Chapter I

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[We] stand open to all anxieties. The decline and fall of everything is our daily dread, we are agitated in private life and tormented by public questions.

—Saul Bellow, “Nobel Lecture”

In his book *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1945), Jean Paul Sartre traces the root of the Jewish problem to social pluralism where a rather loose solidarity unites strongly structured pluralities begetting an annihilating power that sustains the Jew as man but annihilates him as Jew. It is in “the democratic crucible,” observes Sartre, that a Jew “will emerge naked and alone, an individual and solitary particle like all the other particles” (40). If that “democratic crucible” is taken for America, with its inclusive nature that can absorb hyphenated identifies into the overall national culture, how far does Sartre’s statement apply to the Jewish question in it? Arguably, the Jewish history of Diaspora trains Jews to adapt to the position of being part and parcel of pluralism regardless of the privileges or disadvantages ensued by that standing. America, however, is considered by most Jewish intellectuals of the 20th century as a rupture in the Jewish exile that has spanned more than two millennia. Almost half of the world’s Jewish population live in America and the prominence of American Jews in almost every field is taken as an indication of Jews’ full participation in American life as well as the integration into the mainstream culture. But does that assimilation
erase the borderline between two areas primarily designated as mainstream and marginal, majority and minority? And does it provide a full access at the emotional and psychological levels on the part of people feeling ontologically homeless as long as they wander away from the biblical centre? For, residues of Exile still haunt the Jewish diasporic mentality and then surface in their self-expression, especially in the two decades that follow the Holocaust when all Jews’ dreams of carrying their promised land along with them get disillusioned.

Metaphorically, America is a peaceful island unto which the Jew has been cast away by the hurricane only to ruminate about how miserable his condition once was. The hurricane, in this context, is no more than the persecution of Europe, while the act of rumination is a step toward authentic existence threatened by the forgetfulness of the place’s peaceful, assimilative process. Again, Sartre’s view which presupposes persecution as a power through which a Jew is endowed with “more definite consciousness of himself” is of great value. This consciousness inevitably melts the American Jew down to his raw material; that is Diaspora as his essence with all the Angst that consciousness brings about. “[T]he root of Jewish disquietude is the necessity imposed upon the Jew of subjecting himself to endless self-examination and finally assuming a phantom personality” (Anti-Semite and Jew 58-78). Hence, by examining the Jewish-American experience, the entire scenery is prevailed by the existential and psychological intricacies of the Jewish people in the pre- and post-war periods. They are involved in the problematics of their encounters either with a hostile environment (Holocaust, pogroms, anti-Semitism) or with themselves in a friendly surrounding as they struggle to affirm their identity and particularism against assimilation and universalism.
Having been displaced and cast homeless throughout history, Jews never think of America as the end of the story. ‘The book’ in which they always dwell and which epitomises their Diaspora is open-ended. This is why the indispensable self-examination entails irresistible self-expression as a source of empowerment; the power of the story in Bellowian terms that makes Joseph superior to the Pharaoh, his master. “In defeat,” observes Saul Bellow, “a story contains the hope of vindication, of justice. The storyteller is able to make others accept his version of things” (“On Jewish Storytelling” 15). At this juncture appears the significance of fiction as an alternative existence, especially when the whole diasporic question gets reduced to an aesthetic one. At this juncture too, the role accorded to the Jewish-American writer is emphasised in representing his/her people’s persistent reality of being diasporas, a representation that yokes the historical oppression and uprootedness with the multilayered sense of the Diasporic Angst dominating the Jewish psyche in the post-Holocaust era. This leads to the core of the question raised by the present study which proposes to examine, within a fictional Jewish American context, the nature of the relationship between diaspora and Angst as a literary phenomenon characterising the Jew’s response to his/her existence in the postwar Jewish-American novel. As to the questions of what diaspora and Angst are and what bring them together in the context of the postwar Jewish-American fiction, they will be accounted for in this chapter.

To begin with, exploring the existential interpretation of Angst is like getting into a maelstrom of meaningless uncertainty, the salient feature of existentialism itself. With regard to its tradition, one might say that Angst is rooted in the existential philosophy and later becomes a subject-matter in psychoanalysis. First introduced by Kierkegaard by way of figuring out the primordial phenomenon emerging along with
man’s first sin and his subsequent Fall, the term stands out throughout its existential history as a concept immune to any definite interpretation. Whoever tackles it after Kierkegaard—Heidegger, Sartre, Tillich, etc.—adopts it to fit into the context of his existentialist understanding and theories. Taking this into insight, and to avoid ambiguity throughout the thesis, it must be clarified here that the term ‘Angst’ is German in origin and when translated, several alternatives in English have been available to translators and even succeeding philosophers. Among those English translations are: ‘dread,’ ‘anxiety,’ ‘anguish,’ ‘unease,’ ‘malaise,’ etc. Consequently, when one of these translations is used in quotation or over the course of discussion, at any stage of the thesis, it should not be mistaken for something different, but as a direct reference to the phenomenon of Angst itself.

Etymologically, the word Angst, according to the Lexicon of Indo-European Roots in the *American Heritage Dictionary*, comes from the Indo-European stem, ‘angh-’ meaning roughly, ‘tight, painfully constricted, painful’ (App. “angh-”). In its German use, Angst appears in Kierkegaard’s book *Begrbert Angst* (*The Concept of Anxiety* 1844). Though often translated into English as ‘anxiety,’ ‘dread’ and ‘anguish,’ the term, as translators of Kierkegaard and Heidegger acknowledge, has no English equivalent that can amount to the connotations of the rare and subtle emotions that the existentialists wish to define by the German word ‘angst.’ *The American Heritage Dictionary* gives the following meaning of the term: “A feeling of anxiety or apprehension often accompanied by depression” (‘angst,’def.1).

Kierkegaard’s interest in the phenomenon of Angst is inherent in his personal life. Most likely, the overwhelming melancholy of Michael, Kierkegaard’s father, and his failed relation with Region Olson give rise to his indulgence in the psycho-
existential realm of Angst. Michael’s encounter with Angst is a primordial experience that views the whole human experience as mere chaos having no rational interpretation and dominated by a metaphysical abyss hindering any effective communication between the Creator and the creature. From his father’s sense of presentiment, Kierkegaard can develop an onto-theological theory of Angst chiefly based on the idea of man’s freedom and possibility of action: “anxiety is freedom’s actuality as the possibility of possibility” (139). Falling back on his familial backdrop, Kierkegaard detects a strong relationship between Angst and melancholy, “Anxiety has here the same meaning as melancholy at a much later point, when freedom, having passed through the imperfect forms of history in the profoundest sense will come to itself” (140). His idea of Man as a dreaming spirit who understands “backward” but lives “forward-looking” is strongly tied to anxiety about future as man moves from possibility to actuality. Shelley O’Hare, commenting on this point, ties the anxiety of a past misfortune to the possibility that it may be repeated i.e. become future (58). The mother of all possibilities causing Angst, according to Kierkegaard, is the sense of being homeless in the world forgotten by God and overlooked by people. If Angst, in this sense, is to be situated within Jacques Lacan’s Symbolic Order, it takes place as a consequence of separation from anything with mother-like original intimacy. Cameron in his article “The Ethical Paradox in Kierkegaard’s Concept of Anxiety” remarks: “It would seem, then, for Kierkegaard, that desire is rooted always in and around that lost place, that place that never was, that nothing which awakens fundamental anxiety” (99).

Deriving his ideas about Angst from Kierkegaard and, to a large extent, from Edmund Husserl’s Phenomenological philosophy, Martin Heidegger’s treatment of
Angst appears in his book *Sein and Zeit (Being and Time 1927).* He bases his examination of the phenomenon on the existential nature of what he refers to as *Da-sein* literally translated as ‘being there’ and designating the human mode of existence in the world. To Heidegger, Angst, as a pre-requisite of human existence, originates in the primordial uprootedness and thrownness into an alien world, “As attunement, being anxious is a way of being-in-the-world; that about which we have angst is thrown being-into-the-world” (*Being and Time* 178). He offers, an analysis of how existing among others and the shaping force of relations with the world around are determinant in understanding existence as coloured by the mood of anxiety. This means that “who I am” cannot be understood in terms of a being independent of any relationship to other human beings. In this respect he elucidates:

Being-in-the-world, to which being together with things at hand belongs just as primordially as being-with others, is always for the sake of itself. But the self is initially and for the most part inauthentic, the they-self. Being-in-the-world is always already entangled. The average everydayness of Da-sein can thus be determined as entangled-disclosed, thrown-projecting being-in-the-world which is concerned with its ownmost potentiality in its being together with the ‘world’ and in being-with with the others. (*Being and Time* 169-70)

In Heidegger’s view, then, Angst is consciousness that brings to the fore two features marking out Da-sein’s existence: first, Da-sein is cast into homelessness; and second, it shares the world with strangers in the sense that they are other than the self. The standard of how man differs or relates to others is measured by “distantiality” that takes the form of standing in subjugation to others (*Being and Time* 126). The
peculiar oppressiveness of Angst is generated by the possibility of totality (being-in-the-world) rather than by any ‘ready-to-hand’ objects.

This ontological interpretation of Angst indeed posits the question of authenticity, especially when existing with others determines ‘being’ as identity. Since the self of everyday Da-sein is the ‘they-self,’ which is quite different from the authentic self, the latter can evade the inherent flux of fallenness, by gaining a distance from others to experience authentic living. This is why Heidegger defines authenticity as the self that has taken possession of itself. Resolution, accordingly, is the readiness to face anxiety and thereby allow oneself to be summoned out of the lostness in the ‘they’ suggesting the determination essential to authentic existence.

One salient feature of Angst in the Heideggerian phenomenological investigation is the sense of unhomeliness that emerges as a culmination of the above-mentioned ontological aspects of thrownness and authenticity. Defining uncanniness as “not-being-at-home,” Heidegger sees ‘uncanny’ feelings as facets of Angst. According to this proposition, Angst involves the quest for home that essentially takes the form of a “flight from not-being-at-home, that is, from the uncanniness which lies in Da-sein as thrown” opening the door to questions of authenticity and identity as byproducts of that ontological state (Being and Time 176-77). Hence, it is through Angst that Da-sein is led to know how far or near he is from his authentic being. This understanding results from the authentic encounter with the power that Heidegger refers to in Introduction to Metaphysics as ‘nothingness’ anticipating Sartre’s elaborate examination of the concept.

Approaching Sartre’s definition of ‘Anguish’ (his own version of Angst) will indeed be vague and inadequate unless contextualised within his philosophical
categories of ‘being’ as dealt with in Being and Nothingness (1943). Taking its point of departure from Descartes’ cogito “I think, therefore I am,” Sartre’s ‘being’ falls into three categories: “Being-in-itself” meaning a being without consciousness; “Being-for-itself” designating consciousness in search of a being; and “Being-for-others” that indicates a new dimension of being in which the self exists as an object for others. Anguish, accordingly, occurs at several levels in the form of non-being threatening the very being of ‘being’: “human reality rises up as an emergence of being in non-being and on the other hand that the world is ‘suspended’ in nothingness. Anguish is the discovery of this double, perpetual nihilation” (Being and Nothingness 18). In this sense, Sartre agrees with Heidegger’s proposition that the possibility of finding oneself face to face with nothingness is anguish.

But nothingness, according to Sartre, has its origin in the occurrence of being-for-itself as a negation of the in-itself, that is consciousness positing itself as a possibility of self-detachament. Thus, the condition on which the self posits nothingness as a reality of the it-self as well as the world around is the condition in which the present and the past are drift apart by nothingness: “the conscious being constitutes itself in relation to its past as separated from this past by nothingness” (Being and Nothingness 28). Anguish sometimes is born out of fear as a reflective apprehension of the self in anticipation of literal or metaphorical falling down the abyss. It is then the anticipation of horror that carries man toward the future only to nihilate the self. On this point Sartre notes, “Anguish is precisely my consciousness of being my own future, in the mode of non-being” (Being and Nothingness 32). If this is anguish in the face of future, Anguish in the face of the past comes in the form of a revoked decision due to the possibility of actions engendered by the freedom of
choice. By revoking one’s own decision, the self is cut off from its essence since, according to Sartre, one’s essence is what he/she has been. Sartre sums up the relationship between Anguish and nothingness as follows: “Anguish in fact is the recognition of a possibility as my possibility; that is, it is constituted when consciousness sees itself cut from its essence by nothingness or separated from the future…” (Being and Nothingness 35).

This reflective consciousness of the self, however, is not the only source of Anguish, for sometimes it is caused by the existence of the self as an object for others that Sartre defines as “being-for-others” and which can be better understood in the light of his concept of ‘the look.’ For Sartre, such a phenomenon as the feeling of shame is not one of reflection; it rather results from “the presence of another in my consciousness” (Being and Nothingness 221). The Other, therefore, represents a radical negation of one’s experience since he is the one for whom one’s own being is not subject but object. The whole process of flight into objectification and thus vulnerability gets enacted in ‘the look’ which Sartre explains:

The look which the eyes manifest, no matter what kind of eyes they are is a pure reference to myself. What happened immediately when I hear the branches cracking behind me is not that there is someone there; it is that I am vulnerable, that I am a body which can be hurt, that I occupy a place and that I cannot in any case escape from the space in which I am without defense—in short, that I am seen. (Being and Nothingness 259)

But ‘being-seen-by-others’ goes beyond the anguished deletion of the separating space to indicate that “I am in a world which the Other has made alien to me, for the
look embraces my being. . .” (Being and Nothingness 261). Nothingness is the product of the process in which the Other rises to a subject whereas the self is reduced to an object. This is why the Other as a source of the look, penetrating into the heart of the Self’s situation, incarnates the ‘hidden death’ of its possibility causing an irresolvable alienation. “But suddenly the alienation of myself, which is the act of being-looked-at, involves the alienation of the world which I organize” (Being and Nothingness 263). The world in which the self lives is a world organised by the Other, so “I am no longer master of the situation” (Being and Nothingness 265). Sartre cites Kafka’s impressive works, namely The Trial and The Castle, as good examples of a case in which man is considered or rather considers himself, as a slave insofar as he appears to the Other. Apprehension of the Self in anguish and shame may extend to become shared by a community, i.e. the experience of the Self as an object in a community of objects, “the Us-object precipitates us into the world; we experience it in shame as a community alienation” (Being and Nothingness 415).

However, there is a positive aspect of the look insofar as it gives way to Mitsein (Being-with) when ‘we’ is not in conflict but in community with others with whom we share objectification, “We are ‘Us’ only in the eye of Others, and it is in terms of the Other’s look that we assume ourselves as ‘Us’” (Being and Nothingness 422). This constitutes the core of Sartre’s later investigation into the nature of anti-Semitism in Anti-Semite and Jew where he presumes that the Jew is the creation of anti-Semite’s persecution.

Incorporating most of his views on the phenomenon of Angst in Systematic Theology (1951-63), Paul Tillich does not deviate much from Heidegger’s designation in the sense that he establishes causal relation between ‘anxiety’ and
man’s finitude understood as being “limited by non-being” making a great contribution to the interpretation of Angst, the diasporic phase in particular (I:189). Tillich explains the concept of anxiety, as inward expression of outward finitude, in terms of the four categories of ‘human finitude:’ time, space, causality, and substance. It is important, here, to focus only on his definition of space and substance due to their relevance to the diasporic aspect of Angst.

Man’s anxiety over gaining a space, literal or metaphorical, to occupy represents the essential trait of his existential status. Since to “be means to have space,” writes Tillich, every being seeks to provide and maintain a place for itself. Such a quest for emplacement means not only physical location—a home, a city, a country, but also a social place—a vocation, a sphere of influence, belonging to various groups, a definite place in the historical life of his period (I:194). The striving for space, chiefly stimulated by insecurity as a manifestation of Angst, is, then, an ontological necessity, and insofar as it is met, ‘being’ is affirmed and the positive character of the category of space must be recognised. The negative side of space, however, surfaces with the possibility of losing, reaching, or growing beyond the limits of or even having been denied the right to gain a space. Hence, man’s anxiety over space is expressed through the feelings of concern about the future. It is also expressed in man’s attempt to provide a secure physical space for himself and to create social and political systems for the maintenance of general security. This is why Tillich emphasises: “Everything affirms the space which it has within the universe. As long as it lives, it successfully resists the anxiety of not-having-a-place” (I: 89).
Substance for Tillich means identity since it “points to something underlying the flux of appearance, something which is relatively static and self-contained (I: 279). Its positive character, therefore, is revealed in human self identity. It is from the Substance to which it belongs, that the Self receives its ontological power. The loss of self-identity, due to external or internal factors, entails the condition in which Substance is experienced as anxiety. Most obviously, it is the tension caused by the polarity of ontological elements that enable anxiety to take place. This can be witnessed in the particularism /universalism polarity where the emphasis on individuality and self-relatedness provides the threat of “loneliness in which world and communion are lost.” By contrast, the emphasis on assimilation produces the complete loss of identity whereby the individual self is transformed into “a mere part of an embracing whole” (I: 199). On the one end of the polarity, there is alienation, on the other end, self-surrender to the Collective.

This is exactly Tillich’s theory of anxiety, in which, unlike his predecessors, he widens the boundaries of the concept to a horizon beyond the mere existential interpretation. Anxiety, he concludes, is present in every authentic encounter, that is, one in which people let themselves genuinely meet and interact. His views are noticeably influenced by the era during which he wrote; i.e. the decade of World War II in which the grand madness of the war accounts for modern existential thinking regarding the phenomenon of Angst.

It would be structurally and conceptually easier, then, after standing on the existentialists’ definition of the term ‘Angst,’ to gather fragments that when connected together give a perfect view of ‘Diasporic Angst’ as a key concept to the present study. Although, in order to comprehensively grasp the profound conceptual
meaning of Angst, the main existentialist views have been necessarily incorporated, the term as used in this study is not bound by existentialism. To fuse ‘Angst’ with its attribute ‘Diasporic’ is consciously meant to limit the investigation aimed by this study to those existential dilemmas arising as byproducts of the diasporic condition. Accordingly, this study is neither an indulgence into the original realm of the existential phenomenon of Angst, nor a monotonous repetition of the geo-political and historical meanings of diaspora. It is rather an elaboration and elucidation, within the postwar Jewish-American context, of the analogy between the existential Angst based on the idea of thrownness and uprootedness from heaven and the Diasporic Angst bearing the connotations of displacement, homelessness and alienation.

At this juncture, it is important to emphasise that bringing Angst, diaspora and the Jewish experience is not arbitrary. In the mode of investigating into the Jewish question, Sartre, in the section entitled ‘Ontology of Temporality’ of Being and Nothingness, links the nihilation endangering being to the Jewish diasporic fate,

In the ancient world the profound cohesion and dispersion of the Jewish people was designated by the term ‘Diaspora.’ It is this world which will serve to designate the mode of being of the For-itself; it is diasporic. (136)

What turns out clearly in Sartre’s statement is the relationship between the three phenomena that the above-mentioned investigation into Angst has shown. The second step then is to examine diaspora situating the phenomenon within the Jewish archetypal experience focusing on the various existential aspects of that experience throughout history.
The term diaspora goes back to the Greek word *Speiro* meaning ‘to sow’ and the proposition *dia* meaning ‘over.’ In Greek, the term indicates scattering about and is used to refer to the Greek migrating campaigns to colonise new lands. The phenomenon however exists much earlier to the Greeks and has its biblical reference in the Jewish exile to Babylon at the hands of the Mesopotamian emperor Nebuchadnezzar. This takes place after the destruction of the First Temple and later during the Roman Empire following the destruction of the Second Temple in about 70 CE. But comparing the two earlier forms of diaspora, one learns that the Greeks are active agents of colonisation and expansion while the Jews are passive victims of persecution. For Jews, Diaspora always signifies a collective trauma, a banishment where one dreams of home but lives in exile. It is this sinister and brutal meaning that the archetypal Jewish Diaspora shares with the modern diasporas of Palestinians, Armenians, Africans, etc. Most obviously, however, the meanings of the contemporary concept have acquired a new understanding coloured by the post-modern mode and cultural rubrics of identity politics.

Due to the proliferation of the concept of diaspora in the recent years and the metaphoric designation it acquires as a result of applying it to describe different groups of people including, expatriates, political refugees, alien residents, etc., William Safran marks out salient features characterising diasporic communities. According to him, diasporas are those who or their ancestors have been dispersed from original centre in which they retain collective memory, vision or myth. They believe that they can never be accepted so they remain separate in hope of return one day to their ideal homeland, and express their commitment to it through maintaining strong relationship with it in order to strengthen their ethno-communal consciousness.
and solidarity (9-17). Revising this designation, Robin Cohen emphasises on the centrality of ‘trauma’ and ‘injustice’ as diasporic elements binding the group together through constituting a commanding theme in their folk memory, especially when a time should have passed without assimilation before calling a group diasporic. Cohen who classifies diaspora into victim, labour, imperial, trade and cultural categories, concentrates on the positive and creative aspects that transcend the tension between ethnic and national or transnational identity: “Even if there is a degree of subterranean anxiety in the diaspora, it may be possible to argue that this is precisely what motivates the need for achievement.” He cites, as an example, the case of Western diasporic Jews who could garner a number of Nobel prizes in art, medicine and the sciences (23-25).

After departing from the Jewish domain and entering the postmodern, postcolonial one, diaspora acquires new connotations. Safran, however, views the postmodern existential as well as psychological maladies that the modern diasporic minorities have to cope with as an extension of the characteristics of the old one. “In short,” Safran notes, “Diaspora has become a metaphor of discomfort, alienation, and transcendence, features that presumably, are aspects of postmodernity” (26). Stuart Hall has a different perspective. As a cultural theorist and sociologist, he envisions a strong relationship between the notion of diversity and the diasporic identity. The diaspora experience, according to him, is defined “not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity” (235). But alternating between similarity and continuity on the one hand and difference and rupture on the other, the diasporic identity regains its power through the act of
representation that offers “a way of imposing an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation, which is the history of all enforced diasporas” (Hall 224).

Rejecting the whole idea of tying diaspora to a centre or origin (homeland), James Clifford, in “Diasporas” gives priority to certain rubrics within the diasporic framework such as displacement, suffering, adaptation and resistance, stressing: “Peoples whose sense of identity is centrally defined by collective histories of displacement and violent loss cannot be ‘cured’ by merging into a new national community. This is especially true when they are the victims of ongoing, structural prejudice” (307). The aim of the diasporic discourse, thus, is to create alternative spheres of expression, so that the consciousness of solidarity and difference can be maintained. But to emphasise that diaspora cultures are not separatist, Clifford clarifies that “the term diaspora is a signifier . . . of political struggle, to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement” (308). Hence, to tell the story of diaspora is not to evoke the nostalgia of return to the centre, but to express the responses to “dwelling in displacement” (310). This dwelling-in-displacement is often accompanied by the experiences of loss, marginality and above all exile reinforced by systematic racism that co-exists with the skills of survival.

Coming now to the Jewish diasporic experience as the archetype that provides the source of most rubrics of the modern diasporic discourse and as a focal point of this study, it can never be discussed in isolation from the victim tradition. But since the Jewish experience is too complex and diverse to be grasped within one type or framed within a single definition, it is important to get familiar with some central aspects of it. The idea of diaspora implied in the forcible dispersion of Israelites,
having its origin in Deuteronomy, is an appropriate point of departure. The Old Testament highlights the negative aspect of the Jewish Diaspora that follows as a punishment for forsaking the righteous old way:

If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name—the LORD your God. . . . Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods—gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. In the morning you will say, ‘If only it were evening!’ and in the evening, ‘If only it were morning!’—because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see. (New International Version, Deut. 28:58-68)

The Babylonian conquest and the destruction of the first temple (586 BCE) inaugurate the process actualising the biblical prophecy and creating the folk memoirs of the victim diaspora tradition. The experiences of exile, displacement and persecution represent its central images. “Babylon subsequently,” observes Robin Cohen, “became a codeword among Jews . . . for the afflictions, isolations and insecurity of living in a foreign place, set adrift, cut off from their roots and their sense of identity, oppressed by an alien ruling class” (3). Mentioning thereafter the term Babylon is enough to evoke a sense of captivity, exile, alienation and isolation
that constitute together the state of ‘homelessness’ as a master trope of the Jewish identity in literature, art, and culture.

The Roman Christian invasion and destruction of the Second Temple represent indeed the hardest blow that gives birth to the second and major wave of the Jewish Diaspora. This time Jews were irrevocably scattered to the four corners of the earth carrying with them the doleful sense of loss and disintegration. In his book *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans*, Erich S. Gruen elucidates how Jews fall apart when their centre—the Temple—is destroyed:

The eradication of the centre, which had given meaning and definition to the nation’s identity, obliged them to alter their sights, accommodate to a displaced existence, and rethink their own heritage in the context of strange surroundings. (2)

The image of the ‘wandering Jew’ becomes part of a continuing Christian myth along with the dogma of referring that to the unforgivable sin of deicide. On the grounds of such a theological belief, the Jewish existence in the Christian world up to the Spanish Inquisition and later to the Holocaust is always marked by dogmatic vengeful extermination and in most situations, anti-Semitic stereotypes.

Historically, the two major Jewish diasporic communities are Sephardim—Jews of Iberian Peninsula—and Ashkenazim—Jews of Central and Northern Europe. It is the descendents of the latter, however, who make up most of the world Jews in Europe, America and South Africa. They settle these places after leaving the Russian Pale between 1881 and 1914 in search of a refuge from the Tsarist oppressive pogroms and the anti-Semitic sentiments sweeping throughout Russia. In Europe, two
incidents fuel the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’ waves of anti-Semitism: the first is known as ‘Damascus Affairs’ when a Jewish barber was arrested in Syria at the beginning of the 1840s on the charge of a ritual murder of an Italian friar and his servant; the second is the “Dreyfus Affair” when in 1894 a French Jewish army officer was accused of spying for Germany. The latter led to the foundation of the first Zionist conference by the Viennese Jewish journalist Theodor Herzl. Hence, anti-Semitism which designates the intensity of oppression, maltreatment and feelings of hatred, accompanying the Jewish Diaspora from the beginning culminates in the Nazi concentration camps and genocide.

Throughout their diasporic history, Jews are represented as victims not only to physical extermination but also to the sense of anxiety, unease or otherness that results in a quest for protective cover in the host community. This sense of insecurity is often accompanied by a tendency to identify closely with the imagined homeland and with the co-ethnic communities in other countries sharing bonds of religion, culture etc. and common history or perhaps common fate. This leads Jews to an entangled situation in the sense that their anxiety breeds an in-group mentality which, in turn, is interpreted by the host nations as transmuted loyalty to the far-away home causing more distance, suspicion, hostility and anti-Semitism. Such an important phase of the Jewish diasporic experience is further interpreted by Safran who, in his “Deconstructing and Comparing Diasporas,” yokes the lack of acceptance of Jews by the host societies with the continuity of such diasporic features as the growing collective paranoia associated with the feeling that their very existence is threatened by annihilating hostile surroundings (10-11). What begins as externally imposed
develops its institutionalised character into an internalised anguish proliferating socio-psychological maladies.

This casts the light on a distinct feature of the Jewish Diaspora: the irrevocable surrender to the Diasporic Angst either in response to the deep sense of homeless insecurity or as part of what Bernard Susser calls, the “ideology of affliction.” According to Susser’s proposition, the Jewish history is a “case of paranoia” that surfaces after the Holocaust. The postwar Jewish identity feeds on the “mentality of the besieged” that resists the idea that the siege will end adhering to Spinoza’s “adversity thesis.” Arguably, Jews’ survival is believed to owe much to anti-Semitism which defines them as different. When that difference is internalised and enhanced by persecution, it becomes a creative force that turns exile into an inspiration to rebuild after the attack and create a meaning out of desperate moments. Susser asserts that “Jews survived not despite their persecutions but because of them” (221-24).

Though ‘diaspora’ and ‘exile’ have been recently marked as two distinct phenomena with areas of overlaps, there is a strong belief that the Jewish Diaspora designates, from the beginning, the connotations of exile. “The normative Jewish Diaspora,” defines Safran, “is exile” since both refer to the same term ‘Galut’ in Hebrew (15). Nico Israel in his book *Outlandish: Writing between Exile and Diaspora*, tries to draw lines of distinction between the two, though he concludes that distinction by defining exile and diaspora as two overlapping ways of describing the predicament of displacement. Exile tends to suggest an “individual figure in a particular relation to home” whereas diaspora bears with it the implications of a collective response to displacement. Exile, according to Israel, informs most of the
significant strands of modern social and philosophical thought: “from Marxian alienation to the Freudian unconscious, from Nietzsche’s transvaluation of values to Heidegger’s thrownness—each of which involves a particular kind of banishment or ‘leaping out,’ conceived spatially, temporally, linguistically, or ideologically” (2-5).

The literal meaning of the Hebrew word ‘Galut’ (to live exposed) suggests the weakness that follows dispersion. It also connotes the exilic trauma and the collective memory as persistent components of the Jewish diasporic experience. Jonathan Ray places a strong emphasis on the “treatment of Jewish diaspora as galut, a highly charged term that depicts much of Jewish history as a forced exile from an ancient homeland marked by anguish, oppression, and a perpetual longing for return” (13). Hence, the strong link between the exile experience and Diaspora in the Jewish context is reinforced by the lingering sense of dislocation and homeless wandering.

It is important to turn to displacement, then, as an essential rubric of diaspora. Most of the studies that have explicitly explored the question of displacement have tended to concentrate either on the individual experience of private groups or mainly on primordial alienation, homelessness, or existential anxiety. In the book Diaspora and Memory, Marie-Aude Baronian et al. define displacement as an essential face of diasporic experience embodied by the “impulse to (re)produce and (re)create the loss . . . to reinvest something else somewhere else in the present and in the future” (15). To represent displacement is to construct and figure its problematic properties and to show how these properties help give shape to the subject. But in the post-modern post-colonial context, the theme of displacement is tackled in terms of certain tropes, i.e. metaphors that function to shape textual representations. The positionality of the displaced writer as an inheritor of the weaker term in the system of binary opposites
(inside/outside, centre/periphery, etc) allows him to interact with questions of racial belonging and cultural description. Writing displacement in this sense leads to what Israel called “diasporic self-fashioning,” i.e. the power to fashion self out of a place which necessarily entails the quest for emplacement (15).

Taking into consideration the fact that diaspora is a phenomenon that gives birth to several political and cultural realities, the image invoked by the discourse of diaspora communities needs a stimulus—memory to outlive assimilation. This is why Marie-Aude Baronian et al. define memory as “a privileged carrier of diasporic identity . . . ‘proof’ of the diasporic status” (11-13). When territory is decentred and fragmented into segments, it is memory that provides a substitute and principle ground for identity formation. This is true of the Jewish experience. To rethink the overall texture of the Jewish Diaspora beginning with the annihilation of the centre up to the Holocaust and after, is to examine a flux of memory as a catalyst that keeps the dispersed community from disintegration. Memory acts as a unifying power feeding solidarity. Minna Rozen, figuring out diaspora as an equation of which space, time and memory are factors, sees that, “When memory fades Diaspora ceases to exist.” Rozen, comments on how immediately after the Holocaust, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, commemoration was one way of processing the colossal loss (66-81). Hence, memory in diaspora has a crucial function that goes beyond mere replicating aspects of the homeland culture in the host land. It is, further used to cultivate a symbolic identity by sharing a common consciousness of history. In brief, the collective memory, referring to the common shared awareness of the presence of the past in contemporary consciousness, plays a major role in diaspora.
The question posed here is how far does memory offer an alternative existence to a displaced Jew in a state of loss? Jonathan Boyarin and Danial Boyarin can answer this emphasising ‘non-being’ as the origin of ‘being’ which the Hebrew phrase *nahnu ma* implies. Asked by Moses and Aaron, the phrase is translated as ‘we are what’ and interpreted as “we are nothing.” On the basis of this understanding, self-integration begins at the acknowledgement of the lack. This is, according to the Boyarins, the paradoxical power of Diaspora. On the one hand, everything that defines Jew is part and parcel of all the questions of ancestors. On the other hand, everything is permanently at risk. “Thus, contingency and genealogy are the two central diasporic consciousnesses” (Boyarin 4). The power of Diaspora, therefore, is the power of *nahnu ma*; that is of survival and presence through loss and absence. Applying Sartre’s notion of negation in *Being and Nothingness* to the Jewish diasporic predicament, Alain Finkielkraut, the Jewish French essayist in *The Imaginary Jew* elucidates: “What makes me a Jew is the acute consciousness of a lack, of a continuous absence” (114). For Finkielkraut, a Jew is at best a ghostly presence, a ‘negatité’ because he/she is exterminated in a historical event called Auschwitz: “I call that part of myself Jewish that remains at odds with life in its time” (38). Through this analogy, Finkielkraut dramatises, in existential terms, the Jews’ absent presence in the Holocaust. For, it is usually claimed that every Jew is a survivor in the sense that he/she is a potential victim. Hence, the existence of post-Holocaust Jews, as suggested by the fictional characters, is a presence whose link to the past is problematic. This link between Diaspora survival and nothingness as an annihilating power suggests the postmodern, post-structural mode of transvaluating the victim’s rhetoric as quintessential of postwar diasporic discourse.
After delineating the major characteristics of Jewish Diaspora, it is necessary to clarify that the treatment of diasporic discourse in this study can never be anticipated by the postcolonial models of African and Caribbean in which the polarities of master/subalter, coloniser/colonised, East/West, etc. are emphasised. The complex Jewish Diaspora experience does not fit into any of those categories. Nor is the study meant to claim the existence of a stark, well-organised diasporic discourse of Jews at the time. Its chief goal, by contrast, is to trace the residues of diasporic history that persist in the consciousness of the Jewish-American writer simultaneously with the existential anxiety evoked by the horror of World War II and the Holocaust that revives the question as to what extent can Jews feel secure in their otherness?

From all that has been said about diaspora and Angst, some major characteristics situate both within a unified phenomenal and conceptual realm. One can acknowledge that the ideas of uprootedness, thrownness, displacement and alienation which the existentialists figure out as part of Angst, represent indeed the essence of diaspora. In the latter, the boundaries of the analogy are narrowed to the experience of a particular group within the human race though. Angst becomes diasporic when associated with the loss of homeland, with the meaninglessness of life devoid of self-relatedness and in which the instinctive right of having a space is denied. This is often accompanied by the sense of insecurity as one expects non-being or a nihilistic power to fall at any moment and by the inexorable feelings of absence from the centre—spiritual, cultural, or even geopolitical. Diaspora, in turn, dissolves into an existential Angst as man’s experience shrinks into an authentic encounter with two powers. The encounter with the power of ‘For-itself’ as a consciousness of the
existential dilemma with which the ‘In-itself’ is chained and leads to psychological fragmentation. The second encounter incorporates various methods of resistance to the Other’s oppressive power seeking sometimes to subjugate and enslave the self and some other times to embrace and swallow it up so that no identifiable trace can be left. In both cases to survive means to keep experiencing Angst. The moment Angst comes to an end while diaspora still persists that implies one falls into inauthenticity.

It is quite important now to locate the Diasporic Angst in Jewish tradition. And in doing so, it is indispensable to cite David Novak’s statement:

Anxiety over Jewish survival either physical or spiritual was hardly a modern innovation. The shattering experiences(s) of exile—following the demise of the First and the Second Temples and the expulsion from Spain (a kind of double exile)—engendered deep anxiety over the prospects of a continued existence for the Jewish people. (639)

The aesthetics of Diasporic Angst can be easily traced in the European Jewish writing that constitutes the foundation of its American counterpart as well as a direct influence over it. One of the landmarks in Jewish diasporic literature is Franz Kafka (1883-1924) whose influence runs throughout not only the Jewish American body of literature in particular, but the modern one in general. Being himself a product to the ghetto legacy, Kafka’s masterpieces *The Metamorphosis* (1915) and *The Trial* (1925) epitomise the Jewish existentialist predicament. Though there is no overt reference to Jewishness in his writing, he is acclaimed by many critics as the most essentially Jewish of all writers. Robert Alter proposes: “If modern literature in general is a literature that adopts the viewpoint of the outsider, Kafka, as the alienated member of an exile group is the paradigmatic modernist precisely because he is a paradigmatic
Accordingly, Kafka’s subject, though not always manifest, is the dilemma of Jewishness.

Throughout Kafka’s works, there is the eruption of a split identity and fragmentation that emerge from the protagonist’s consciousness only to destroy him. Hence, the further the writer tries to distance himself from his heartbreaking reality, the harsher he moans under the weight of self-estrangement and alienation. In a letter to Gustav Janouch, Kafka writes: “while we walk the bright broad modern boulevards, the dark gloomy alleyways, of the old ghetto still live on deep with us. We think we inhabit a hygienic modern town, but within us we continue to dwell in the dark foul-smelling ghetto of our past.” To further incarnate the dilemma of the Jewish writer torn between the tendency to assimilate and the ethnic bondage that he/she cannot sever, he comes out with an evocative self-image of the four-legged animal: “but in their little hind legs they remained stuck in the Jewishness of their fathers and with the little front legs they were finding no new ground, the despair over that was their [concern]” (qtd. in Sokel 844-49). It is this grotesque representation of estrangement and homelessness that characterises much of prewar and postwar diasporic Jewish writing in Europe and America with varying degrees.

Likewise, the image of Jewish Diaspora as a state of dwindling in vexation and emptiness appears in Rosenberg’s poem “Chagrin” (1916) in which the Jewish-British poet utilises the figure of Absalom, hanging by the hair, to incarnate the Jewish diasporic conditions:

From the imagined weight
Of spaces in the sky
Of mute chagrin my thoughts
Hang like branch-clung hair
To trunks of silence swung,
With choked soul weighing down
Into thickemptiness. (6-12)

But this endless sense of being caught in-between, neither integrated nor rejected, in the British-Jewish context, is counterparted by the image of America as created by Israel Zangwill, another Jewish-British writer. Zangwill’s whose play *The Melting Pot* (1908) proclaims America to be ‘God’s crucible’ (the great melting pot) where Jews along with other races are reforming and melting down into something new. In both cases of Absalom and the melting pot, however, identity is at risk.

When the American Jews’ prominence and prosperity are considered, a question arises as to how far are American Jews related to the traditional sense of galut, at least in their own consciousness? One of the facts admitted by the aforementioned diaspora theorists is that for the maintenance of identity and ethnic survival, the diasporic community needs to create and stick to the victim ideology. Jews of America are no exception. In his essay “Coming to Terms with Exile,” Howard Wetlestein emphasises that “even a culturally rich and liberating Diaspora was not likely to liberate us [Jews] from galut” (56). This is supported by the view that says: “The symbolism haunted Jewish consciousness. The figure of the ‘wandering Jew’ serves as an emblem of the people’s fate, a repeated theme in art and literature through the ages” (Gruen 1). This consciousness acts as a distinguishing feature of the postwar Jewish-American novel. In it, though they appear to be rooted in their American home, the Jewish American characters do not cease their wandering. Such a stereotypical image of the Jew in America acquires the character
of a double alienation in the form of double Diaspora: first from the symbolic biblical homeland and then again after the elimination of the European Jewry. The self-portrait of American Jews, therefore, appears torn between being at home and yet perfectly insecure. For the Jewish American writer, the dilemma is further intensified as he/she struggles to express his/her self in a language that should be reformulated to fit with the traditional Jewish distinctions while responding to the exigencies of contemporary American culture.

In America, then, the entire question of diaspora and displacement gets reduced to the aesthetic magma of telling the story. Cynthia Ozick, the Jewish-American writer is quite aware of this fact, so she states: “The problem of diaspora in its most crucial essence is the problem of aesthetics” (“America: Toward Yavneh” 25). Ozick’s proposition indeed originates in the first ancient query asked by Israelites after exile: “How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?” (*New International Version*, Ps.137.4). Suggestively, the Jewish diasporic literature is a repetitive re-enactment of this lamentation assuming the form of an extended, practical answer to the above-mentioned question. Admittedly, it is the story of the particular rather than the universal that can be heard throughout history. Defending such parochial tendency in Jewish-American literature, Ozick rhetorically uses the metaphor of “shofar” or ram’s horn for analogy. “If we blow into the narrow end of the shofar, we will be heard far. But if we choose to be mankind rather than Jewish and blow into the wider part, we will not be heard at all; for us America will have been in vain” (“America: Toward Yavneh” 34).

With achieving prominence in America and the establishment of the state of Israel, the Jewish external exile ends literally only to be replaced by ‘inner exile’ that
after the nemesis of the Holocaust can offer a chance for symbolic survival in terms of dwelling for a time within. The fears of being thrown again into the chaos of the unknown, play a crucial role in keeping the trauma afresh. As a condition, Jewish-American writers, unlike, their European counterparts, are in charge of remythologising the past which is European in nature. Paradoxically, the American melting pot stipulates amnesia whereas those writers insist on retaining the bonds connecting them to their immediate brutal past of which even the present miserable realities of America are residues. This is true of the 1950s and the 1960s, the golden age of Jewish-America literature when some of the best writers like Bellow, Malamud, etc. grapple with their own ethnic identity in relation to the wider forces of American life. But the travail of previous generations, with its experience of slavery, pogroms, and the Holocaust, remains in the distant background. Most obviously, the Jewish American creativity is the outcome of telling the story of persecution. Its secret lies not in resisting the whirlpool of assimilation but in bringing alive the gloomy past of entrapment in order to make America pride over its difference. This core of Jewish American literary mood gets its defining note in Emma Lazarus’ Statue of Liberty sonnet entitled “The New Colossus” in which the statue is suggestively called “Mother of Exiles” (25). Lazarus’s other poem “1492” sums up the status of instability and sense of entrapment with which her race is afflicted in three lines, “The West refused them, and the East abhorred./ No anchorage the known world could afford,/ Close-locked was every port, barred every gate.”(6-8). Emma Lazarus’ poetry, imbibed with Jewish sensibility, indeed inaugurates the process of Jewish literary voice in America that is written in more than one language parallelling the scattered nature of the people themselves.
The first Jewish literature in America is in Yiddish, the mother tongue of Eastern European Jewry (Ashknazis). Developed in the nineteenth century by a number of writers who prefer to write in their communal language, the American Yiddish narrative reaches its zenith at the hand of the Nobel Laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer (1904-1991). Nevertheless, Yiddish literature in America addresses only a small group of American audience through such Yiddish newspapers as the \textit{Jewish Daily Forward} founded by Abraham Cahan, a journalist, novelist and social activist in 1897. The second generation of immigrants feel more confident to write in English that enables them to make their voice heard by a larger social spectrum. The generation of Jewish authors writing in English comprises Abraham Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, Rose Cohen, Michael Gold, Daniel Fuchs and Henry Roth. They left a legacy of a long list of postwar Jewish American writers of which Bellow, Malamud and Roth are the most famous. The New York Lower East Side ghetto culture can find a foothold amidst the American literary terrace because the American audience feel attracted to the ethos, values and lifestyle of the new immigrants whose ambition, anxiety and homeless fears are something new. Though America represents a relatively well-furnished ‘galut,’ the recurring theme of uprootedness persistently prolongs in literature due to a deep sense of insecurity and to constantly nurture the community’s solidarity. “To a certain extent,” observes Sanford Sternlicht, “the reading of Jewish American writers by American Jews has provided a community cohesion that supplements or sometimes replaces the synagogue and the temple” (8). Since its early emergence, the Jewish-American fiction appears imbied with the tensions brought on by the problems of acculturation, relocation, poverty, self-hatred, negative stereotypes and the merciless capitalist system in which they are thrust. The
theme of quest with its multi-faceted nature is accompanied with sympathetic sentiments for those left behind.

Assimilation, that presents itself as a costly price of normalisation into America, gets doubled when alienation yields internal and external pressure on American Jews. As a result, the emergence of Marxist, socialist mood among the prewar Jewish American novelists defines their typical response to the adverse politics by which their identity is threatened to be swept away. Leslie Fiedler, in “The Breakthrough: The American Jewish Novelist and the Fictional Image of the Jew,” justifies the Jewish writers’ interest in “the Proletarian Novel” during the prewar era as a self-fashioning attempt to “identify themselves with America and protest against certain aspects of its life.” Fiedler further clarifies: “There is beyond this, the constant awareness of alienation which belongs to the Jew: the sense of loneliness not as an accident but as a kind of closeness” (87-88). The Lower East Side’s Ghetto experience, therefore, enriches the imaginative scope of such novelists as Anzia Yezierska (1880-1970) and Michael Gold (1893-1967). It is Gold, however, whose interest in the tenement’s proletarian cause becomes most perceptible. His novel *Jews Without Money* (1930) portrays the Capitalist America as a Darwin’s jungle where the fittest only survive and where social injustice and exploitation are boundless. This novel contains an existential note appearing in Mickey’s perplexity and grief over the death of a poor horse that brings back to his mind the death of his sister in a cart accident.

Moreover, naturalism, a defining feature of the Jewish American fiction at large, is much felt in the prewar writing. Through it, the impact of the ghetto’s environment gets reflected on the characters’ desperate attempt to find a way out of
its anguish, poverty and all other maladies. Sometimes they reach an impasse, sometimes their exit is unfortunate to a point that they try to return to it in vain, and some other times the characters’ cyclic movement leads them to the starting point. Abraham Cahan (1860-1951), whose fiction is believed to mark the actual beginning of the Jewish American novel, demonstrates naturalism by casting his fictional characters and scenes against the backdrop of the ghetto paying attention to the moral crisis of American capitalist materialism and exploitation. His masterpiece, *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), intent to show the rise of a Jewish immigrant from abject poverty to great wealth, records the Jewish ethics of success at the expense of one’s own ethnicity. The struggle of the ghetto life is authentically Jewish whereas Levinsky’s success by severing all bonds leaves him at the end dangling in emotional and spiritual emptiness.

Henry Roth (1906-1995) incorporates, in addition to the above-mentioned features of prewar Jewish-American fiction, the psychological malaise that can be detected in his stream of consciousness novel *Call It Sleep* (1934). David’s oedipal complex investigates a different but more profound aspect of the Lower East Side tenement providing a diagnosis of the Jewish problem, this time from the internal perspective. But David’s passion for his mother and clash with his brutal father never submerge the fragments of an ethnic minority trying to find a space in the overwhelming metropolis of New York. Roth’s *Portnoy’s Complaint* is believed to be influenced by this novel. The same Jewish intra-conflict, but at the social level, appears in *The Old Bunch* (1937), a novel by Meyer Levin (1905-1981). In this Novel, Levin depicts the generational conflicts through a group of young Jews whose protest to their parents’crudeness, anxieties and resistance to assimilation urge them
to seek prosperity during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Ending in a failure, the young Jews pay the bill for acculturation without enjoying its fruits.

But if the prewar Jewish writers tend to define their identity in terms of Marxist terms, the postwar period witness an enthusiastic rediscovery of roots—thanks to Hitler. The fate of the European Jewry is present throughout as a central consciousness, though sometimes not outspoken overtly. Mark Schechner explains that the Holocaust in postwar Jewish American literature “was a hidden wound, shrouded in darkness and suffered in silence, felt everywhere but confronted virtually nowhere” (4). This revival of ethnic interest among Jewish highbrows either due to the sense of a survivor’s guilt or by way of self-fashioning can be paradigmatically seen in the works of New York Intellectuals (anti-Stalinist left-wing writers and literary critics who emerge in the 1940s and the 1950s and whose works appeare in journals such as *Partisan Review* and *Commentary*) including Saul Bellow, Alfred Kazin, Lionel Trilling, Irving Howe, Isaac Rosenfeld, Philip Rahv, etc. Apparently, the atrocities of the Shoah compel the highbrows of Jewish-American culture to rethink their indulgence in Americanness. Alfred Kazin, discussing the writing of his colleagues, remarks: “The more Jewish we became, the more we were open to the new horror” (qtd. in Brauner 11). It is remarkable then that even the fourth and fifth Jewish generations in America retain their sense of being guests in a foreign land subject to what the host society think of them. This persistent consciousness keeps their unwelcome otherness alive in memory and, thus, a Jewish novel does contain allusions to anti-Semitism implicitly or explicitly. “It is the rare novel of Jewish life that does not, despite the recession of anti-Semitism, contain allusions to, or incidents
of, anti-Semitism. Only at their peril will Jews lower their guard against that even in favorable times like the postwar period” (Harap 5).

The sense of ambivalence represents one of the most defining features of postwar Jewish-American novel by writers who find themselves caught between self-assertion and self-denial; pride and shame of their difference; emotional effusiveness and skeptical detachment. In the midst of such psychological swinging, the postwar Jewish-American novelists project their sense of uneasiness onto protagonists who are typically paranoid and urban. They are paranoid because they feel morbidly sensitive to any passing remark and they are anti-pastoral because in the country they are more visible and thus more subject to anti-Semitism. Such a mood marks a parting point with the prewar dreams. Written then from the mainstream standpoint and for the mainstream audience, the postwar Jewish American novel, in Daniel Fuch’s words, marks the end of innocence and of “radical utopianism” (239). The novelists feel a desire to express the self and share self-consciousness with others by incorporating their ethnic issues within the American context on the one hand and adopting the existentialist and realist temper that kicks away the prewar socialist utopia on the other. In short, it is anxiety that evokes writing which, in turn, records the intimations of that anxiety. A brief survey of the postwar Jewish American fiction is important to explain the thematic complexity embedded within that genre.

What reveals itself as a phenomenon in the postwar Jewish American novel is the barren psychological mood and psychopathic disorders that come as a result. Jonathan Baumbach (1933) reflects on this aspect of the postwar life in his study entitled The landscape of Nightmare: Studies in the Contemporary American novel (1965) which comprises, in addition to five other non-Jewish novels, The Victim by
Saul Bellow, *The Assistant* by Malamud, *The Pawnbroker*, by Wallant and *The Catcher in the Rye* by Salinger as typical epitomes of the writers’ insights into the nightmarish modern world. That world invokes the polarity of fall and redemption where each protagonist contemplates his own history of alienation as a secret passage from innocence to self-knowledge. Apart from Baumbach’s study, it is J. D. Salinger (1919-2010) who problematises in *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) the adolescent confusion, alienation, identity and most of all rebellion as attributes of growing in a tense climate.

The horror of the war, the atrocities of the Holocaust and the existentialist mood that they beget, though felt everywhere in the postwar fiction, are brought to the surface in some novels that confront them directly. But the wide scope of man’s dilemma in the wasteland hides beneath its entangled folds of the doubly perplexed existence of immigrants. Joseph Heller (1923-1999) makes a great contribution to this mode through his well-known war novel *Catch-22* (1961). The novel portrays man’s existential dilemma in an absurd world where he is a victim no matter what option is chosen. The major theme in the novel is the anti-hero’s struggle to withstand the monolithic irrational forces that widens the sense of dislocation and loss to its extremes. *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), a novel written by Norman Mailer (1923), harps upon the same theme of World War II with more emphasis on the nihilistic outlook cultivated by the two soldiers losing their comrade and coming to conclusion that life is nothing. Roth, a Jewish soldier, is a victim of his sense of insecurity, so he falls to death. The novel is an example of the quest for power that Mailer develops as his own artistic parody of the nihilistic Faustian impulse determining the Nazi ideology.
Exploring the role of covenantal beliefs in environments seemingly devoid of redemptive possibilities is competently tackled by Chaim Potok (1929-2002). The Holocaust and the creation of the state of Israel lie in the background of his fictional world. *The Chosen* (1967) questions the fate of Judaism in non-Judaic world when the individual’s ambition conflicts with historic memory, Zionist ideology, and religious imperatives. That tension between secularism and orthodoxy, between the exigencies of punishment and a hope for deliverance, develops into a symbolic reenactment of the superstitious mood of the 17th century in which a false Messiah Sabbatai Zevi plays the role of a mock saviour. Echoing Singer’s *Satan in Goray* (1955), *In the Days of Simon Stern* (1973) is written by Arthur Allen Cohen (1928-1986) dramatising the rite of passage along with the birth pangs and functions of the traditionally awaited Jewish Messiah. The same theme of the Messiah is revisited by Cynthia Ozick (1928) who innovatively asserts that deliverance needs no messiah but the self that can rebuild its past according to the requirements of the present. Ozick shows more loyalty to her ethnic identity and preaches, throughout her writing, the cult of belonging too well. Her novel *Trust* (1966) is a quest for a father figure which encompasses the implication of a quest for roots. Ozick poses the question of aesthetics as one crucial aspect of resisting assimilation in her novels. The Holocaust that goes along as a touchstone in characters’ morality throughout her works is symbolically but skillfully incarnated in her novella *The Shawl* (1983).

On the opposite side of the coin, there are writers whose relationship with Jewishness is so problematic that belonging, for them, means individuality in the first and foremost place. A paradigm of this current is Philip Roth (1933) who, comprising a literary movement in himself, is the most prolific and controversial of contemporary
Jewish American writers. Rejecting the group imperative that imposes upon him to be a spokesman of the common will and history, Roth chooses to be his own. The accusation of self-hatred by no means scares Roth away from sticking to his own manner of representing the Jewish diaspora experience in America, a manner that is not imitative. His fiction, including *Goodbye Columbus* (1958), *Portnoy’s Complaint* (1969), *The Counterlife* (1980) etc. moves between sexual paralysis and obsession, cultural rebellion, and psychological disorders. The semi-autobiographical themes in Roth’s novels give a clue to a rebellious consciousness that, shedding off the burdens of roots and shocked by the deformities of the American Dream, finds itself wandering homeless. His comic treatment of alienation as a backdrop in all the fictional worlds, consistently adhering to the themes of anxiety, self-absorption, and neurosis, is typically a product of the Jewish America synthesis. Like Roth, Lionel Trilling (1905-1975), focuses on the conflict between self-definition and the influence of culture. He writes only one novel *The Middle of the Journey* (1947); a novel of ideas that anticipates the crisis of the left in McCarthy years. A deeply troubled examination of America, the novel attacks the dogmatic and pragmatic liberalism.

Although, most of the above-mentioned postwar novels revolve around the questions raised by the thesis, they do little to help answer them, since the writers efforts are dissipated among some different questions quite not relevant to the focus of the study. It is only in the works of Saul Bellow, Bernal Malamud and Edward Lewis Wallant that the questions raised by the study intersect and satisfying answers to all the problems of enquiry are found.

Saul Bellow (1915-2005) is the first of the Jewish American writers to capture a large reading audience without departing from the Jewish idiom. He is instrumental
in preparing the way for other postwar Jewish-American writers such as Malamud, Wallant and Roth. The sense of irony, the moral seriousness of his concerns and the style of grotesque realism render him as distinct. Generally speaking, Bellow’s themes never fail to represent the ghetto experience in the postwar mainstream life; the guilt of survivors unable to shed off the horror of the past; the dilemma of an intellectual protagonist besieged by alienation ensued by a degraded civilisation and young libertine generation; and an affirmative note on the need to accept life as an inevitable consequence of thrownness and multiple dislocations. Discussing Bellow, Earl Rovit observes: “It is the rooted feeling of displacement that appears to be the immutable mark of our age and not the historical events that stand in antecedence to it” (6). Born in Montreal, Canada, to parents who are Russian Jews in origin, Bellow moves with his family in 1924 to the immigrant tenement of Humboldt Park, Chicago in what looks like a long series of displacement and wandering. Falling back on the sense of otherness inherent in his Jewish sensibility, Bellow projects this theme on a wider humanist screen. It is through the character of Henderson, that the reader is introduced to another prominent feature of Bellow’s fiction; the hero’s anxiety resulting from his mental struggle for survival in an environment of ideas. As a result, the characters suffer intensely and internalise suffering as part of their destiny. Henderson says: “I am to suffering what Gray is to smoke” (260). Written in a critical time of Bellow’s life when most of those around him died, *Henderson the Rain King* (1959), is clearly an escape from the agony of loss. But in the midst of despair and alienation, comic elements emerge so as to reconcile the will to live and an awareness of death.
The background to Bellow’s literary career emerges from the postwar Jewish breakthrough that, through the New York Intellectuals, shows concern over social justice and the ethnic anxieties of the second-generation immigrants. While Bellow’s first novel, *Dangling Man* (1944), dramatizes Joseph’s state of alienation and paranoia that echoes Kafka and the French existentialists, *The Victim* (1947), based on Dostoyevsky’s *The Eternal Husband* and *The Double*, explores the damaging effect of anti-Semitism. The paranoid protagonist, Asa Leventhal, spends a long, hot summer fending off his WASP antagonist, Kirby Albee, and caring for his brother’s family. *The Victim* focuses on the idea that in the presence of anti-Semitism, denying one’s Jewish origin amounts to Sartre’s ‘bad faith.’ Like any of the postwar generation, Bellow draws heavily on Dostoyevsky who stands out as a great influence on postwar writers. *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953) combines the futile wandering of Augie with his moral growth. The picaro’s journey through Chicago of the Depression era, echoing Bellow’s youth, is meant to parody the American dream turning into a song of loss. It also reveals Bellow’s anti-modernist philosophical approach that later shapes the rest of his writing. In *Herzog* and *Mr. Sammler’s Planet*, there is the intellectual inner journey from desolation, despair and rejection of society charged with maladies of various kinds to a final compromise with the world and acceptance of its primordial ailments. The protagonist of Bellow’s *Mr. Sammler’s Planet* (1970) is an upper class Polish Jew immigrant who has survived a Holocaust traumatic experience. He is buried alive with his wife but like Phoenix he comes out of ashes and dust to live a new life. In his new life he becomes a priest strongly attached and committed to the state of Israel. Bellow’s *Herzog* (1964) is about the midlife crisis of a Jew who, victimised by a failed marriage, finds it difficult to come
to terms with the philosophical problems of existence. Herzog’s diseased mentality is typical of the post-Holocaust Jewish experience.

The torment of a gullible Jewish character who is abandoned by his own father and wife and, therefore, wanders in quest of a father figure is dramatised in Seize the Day (1956). After his failure, Wilhelm runs into a funeral that brings back to him a sense of compassion for humanity and understanding of himself. A commentary on the commodification of culture in mid-century America, Humboldt’s Gift (1975) explores the relationship of art and power that, due to materialism, kills poetic sensibility and bankrupts Western humanism. The same theme of cultural degradation occurs in The Dean’s December (1982) which, moving in its setting between Chicago and Bucharest, comments on the totalitarian agenda turning the daily life into a nightmarish experience of artificiality. The theme of the Holocaust and the suppressed memories about dead Jewish relatives haunt the protagonist of The Bellarosa Connection (1989). Bellow’s last book, Ravelstein (2000), written in a memoir form, gives a revival to the anxiety originating in the immigrant legacy touching upon two large themes: death and American Jewishness, which represent a natural denouement of a great writer approaching his death five years later (in 2005).

Bradbury considers Bellow as one of the most serious and commanding novelists, for his successful attempt “to reconcile mind, in all its resource and confusion, its fantastic fertility and unending anguish, with a life that is itself absurd [and] extravagant,” impressing the reader “not only with material forces but with ideas and forms of consciousness” (103-4). Though often criticised for misogyny and for not distancing himself so much from his autobiographical protagonists, Bellow’s quest for authentic existence and redemption demands a confrontation with
and an acknowledgement of suffering without being obliged to put on aesthetic masks in order to appease his critics.

Born in Brooklyn to Russian immigrant grocers Max and Bertha, Bernard Malamud (1914-1986) is one of the Jewish-American fiction’s most impressive talents. He always feels uneasy about being labelled as a Jewish writer for he wants his voice to go beyond the parochial spheres. The immigrant tone articulating the sorrow of being abandoned, the tragic recognition of the self, the quest for integrity, and the fight for space are evident in all his fiction. His first novel *The Natural* (1952), an allegorical baseball novel about fallen heroes, dramatises how the pursuit of ambition may cost one his humanity in a world of bad luck. But it is with the publication of *The Magic Barrel* (1958) that Malamud establishes his presence in the American Jewish Renaissance. This is a short story collection that explores a range of social issues confronting Jewish immigrants, ranging from poverty and language barriers to interracial conflicts and gaining redemption through patient endurance and suffering. Most likely, the gloomy atmosphere of Malamud’s early life in Brooklyn provides the essential backdrop for his most characteristic stories as well as the manners, language and values of his most distinctive characters.

Touching upon the mythic elements and Jewish issues, Malamud explores the themes of socio-psychological concerns like isolation and initiation. Though compared to Bellow in terms of his Yiddish imagination and drawing on Jewish traditional texts, Malamud, as Roth points out, creates characters that “live in a timeless depression and a placeless lower East side; their society is not affluent, their predicament is not cultural” (“Imagining Jews” 184). *The Assistant* (1957) probes deeply into the psyche of a suffering poor Jew for whom the gloomy sights of the city
look like an extension of the Temple’s ruins while his grocery becomes a jail where there are no jailers. It is a tale of an immigrant’s poverty that looks and feels like nobody’s else. Contextualised within the framework of social realism, the novel deals with Bober’s silent suffering in a prison-like grocery surrounded by apathy leading to his moral transformation. *The Fixer* (1966) intends to redefine the myth of Jewishness and Jewish dilemma in a wider context of human community. It depicts the ordeal of a poor Jewish man, Yakov Bok, who leaves the ghetto, pretending to be Christian in order to better his life but his miscalculated movement leads him into trouble. Based on the real story of Mendel Beiles, the book deals with the anti-Semitic trial and investigation of Bok who will never confess despite humiliation. *The Tenants* (1971) presents a stark vision of a deteriorating racial relation between Jews and Blacks epitomised by the conflict between the Jewish protagonist, Harry Lesser, and the Afro-American anti-Semite, Willie Spearmint, as they put up together in a dilapidated building. The whole story is an extended metaphor of America itself; both Lesser and Willie are inscribed as ‘other’ and both are squatters endangered at any moment by the landlord’s eviction. While *Dubin’s Lives* (1979) emphasises men’s capacity to transcend suffering through art, *God’s Grace* (1982) has an apocalyptic tone about the end of human history that reveals Malamud’s dark vision of the post-Holocaust world.

Edward Lewis Wallant (1926-1962) was born in New Haven where the stories of the old country (Russia) he learnt from his grandfather, Mendel, shapes his later imaginative flashbacks of Russia in his first novel *The Human Season* (1960). Discharged from service in World War II, Wallant worked in commercial art (illustrator). A dominating motif in his four published novels is the journey from
spiritual numbness to redemptive pain. Each of his protagonists is first pushed into moral anesthesia caused by a nightmarish experience of barbaric culture and human savagery and then brought again to sensation no matter how torturing it feels. *The Human Season* (1960) deeply explores the realms of loss and memory in the life of a plumber who metaphorically stands helpless to cleanse the filth of existence heaped upon him. Berman’s existential dilemma reaches a critical point with the death of his wife whereas his memory moves backward to an earlier diasporic experience as a Russian Jew posing the question of how an embittered past can appease a heartbreaking present.

Almost the first Jewish-American novel that poignantly includes the Holocaust as a major theme, Wallant’s most critically acclaimed novel *The Pawnbroker* (1961) tells the story of Sol Nazerman, a Holocaust survivor. Nazerman appears lost into a silent agony and wistfully torn between the torturing memory of failing the Nazis’ victims, including his wife and children, and the present realities of living among people unable to imagine the evil experienced by him. For Mark Zaitchik et al., the “pawnshop is the perfect metaphor for Sol’s existence: the randomness of unrelated objects; the tattered fragments of identities, disconnected from what they won and what they are” (452). It is the same tone of movement from desolation to participation that prevails Wallant’s two other novels *The Tenants of Moonbloom* (1963) and *Children at the Gate* (1964). From an apathetic collector of rent and a deliverer of ice cream to hospital sick children, both Norman and Angelo in these two novels respectively are awakened to life full of agony. In all Wallant’s novels, for the characters to be redeemed, the history that haunts the soul should be
exorcised. Compared to Kafka’s, Wallant’s characterisation is often appreciated for
the profound penetration into human psychology.

After this survey and since the term ‘postwar’ is somehow elusive covering a
wide span of time, the present study shall be limited to the Jewish-American fiction
written in the period from 1947 to 1970 representing the nearly immediate postwar
era. Restricting the postwar period aimed by this research to the two decades
following World War II is justified by a number of reasons. First, the postwar era is
characterised by the existentialist mood dominating various aspects of cultural life
including literature as a direct result of the unimaginable horrors of the war and its
mass annihilation of man and nature. Second, the atrocities of the Holocaust and the
establishment of the state of Israel represent two landmarks in the history of the
Jewish people and a turning point in the Jewish thinking. Needless to mention, the
annihilation of the European Jewry leaves its deep impact on the Jewish psyche and
reinforces the old anxieties among Jews. Third, the 1950s and 1960s are often
referred to as the golden age of Jewish American literature after which a remarkable
decline starts taking place. This is Irving Howe’s view who in his introduction to
*Jewish American Stories* (1977) declares that the Jewish American writing, having
found “its choice and its passion at exactly the moment it approache[d] disintegration” (3), has “probably moved past its high point” (16). But, taking all
these justifications into consideration, the abundance of material available on postwar
Jewish American novels makes it necessary to be selective. It is, thus, quite
reasonable to select only Bellow, Malamud and Wallant for the study.

Though Bellow, Malamud and Wallant live and write during a period when
their ethnic identity is influenced by the wider forces of American life, the travail of
previous generations remains a persistent background to their works. The characters they create, therefore, are anxious about integrating into a nation that, despite the horrors of the Holocaust, still harbour strong prejudices against Jews or half-sane, half conscious paranoids detached from the present moment and attached to the memory of a horrible past. Morris Dickstein discusses how postwar writers “portrayed Jews as exemplary victims or dark symbols of man’s inhumanity to man, or delved into problems of assimilation and barriers to full acceptance” which echoes their need to gain a foothold in mainstream literature. True, they let themselves be taken by the currents of modernism and the existential mood, but the Jewish character remains a metaphor on which their philosophical ideas and preoccupations could be projected. And doing so, their works, with varying contexts and themes, can never hide the Holocaust which, according to Morris Dickstein “went largely unmentioned but seeped into every line” (111-12) as well as the history of their people.

Perceptibly, these writers define the flux of the New World in terms of space, time, and ethnic identity. They might not be the direct victims of displacement, but their literary outcome is an embodiment of the second-generation postmemory that allows them to freely contemplate the past and, thus, imaginatively retrace its entangled twists. But reconstructing an embittered past means reliving and recreating its horrors. They, therefore, can never imagine their present without envisioning the world-wide abyss of anti-Semitism and ever-lurking persecution. No wonder then if the people dwelling in the midst of that tense atmosphere expecting danger to fall any moment are, to greater or lesser degrees, afflicted with psychological disintegration. Bellow, Malamud, and Wallant create central or minor characters who either suffer, at certain stages of the novel, from neurotic symptoms or develop reactive delusions
of persecution in response to the overwhelming sense of insecurity. And to cope with these external and internal forces besieging the self and threatening to annihilate it, memory becomes a significant factor that gives form and meaning to the acute feelings of loss and victimisation. Memory, as tackled in the postwar Jewish American context, offers an alternate space when the actual one is reduced to an arena of encounters.

Discernibly, Bellow, Malamud, and Wallant incorporate stories which have self-conscious protagonists epitomising the physical and mental agonies they face as victims of injustice. These protagonists are too painfully aware of their own existence that they live in their own minds and to such an extent that their existence is quite unbearable. No hope for deliverance from suffering can put an end to the journey of anguish because their very acute awareness of self brings not deliverance but suffering itself. In this respect, they render themselves as part of a ceaseless historical existence in strange environments. Hence, while the Jewish character in their works is obliged to cope with the circumstances as they unfold, he/she can never evade the aftermath of his/her people’s disasters. Apart from being cast away by a brutal past, almost all their protagonists appear in the present moment deprived of intimate familial atmospheres. Minutest details about their domestic wandering reflect the emotional emptiness in which they dwindle. The writers are conscious of the role the past guilt plays in their protagonists, so they make use of it as a motivating force. That sense of guilt occurs as a consequence of survival assuming, in Edward Gloves’ words, “a highly specialized form of anxiety which operates internally” (qtd. in Lewin 14). In this respect, they are influenced by Dostoevsky. Their heroes suffer the loss of loved ones and go on overloaded with the burden of living. As a result, these
protagonists punish themselves by creating an alternative world of memory that keeps them aloof and detached from the surrounding.

But what links the works of these three writers most with the Jewish tradition is the theme of suffering that hides under its folds not only a direct cause of homelessness, displacement or anti-Semitic atmosphere, but also a history and traditions that put suffering as a condition of moral transgression. In other words, suffering for Jews has a distinguishable meaning with masochistic character and dogmatic foundation. Morris Bober, in Malamud’s *The Assistant* explains: “if a Jew don’t suffer for the law, he will suffer for nothing” (125). Bellow, Malamud, and Wallant are Jewish in the sense that their work is informed by the traditions, values, and hidden accents. Their interest, however, is not only in the manifestations of suffering but also in its implied meanings; the character that owes much to the postwar existential climate. Wandering becomes a cause as well as the product of suffering. This is not to claim that these writers are existentialists, it is only to suggest that the existential mood and the atmosphere of alienation penetrate deeply into the post Holocaust mindset.

There are a number of existentialist elements incorporated into the novels the most prominent of which include: the essential absurdity of characters’ action does not rationally fit into the world in which they live; the impression that one can determine his/her own character and fate by a series of existential choices that mark his/her limitation as well as potential. The theme of alienation, closely related to the existential mood, can be detected throughout their postwar novels arising naturally out of the Jewish experience which is the product of two cultures even before coming to America. living in America does not help the Jew evade the consciousness of exile,
the haunting of memory and the label of a stranger belonging to minority. The process of acculturation does not erase the borderline, so Jews believe that they cannot be integrated completely because they do not share the same heritage. Combining the contemporary currents of Freudian psychology, existentialism and diasporic alienation, the writers never fail to utilise the Jewish-American background as a fictional framework without departing from the ethnic sensibility and subject. Leslie Fiedler is right when he declares: “All flights, the Jewish experience teaches, are from one exile to another. . . . Feeling exclusion in the Old World, the immigrant discovers loneliness in the New World” (*Waiting for the End* 84).

Self-analytic investigation, which becomes a motif characterising the novels written in the postwar, is best exemplified in the works of these three writers. In this respect, Malamud and Wallant are influenced by Bellow who can move the focus from the outside manifestations of torment to internal intimations of anxiety. “Saul Bellow,” notes Sanford Sternlicht, “was instrumental in moving the focus of the Jewish American novel from physical action to the sphere of the often angst-ridden intellect” (10). Bellow’s novel *Dangling Man* (1944) represents the turning point in which that metamorphosis in Jewish American fiction occurs. Thereafter, the Jewish protagonists, in the novels of Bellow, Malamud and Wallant are individuals indulging in two metaphorical journeys: an external journey of painful struggle to resist enslaving power surrounding them; and an internal journey of a consciousness that seeks to understand the relationship between the self and the world. Ultimately, they fail in the sense that they can never stand alone, but attain partial success by understanding and accepting themselves in their anguished existential conditions. Only from this perspective is their suffering positive.
The present study precisely accounts for the aforementioned aspects of the postwar Jewish-American novel. It further highlights such major preoccupations as the Holocaust, anti-Semitism, and the exile experience, situating them in a wider discourse of the Diasporic Angst and highlighting the feelings of alienation, marginality and homeless insecurity as byproducts. By examining different aspects of the Jewish diasporic experience as exemplified by the contexts created by Bellow, Malamud and Wallant, the thesis proposes to show how the historical uprootedness inflicted on a race maintains itself in the consciousness of the successive generations resulting in anxiety—an existential and psychological phenomenon that assumes several manifestations. Dealing, however, with a genre that covers a broad area of time and a huge body of literature makes the selection process a must. This is why the study focuses on eight novels, while the analytical approach is confined to the themes mentioned above. Bellow’s The Victim, Mr. Sammler’s Planet and Herzog; Malamud’s The Assistant, The Fixer and The Tenants; Wallant’s The Pawnbroker and The Human Season constitute altogether the main body of the novels investigated. However with the purpose of augmenting the study, occasional references to other works by the same authors or by others might be incorporated when there is a need for comparison.

While diasporic and existentialist elements come together to shape the theoretical foundation of the study, the analytical approach relies for examining the consciousness of writers and characters on the phenomenological views of Heidegger, Sartre and even some of the views adopted by the Critics of Consciousness. Primarily, Angst can be analysed only in terms of being a mental response to external phenomena that are endowed with life by the presence of consciousness. In diaspora
consciousness, Angst often manifests itself as a byproduct of the mind experiencing
the problematics of time and space. Hence, analysing the novels as intentional
experiences of the extrinsic phenomena entails examining the consciousness of
characters. This leads ultimately to conceive the author’s own consciousness of the
realistic social and psychological surrounding as projected on fictional characters and
scenery. The methodology of the study, in this respect, draws heavily on the
phenomenological criticism of Geneva school, especially that of J. Hillis Miller. What
is important, therefore, is how the novels represent the deep structures of the author’s
consciousness and its relationship to the real world. The interpretation of fictional
reality is sought out in the recurrent themes and images concerning time and space
and reflecting the problematic relationship between the self and others. The study
presupposes that each scene, interior monologue, or a passage describing characters
or events, whether presented from the point of view of the narrator or some imagined
character, defines a certain relationship between the mind and the world. In the words
of Miller, since the novel “is the embodiment in words of a certain very special way
of experiencing the world,” analysing its content has to reveal “the persistence of
certain obsession, problems, and attitudes” (Charles Dickens x). Taken all together,
the fictional fragments reconstruct not only a single author’s worldview but also a
shared period-consciousness.

But no study can limit its investigation to a single method while approaching a
broad spectrum of contexts. The present one is no exception. It is inspired by Terry
Eagleton’s invitation for a multiplicity of methodology, “perhaps we should celebrate
the plurality of critical methods, adopt a tolerable ecumenical posture and rejoice in
our freedom from the tyranny of any single procedure” (175). Since the literary object
can never be stable, the unity of the method approaching it is illusory and elusive. The multi-faceted theoretical framework, the various contexts of the novels examined, the plurality of writers, and the hyphen itself necessitate the employment of more than one approach. As a result, it has been important for the central phenomenological method to border on psychological and rhetorical analysis at some junctures of the study.

The topic shall be thoroughly examined by way of analysing it into its major rubrics and devoting a whole chapter to each rubric taking into account how the arrangement of chapters reflect a logical development in the existential pattern of Jewish Diasporic Angst from the underlying reasons to the cultural and psychological outcome. Perhaps the most important decision and challenge regarding the framework of the study is to incorporate discussion of authors and texts in broad conceptual chapters rather than in the traditional format of devoting whole chapters to individual writers or specific texts. The organising principle means that the same novel is to be discussed in several different contexts, since any text is not primarily woven round and does not exclusively stick to a single subject. Furthermore, such a method supports the main argument which proposes to examine how the consciousness of a group of writers sharing common ethnic and historical background can beget similar imaginative and fictional preoccupations. The thesis is divided into six chapters including the Introduction and the Conclusion.

Chapter II discusses the theme of Displacement focusing on the innovative but diverse manners in which Bellow, Malamud and Wallant tackle it. The representation of the predicament of displacement is posited through a number of thematic metaphors that resonate the experience of thrownness and consider the
factors of space determining authentic existence. In principle, the chapter focuses on two rubrics: the state of unhomeliness and what it entails of insecurity, wandering (physical and mental) and the different facets of alienation; and the present experiences of loss and dispossession that reinforce the history of displacement.

Chapter III is devoted to investigating the theme of Entrapment by way of analysing the leitmotifs of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust that unfold explicitly and implicitly throughout the body of postwar Jewish-America writing. The chapter explores the atrocities of anti-Semitism not only as rendered in the physical act of assault and murder but also in the reactive consciousness of the characters. Whether they are direct or indirect victims of that history, the characters feel sensitive to whatever belongs to or is associated with the Holocaust. The layers of persecution, initiated by a hostile world, get reproduced within the internal spheres of mindscape.

Chapter IV brings to the fore the concept of Fragmented Psyche by emphasising the psychological problematic resulting from the protagonists’ struggle to come to terms either with a hostile world pushing them to the margin and conspiring against their dreams or with a fragmented psyche in a constant quest for integrity. Psychological fragmentation encompasses the symptoms that occur either as a result of posttraumatic stress disorder and intensive exposure to suffering or due to an exaggerated anxiety that colours the characters’ outlook with various delusions of persecution. In both cases, however, the Jewish character is involved in an internal struggle to define the self in the midst of psychological chaos.

The theme of Memory is examined in Chapter V by means of illustrating how surviving death, trauma, or past torment entails dwelling in the alternative space of memory. In this respect, the encounter with death, the dogma of suffering as an
aspect of belonging, and the empty places that have been once occupied by the lost are all stimulators. This chapter is chiefly concerned with delineating the prominent position that memory occupies in the Jewish American context. Represented at both personal and collective levels, memory is presented as either a survivor memory or postmemory in terms of how near or far the past is viewed.

The Conclusion attempts to link the various aspects of the Diasporic Angst as portrayed in the rhetorical treatment of the novels to an underlying ideological scheme within which the novels have evolved. The ultimate findings prove how the writers represent the flux of the hyphen and the Angst of in-between position through a number of embodied anxieties as their own contribution to and contemplation of a collective history. Diasporic Angst as exemplified in the postwar Jewish-American context does not always mean rejection of diaspora. It rather implies accepting diasporic status as a rich presence of absence where one is an eternal improviser. Authenticity, in this context, means asserting the self by accepting the responsibility of being-in-the-world of diaspora.
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