unlucky situation, Malamud too ceases to caricature him and makes him victorious in the end.

Chapter V

Literary Devices: Malamud and the Job Tradition

The works of Malamud have much in common with the Hebraic tradition in the use of literary devices. While several of the devices employed in Malamud's fiction are different from those in The Book of Job both make use of elements characteristic of their tradition, though in Malamud they find expression in modified forms. The purpose of The Book of Job is far from giving a picture of the life of the Jewish community, or even of the protagonist Job. It is rather to give an image of an ideal human being in relation to God and to man. This calls for selectivity of subjects matter as well as the careful use of a variety of literary devices. Literary devices such as the use of a prose-poetry-prose sequence, effective imagery and the creation of a fictional milieu raises the pure didactic story of The Book of Job to the status of a literary piece. The images, metaphor, tones of feeling, perspectives, transitions, clashes of view, the use of existential questions, key words, and irony are all used in such a way that the real Job emerges in a sense, as a textual construct in the book. Malamud's stories too share these features of selectivity of subject and method, and its implications. The author of Job, it seems, takes an old epic account as a framework for the dialogue. John E. Hartley in The Book of Job says: "It[ The Book of Job] has a very ancient substratum that possibly goes back to the pre-patriarchal era. The author of Job took over the ancient form and adapted it as the framework for the dialogue"(64). Therefore an epic substratum underlies the prologue and epilogue. Epic, in the strict use of the
term by literary critics, is a long narrative poem on a great and serious subject, related in an elevated style, and centered on a heroic or quasi-divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation, or the human race. The traditional epics, which are also called primary epics or folk epics were shaped from historical and legendary materials which had developed in the oral traditions. The literary or secondary epics were composed in imitation of the traditional form.

The literary epic is the most ambitious of poetic types, making strong demands on the poet's knowledge, invention, and skill to sustain the scope, grandeur, and variety of a poem. Though the author of The Book of Job is anonymous, some insight into his knowledge and character can be gained from his great work. He can be definitely numbered among the ancient wise men who were interested in right conduct. They advocated a disciplined way of life and believed that their faithful adherence to the teachings and laws would bring prosperity and a long life. In their quest for knowledge they had a keen interest in the literature of other countries. The author of Job was a wise man. He was skilled in the use of proverbs (6: 5-6); rhetorical questions (21:29); and enigmatic riddles (5:5). He ran the whole gamut of tones: he could be coarse (15:2-3) or vehement (16:18), gruesome (17:14), or humorous (17:16), tender (14:13), or passionate (19:13-19). He used all the shades of irony from earthly sarcasm (12:2), to heavenly persiflage (38:3).

The author's knowledge of nature, both plant and animal life was extensive (14:7-10). He used five different words for lion (4:10-11). The series of animal portraits in 38:39-39:30 is a magnificent piece, proving his extensive knowledge of the habits of wild animals. He was familiar with precious gems, using thirteen different words for them in 28:15-19, including five words for gold. He describes the formation of a human embryo quite picturesquely in 10:8-11. He was very observant of weather patterns (7:9), and the constellations (38:31). He enjoyed contemplating the created order and so he
composed the Yahweh speeches around the order, beauty and marvels of nature. He knew the ancient mining practices according to 28:1-11. Knowledgeable about hunting and trapping, he employs six different words for traps in 18:8-10. The author was well informed about foreign cultures, particularly Egypt. He refers to the pyramids in 3:14; the speed of swift skiffs made out of papyrus in 9:26; the hippopotamus in 40:15-24 and leviathan or the crocodiles in 40:25-41:26 which are commonly associated with Egypt. The parallels between the Book of Job and literature from Ugarit show that he was acquainted with many of the Canaanite myths and legends. He had also a deep interest in spiritual matters. He alluded to the myth of the primordial man in 15: 7-8. In accord with the Wisdom tradition in general, he valued the fear of Yahweh as the foundation of true worship and as the basis for upright behaviour as in 1:1,8.

The literary epics are highly conventional poems which share some common features. The first is that the hero in an epic poem is a figure of great national or even cosmic importance. In the Book of Job, the hero, Job, is the favourite of Yahweh, the leader of the tribesmen and the envy of Satan. Job represents the entire human race and his sufferings are the sufferings of the man in general. The author thereby masterfully composes a literary piece in which Job is representative of all who suffer. Thus he is 'the universal man' of cosmic importance. The second feature is that the setting of the piece is worldwide or even larger. The scope of The Book of Job is cosmic, for it takes place on earth and in heaven. The third is that the action involves superhuman deeds in battle. There is a battle in the heavenly court between Satan and Yahweh disputing on the purity and innocence of Job. Satan journeys through the earth to tempt Job and Satan is frustrated by the intervention of Yahweh. The fourth is that God and other supernatural beings take an interest or active part. Yahweh takes an active part in humanizing and restoring Job. The fifth is that an epic poem is a ceremonial performance, and is narrated in a grand style. The literary style in The Book of Job corresponds to that of an old epic.
containing alliteration (22:9-10); and assonance (28:1-2); parallelism (28:12), symbolic use of colours, numbers and persons; vivid expressions; symmetrical patterns (1:6-12) and (2:1-7). Job heightens his complaint by recounting the marvelous way a baby is made. For the heightening purpose, the author uses imagery:

Did you not pour me out like milk, / and curdle me like cheese,/ clothe me with skin and flesh,/ knit me together with bones and sinews?(10:10) They send forth their infants like sheep; / their children dance about.(21:11) The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; / its features stand out like those of a garment.(38:14)

Many details place the prose account in the Patriarchal tradition. For instance, wealth is measured in animals and servants (1:3). The author of Job had an interest in antiquity. His knowledge of patriarchal history is reflected in his ability to set his work in the patriarchal period. The reference to five hundred yoke of oxen plowing fields suggests an agricultural way of life and the reference to living in a tent in 18:6 points to a nomadic way of life. The author has used archaic names for God and judged a character by adherence to a patriarchal standard of ethics. Thus the author must have been an avid student of the patriarchal tradition.

The narrative of the book follows the charming manner of a folk-tale. The effectiveness of the poems is due largely to their being framed within the context of the folk story. The story is located in Edom, the area southeast of the dead sea on the border of the Arabian desert, it is possible that the Job legend originated in Edomite territory around Teman. The author of the poems appropriated the old folk-story as a literary framework within which to place his poetry. Ezekiel mentions Job together with Daniel as legendary wise and righteous men. (Ezek. 14:14, 20) Daniel was celebrated in Canaanite legend.
now known to us in the Ras Shamra literature. Similarly, the story of Job must have circulated orally for many years before it was written down as we now have it.

The characterization is developed through speeches and a person's response to an action. The narrative opens in epic style, "there was a man". Two sets of word pairs such as "blameless and upright" and "feared God and shunned evil," characterize Job as a man of innocence. The epic account is composed in the beautiful, simple, compact style typical of early Hebrew prose. Narratives and speeches are uniform; thus a small variance in wording yields maximum effect. The characterization of Job in the prologue, especially Yahweh's evaluation of his servant, is essential for a proper understanding of the speeches. The epilogue is a vital part of the message of the book for, it demonstrates that God seeks the ultimate good of his servant despite the tragedies he has suffered. It is also impossible to strip away the prologue and epilogue or the prose part from the dialogue or the poetry part. The poetry cannot exist in such a form without the prologue setting the scene for its dialogical questioning. The prose sections are composed for its specific literary effects. Then a series of poetic exchanges are set in motion between Job and his three friends in a pattern as Job-Eliphaz; Job-Bildad; Job-Zophar; Job-Eliphaz and so on, until three cycles are completed. At this point Job reverts to speech in the mode of soliloquy (3:1-26 and 29:1-31:37) and addresses himself to the enigma of wisdom (28), and its apparent inaccessibility to humankind. This hymn to wisdom enhances the work, coincides with the author's style, stands at the place of a major transition in the book and contributes to the theme of wisdom that reverberates throughout the book. Here Job sums up his own life in a retrospective affirmation of his past life (29) through the imagery "royalty" (30), an unblinking recognition of his present condition through the imagery "slavery" (31) and an integrative oath before God.
The Yahweh speech can be identified as a hymn of praise to God. It is a mixture of questions and descriptive sentences. The existential questions which pervade The Book of Job form a major rhetorical feature. The mixture adds variety. The two speeches of Yahweh address different issues. The first speech is all about the wisdom of God in the creation. The second speech challenges Job to surrender his case before the all powerful ruler of the cosmos. The characterization of Elihu, the new comer, as an angry man as well as a schlemiel offers a comic relief to the tension built up by Job’s solemn oath. At long last Yahweh, who has remained silent all the while speaks. The Yahweh speeches give an effect of heightening of the experience and fit the dramatic action of the book. The two Yahweh speeches are an integral part of the structure and the message of the Book of Job. Both the divine questions to Job and Job’s questions to God are resolved in a covenating convergence which implies transformed perspectives on the character of God and on the status and vocation of humankind in the world.

Another prominent feature is the repetition of key words. The frequent indication of Hebrew words in transliteration is meant to enable the reader to appreciate this feature somewhat more fully. The words in Yahweh’s opening question 2:3 exactly repeats 1:8, adding “he still holds fast his integrity(tumma), although you moved me against him, to destroy him without cause(hinnam).” The key words tumma and hinnam have their force here because of the way they have previously been used. Yahweh began in 1:6-12 by drawing attention to the fact that Job was blameless as in 1:1. Using the expression “feared God” which in 1:1 is synonymous with tam, the Satan in 1:6-12 questioned whether job’s piety was free or hinnam. In 1:6-12 Yahweh owns responsibility for the calamity, whether or not the Satan acted as executor. Yet Job maintains his integrity, tumma, which arises in and from his relation to God. Later we see that his integrity is grounded in his sense of dependency and gratitude. Another feature is Chiasms or envelope construction or inversion wherein words, images, and themes occur in
sequences such as 'abba' or 'abcba'. Somewhat related to this feature is a tendency to open and close passages with the same word, image or other means. Zophar's speech in 20:2-3 discloses a chiastic sequence. My disquieted thoughts give me answer, (a) because of the agitation within me. (b) I listen to your shameful rebuke, (b) and the spirit of my frame answers me (a). Zophar's frame is his embodied self. The spirit of my frame refers to the way in which his cultural feelings, thoughts and values are deeply ingrained to form his self. The protest of his whole being, the spirit of his frame, in its agitation gives him his answer to Job. The placing of the challenge at the conclusion of the first speech and at the head of the second speech of Yahweh form a Chiasm which is designed to heighten the impact of Yahweh speech.

Hebrew poetry is characterized by varieties of parallelism. A unit may have three sometimes four lines, the bicolon is the rule in Hebrew poetry. The second line which receives greater emphasis, completes the thought begun in the first line. It defines, restricts, or carries forward the idea of the first line. By juxtaposing words and phrases, new clarity is given to an otherwise neglected, overlooked or forgotten concept. Often only parts of the lines are synonymous, while the other parts either expand the thought or set up a contrasting idea. At times the first line expresses an obvious truth and the second line presents an idea not so obvious, but one made more understandable because of the parallel with the accepted idea. The second line does not merely repeat the first, but develops it in some way.

The text is structured symmetrically composed of sets of twos, threes or fours. The prologue is composed of six scenes grouped into three sets of twos. The number three is prominent in the dialogue, three speakers each deliver three speeches in a three fold cycle. In each cycle Job has three responses. Job's avowal of innocence also has three parts. In the next two sets, the number four dominates. In order to probe deeply into the issue of the suffering righteous and its attendant issue of theodicy, the author has drawn on
numerous genres in the composition of the speeches. Job is a dramatized lament. Legal language is incorporated into the lament in order to heighten the intensity of Job’s complaint and his accusations against God. The skilful blending of genres in Job’s speeches yields a splendid result (7:1-3). Afterwards he draws on the language of a law-suit to confront God. The message of the Book of Job is presented on two levels. First on the basis of the book’s dramatic framework and second in the light of its themes. A consideration of the dramatic framework of The Book of Job offers great insight into the book’s message. The author penetrates deeply into the issue of human suffering by setting up many sharp contrasts. The interplay of these contrasts gives dramatic movement to the story: the basic tension between one’s belief in God and one’s personal experience. In the prologue two dimensions of human existence, one’s belief in God and one’s personal experience, are in harmony for Job: Job fears God./ God blesses Job. Multiple aspects of human suffering are presented here as themes. The Book of Job teaches that a person can triumph over suffering through faith in God.

The basic literary unit of wisdom literature is the mashal usually translated “proverb”. It is derived from a verb meaning “rule” so that mashal was originally “a ruling saying,” an authoritative word. It is often a statement which conveys the wisdom of the ages in capsule form and as such commands assent. It has also another meaning “be like,” and thus means a “likeness” or “comparison.” This verb occurs several times in the Hebraic literature and has cognates of similar meaning in other Semitic languages. Such proverbs as “Like mother, like daughter” (Ezek.16:44) and “Like vinegar to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him” (Prov.10:26), explicitly convey the notion of comparison, as does “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord” (Gen.10:9), which is clearly a mashal. In the popular proverb “Is Saul also among the prophets?” (1 Sam.10:11), the point is simply that Saul’s behaviour resembles that of the ecstastics. In the majority of the instances the mashal does not carry the connotation of likeness, but this does
not necessarily deny such etymology. It indicates rather that this word, like so
many others both ancient and modern, passed through an extensive
development of meaning in which the original connotation was obscured or
altogether lost.

Often the *mashal* is a short popular saying. These are widely scattered
through Hebraic literature. Some well recognized examples are: “The fathers
have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” (*Eze. 18:2;*
*Jer. 31:29*); Out of the wicked comes forth the wickedness(*I Sam. 24:13*); The
days grow long, and every vision comes to naught(*Ez. 12 : 22*); Physician,
heal yourself (*Lk. 4:23*); The fool speaks folly(*Is. 32:6*). The polished versions
of mashal is seen in *Proverb* 10:1-22;16;25-29; *Eccl. 9: 17-10:20 . “A wise son
makes a glad father,/ but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother”(*10:1*).
Sometimes the mashal is a taunt song, a word of mocking, scornful derision
directed against the enemies of Yahweh. “You will take up this taunt against
the king of Babylon: How the oppressor has ceased, the insolent fury ceased!/
The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked,/ the scepter of rulers,/ that smote
the people s in wrath/with unceasing blows,/ that ruled the nations in
anger/with unrelenting persecution” (*Is. 14:4-6*). Again it is a byword, a
reproach against those who have turned away from Yahweh and thus have
made themselves a horrible example to others. “ And you shall become a
horror, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples where the Lord will
lead you away”(*Deut. 28:37*). Marshal in Ezekiel is sometimes an allegory.
The story of meat boiling in a cauldron, 24:3-14, is introduced as a mashal ;
that of the eagle and the plánts, 17:2-10, is called a riddle and an allegory. It is
also a more lengthy saying or discourse. The speeches of Job (27; 1; 29:1) is an
example. There is longer wisdom address also. Most of Job is of this type. The
beautiful wisdom poem of *Job* 28 is an example. Thus we see that the selective
use of mashal in Job is for the artistic development of the literary piece.
Malamud uses the Hebraic device of *mashal* and has used it in appropriate places, giving meaning beyond the letter of the words. For example Shmuel while speaking of charity says, “Charity you can give even when you haven’t got”(11). Yakov thinks of his father in law that he lives miraculously even though he has no money, “He who gave us teeth will give us bread”(12). While leaving Shtetl, he exchanges the decrepit cow with Shmuel, though he doesn’t like it. He thinks: “A father-in-law’s blood is thicker than water”(12). In the conversation between Yakov and Shmuel, Malamud selectively introduces mashal like sayings: “I’d sell my last shirt to be a millionaire” (14); “change your place, change your luck” (15); “Charity saves from death” (16); “Afterwards your ox will calve” (34); “A fearful wolf should stay out of the forest” (36); “Blessed are they who put their trust in God” (19). Following the Hebraic tradition, almost all the novels of Malamud open with the name of the protagonist. The Fixer opens: “From the small crossed window of his room above the stable in the brickyard, Yakov Bok saw people in their long overcoats running somewhere early that morning, everybody in the same direction” (7).

Hebraic tradition is replete with ethical symbols and moral stances. In the Hebraic tradition, the word “rose” evokes images of beauty and love. In Hebraic tradition the flowers are used to show the life and the advent of spring. Isaiah sings that “a noble flower of Juda from tender roots has sprung and a rose from the stem of Jesse has blossomed.” The rose of grace and beauty of which Isaiah says is Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Christ is the flower she brings. Thus symbols make the Hebraic language rich and powerful. Without symbols certain elements of the Biblical sense can not be communicated. Through the symbolism, the eternal things are conveyed to the finite mind of man.

The use of number three dominates in the tradition. The Book of Job is structured and composed of sets of two threes and fours. The prologue is
composed of six scenes grouped into three sets. The number three is prominent in the dialogue; three speakers each deliver three speeches in a three fold cycle. In each cycle Job has three responses. Job’s avowal of innocence has three parts. Seven too is considered as a magical number in the Hebrew tradition. Job has “seven sons and three daughters” (1: 2). He has also seven thousand cattle and three thousands camels. Job has three friends (2: 11). The Chaldeans form three companies (1: 17) to take the camels. In restoration he gets once more seven sons and three daughters (42: 13). Numbers often have symbolical significance in the Hebraic literature. Certain numbers have symbolic value apart from the obvious meaning of the context. Derek Williams, in *New Concise Bible Dictionary* says:

The idea that numbers had mystical or magical meaning may be traced to the Gematria of the Hellenistic period, which ascribed hidden meaning based on the numerical value of individual letters; later the Masoretes would employ these symbolic values in an elaborate system for checking the accuracy of their copies. (769)

Persons are also sometimes symbolic in the Hebraic literature. The name Lord stands for “I am who I am”, (Exod. 3: 14) Jesus for “Salvation” and Christ for “Anointed”. Among many other symbolic Biblical names are Abram, “exalted father”; Abraham, “father of a multitude”; Jacob, “supplanter”; Israel, “God supplies”; Moses, “drawn out”; David, “beloved”; Solomon, “peaceable”; Immanuel, “God with us”; Peter, “rock” and the name Job when related to Hebrew, means “the enemy of God” but when related to Arabic root it means “return or repent”, meaning the “penitent one”.

In the Hebraic *Old Testament* tradition, almost all the stories introduce the protagonists in the opening sentence. In *The Book of Joshua*, the name
Joshua is introduced in the opening sentence: “After the death of the Lord’s servant Moses, the Lord spoke to Moses’ helper, Joshua, son of Nun.” Isaiah is introduced as the son of Amos; and Jeremiah as the son of Hilkiah; Ezekiel as the son of Buzi; Hosea son of Beeri etc., in the opening sentences. Job is introduced as “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright” (Job 1:1).

The symbols and images used by Malamud in his novels have strong suggestions of the Hebraic tradition. In *The Assistant* black and brown are used to denote poverty and hunger. “He [Frank] was young, dark bearded, wore an old brown rain-stained hat, cracked patent leather shoes and a long black overcoat that looked as if it had been lived in” (29). To emphasize Helen’s role in the redemption of Frank, Malamud describes her in terms of flowers and birds. Like Aphrodite, Helen leaves a floral fragrance about her in the air. Therefore Frank is agonized to leave her, and “the floral fragrance, she left in the air” (184). After his assault of Helen, he apologizes. That night:

He dreamed he was standing in the snow outside her window. His feet were bare yet not cold. He had waited a long time in the falling snow, and some of it lay on his head and had all but frozen his face; but he waited longer until, moved by pity, she opened the window and flung something out.... saw that it was a white flower, surprising to see in winter time. Frank caught it in winter time. Frank caught it in his hand. As she had tossed the flower out through the partly opened window, ... the window was shut. (185)

This flower, Frank desires to receive from Helen, is her love and Helen herself. At Bober’s funeral, Helen throws a rose onto the coffin and Frank is so curious to observe the flower that he falls into the grave. At another time he
carves a board into something: "To his surprise it turned into a bird flying. It was shaped off balance but with a certain beauty. He thought of offering it to Helen but it seemed too rough a thing" (192). The bird, he tries to offer to Helen is his soul itself. Afterwards he refuses it thinking of his unworthiness, of his being. Next he carves her a flower, a rose, appropriately a flower and it came out a rose starting to bloom: "When it was done it was delicate in the way its petals were opening yet firm as a real flower" (192). He gives it to her to atone for his sin against her. But she throws it in the garbage. Malamud, in the end, fuses these elements together for emphasis. Malamud associates Helen with flowers and birds, especially the rose, symbol of love and femininity:

He tossed it[ the wooden rose ]into the air, and it turned into a real flower that he caught in his hand. With a bow he gave it to Helen, who had just came out of the house. "Little sister, here is your little sister the rose". From him she took it, although it was with the love and best wishes of Frank Alpine. (245-246)

Malamud makes Helen the motive and inspiration for Frank's conversion and fulfilment thereby endowing her with the characteristics of mythic fertility goddesses. Helen's role in the conversion of Frank has another significance. There is a relationship between the circumcision and ritual forms of emasculation. Peter L. Hays says in Bernard Malamud and the Critics that 'speaking of the self mutilation of the priests of Cybele, Bruno Bettelheim discusses in his Symbolic Wounds':

This example of ritual castration, and many others not mentioned here, indicates that it was exacted by maternal figures as a sign of devotion and submission on the part of their male followers .... Loeb is convinced that circumcision was originally performed as a sacrifice to a
female goddess ... He follows Barton who holds that originally all circumcision was a sacrifice to the goddess of fertility. (227)

It is because Helen loathes to marry Frank as he is "an uncircumcised dog", and Mrs. Bober doesn't approve of a non-Jew, that Frank gets circumcised as a sign of the "devotion and submission" to the law of Judaism. Frank's circumcision for love of Helen and of Judaism during the Passover, the time of propitiation, coincides with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also coincides with castration of Attis and Adonis for their lovers and fertility goddesses, Cybele and Aphrodite respectively. Helen can be compared to these fertility figures and Malamud can be said to have written modern Greek myth. Thus Malamud with religious allusion, Mediterranean mythology, sacrificial rites and fertility imagery has created a story of conversion and redemption in his own style for the artistic purpose. Malamud also uses Jewishness to suggest ethical and moral stances. The names are symbolic as it is in the tradition. In The Assistant Morris Bober stands for Moses, Frank for Francis, Alpine for mountain, the assistant for Assissi and Yakov for Jacob.

Malamud has written The Fixer in a naturalistic style. His chief distinction as an artist is his command of a literary idiom. This style is integral to the various themes of the novel. Thus in The Fixer Malamud shows the victory of Yakov's spirit by using this selective omniscient point of view that focuses his inner life. Malamud succeeds in allegorizing Yakov Bok, putting him symbolically against himself, which is the heart of his art. Malamud also uses realism and fantasy to make the character's world real. Yakov is seen speaking Yiddish to other Jews, and thinking in it as well. He is forced to use Russian with non-Jews. The ferry man finds difficulty in recognizing his accent. He assumes that he is a foreigner. "He waved his arms as though talking to a foreigner although Yakov had spoken to him in Russian" (27).
Nikolai Maximovitch tells him: “You speak well although with a provincial accent. But grammatically(38). All the officials in *The Fixer* speak the formal syntax. But Yakov while in prison speaks simple and natural language.

Malamud's early short stories also contain the elements of the Hebraic traditions. "The First Seven years" has a Hebraic and simple opening as *The Book of Job* opens: "Feld, the Shoemaker, was annoyed that his helper Sobel, was so insensitive to his reverie that he wouldn’t for a minute cease his fanatic pounding at the other bench"(3). A good many other stories begin in the same rough and ready way. "The Mourners" opens: "Kessler, formerly an egg candler lived alone on social security (17). The starting of "Take Pity" is: Davidov, the Census taker, opened the door without knocking, limped into the room and sat wearily down" (85). "The loan" varies in the form only by the position of the name "The Sweet the heady smell of Lieb’s white bread drew customers in droves long before the loaves were baked" (183). Here we experience the reappearance of the old tradition. In the opening of "Angel Levine," the Hebraic tradition echoes:

Manischevitz, a tailor, in his fifty-first year suffered many reverses and indignities. Previously a man of comfortable means, he overnight lost all he had, when his establishment caught fire and, after a metal container of cleaning fluid exploded, burned to the ground. Although Manischevitz was insured against fire, damage suits by two customers who had been hurt in the flames deprived him to every penny he had collected. (43)

Here Malamud brings out the reality of pain. His "Fanny, a good wife and mother" is really selective and makes it work. He is able to convince. In reading these lines, we enter a world of heightened experience. The subjects of his stories are always simple and ordinary people as in the novels. The themes
of spiritual growth and decay, and terrors of alienation and salvation echo the old traditional Hebraic stories.

Charles Alva Hoyt in his “The new Romanticism” published in *Bernard Malamud and the Critics* by Fields says: “One of Malamud’s strongest and best claims to enduring recognition is his instinct for myth” (174). For Malamud, myths are "endless stories" and endless story of his novels has been the conflict between the myths and the outer world. It is this theme that has occupied Malamud from the beginning of his novelistic career, and it has been the task of the heroes of his novels to see beyond myths without losing sight of them. The stance toward which Malamud moves his heroes is that of a man aware of and sustained by a mythology. Yet he is capable and willing to confront reality. At the same time he justifies and defends the myth. Malamud, in an interview with Fields, says, “...between childhood and the beginning of a writing career, I had been to college. I became interested in myth and tried to use it, among other things, to symbolize and explicate an ethical dilemma of American life” (9).

Myth is an integral part of Hebrew literature. The event of myth is not the singular event located in time and space, but the recurring event of the eternal now. Myth presents in a story the constant reality of the universe. It does not pretend that the symbol is the reality. It proposes the symbol as that which affords an insight into a reality beyond understanding. The goal of myth is truth not falsehood in Jewish tradition. The fact that myth sometimes exhibits contradictory approaches to the reality it seeks, is not in opposition to its quest for truth. In the Hebraic tradition, myth is a symbolic story that develops among a people to explain origins, customs and ideas. For example the story of Adam and Eve explains not only the creation but also the causes for dislike of snakes, pain in childbirth and toil and misery. In the Hebrew, the universal dimension of the myth is emphasized in the name Adam which means ‘mankind’. Thus the stories in the Hebraic tradition seem to be of ancient myth
and the flood story is full of mythological motif. According to *Jerome Biblical Commentary*: “Myth is defined as a symbolic form of expression together with art, language, and science. Each of these produces and posits a world of its own. Myth is an intuition and an art of belief. It seeks to impose intelligible form upon the realities that transcend experience” (1288).

The use of mythical language in Hebraic literature has long been recognized. Some allusions can be identified. The psalmist presents myth by the personalization of natural phenomena like the sun: “In them he has set a tent for the sun, / Which comes forth like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, / and like a strong man runs its course with joy its rising is from the end of the heavens/ and its circuit to the end of them; and there is nothing hid from its heat” (19:5-6).

The etiological stories are composed to explain an existing situation: The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh, and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman (Gen. 2:21-22). Ezekiel explains the myth of the chariot of Yahweh (1:4-28). Yahweh’s glory rides on a throne which surmounts the most intricate chariot whose power consists of four cherubs. Cherubium (Gen. 3:24) is known from ancient folklore as mythopological winged animals, usually with human faces and animal bodies. They appear on the thrones of kings. These cherubs form the chariot of Yahweh in the ancient myth. *Genesis* exhibits the structure of the visible universe as the Mesopotamian myth (2:2,4). Gunkel, the famous Biblicist investigated the folk mythology. The *Jerome Biblical Commentary* says that: “The investigation of the folk mythology underlying the Biblical presentation may be derived from ancient Babylonian accounts of the same phenomena” (1120).
The Book of Job has many parallels with the mythical literature of ancient Near East, which are concerned with the issue of human suffering. Some mythical Egyptian’s texts can be compared to The Book of Job. Many allusions to motifs common to them show that the author was acquainted with many of the Canaanite myths and legends. He was well informed about Egypt. His reference to the pyramids (3:14), the mention of papyrus (9:26), the Hippopotamus (40:15-24) and Leviathan, or the Crocodile (40:25), these two creatures commonly associated with Egypt. His reference to Caravan travel through the Arabian desert shows that he is aware of the Arabian myths too. He alluded to the myth of the primordial man (15:7-8).

In the dramatic framework of the Book of Job, there is a conflict between one’s belief and the personal experience. In the prologue these two dimensions are in harmony because Job fears God and God blesses Job. Though Job serves God wholeheartedly, Job continues to fear God. God permits Satan to afflict Job. Now his daily experience is no longer in harmony with the myth. He looks at the myth of Jewishness with complaints and lamentations. He even thinks that God who is the center of everything, avoids him and treats him cruelly. Initially Job mourns his plight in silence but later he bursts forth in a bitter lament (3). He begins to look at God in suspicion. Job’s three friends are troubled by the severity of Job’s affliction. They accuse him of flagrant sins. But at the end God encounters with Job and blesses him abundantly. God condemns the three friends. Job submits himself to God. Though he was in the myth in the beginning he looses it, and at the end he enters into it by submitting to God. God accepts and blesses Job and he is restored. Now he is in full harmony with the myth of Jewishness.

In the Book of Job we come across mythopoeic imagery. In the lines “Am I the sea, or a sea monster, that thou settest a guard over me?” (7:12), Job caustically asks God why he has set a guard over him. Drawing on the rich mythopoeic imagery of primordial conflict Job wonders if God is treating him
so harshly because he fears that he is a cosmic foe. In Mesopotamian mythology, the sea and its frightful inhabitant, the sea dragon were viewed as the forces of chaos or evil bent on defeating the ruling deity. Ugaritic mythology also seems to have two accounts of a cosmic battle. In the lines “out of north comes golden splendour” (37:22), the term “the north” is seen in Ugaritic mythology. The Gods held their solemn assembly on the high mountain in “the north,” Mt. Casius. Israel used this language metaphorically for the place of God’s ruling. Intertwining the terms the north and the storm both symbolic of a theophany, Elihu sees that God is about to appear from the glorious sunset. Job had seven sons and three daughters. In Ugaritic myths Baal had seven sons and three daughters. Thus we see many expressions and imagery are drawn from the earlier mythical literature.

Malamud uses Hebraic myth, images, metaphor, ritual and symbolism in his fiction and at the same time he deviates from the ancient sense of myth and appropriates it to suit his purpose. In The Assistant, we see Frank Alpine at the beginning of the novel looking at a myth—Jewishness—from the outside. He is of Italian extraction. Though he doesn’t mind robbing Morris Bober, since he is a Jew, he is good at heart. He gives a cup of water to Morris when he falls. He often thinks of St. Francis. He often thinks of the endurance of Morris Bober as a Jew. He begins to marvel at the Jew. So he asks “What I like to know is what is a Jew any way?” (123)

By the time of Morris Bober’s funeral Frank Alpine understands it partially and he gets into the mythology which has sustained the grocer in his long suffering. After the prayer, the coffin is placed in the hearse. The people are gone. Frank Alpine sits alone in the funeral parlour: “Suffering,” he thought, “is like a piece of goods. I bet the Jews could make a suit of clothes out of it” (231). But, at the end of the novel Frank has entered the mythology completely as he is aware of the truth of Jewishness. The rabbi says:
Morris Bober was to me as true Jew because he lived in the Jewish experience, which he remembered, and with the Jewish heart. He was true to the spirit of our life to want for others that which he wants also for himself. He suffered, he endured, but with hope. (229)

Now he knows the essence and truth of Jewishness. Therefore Frank Alpine gets himself circumcised and after Passover he becomes a Jew. He has become the myth itself. He begins outside a mythology and by learning the truth of it from the outside, he enters it. In most of the higher religions this in turn has become the central quest—myth that emerges from ritual. The Messiah-myth has become the narrative structure of the oracles of Judaism. The myth of Jewishness is an integral part of Malamud’s fiction. The quintessence of Jewishness is to learn to be good, honest and true through suffering. Thus it takes a moral stance and it stands for every time and for everyman.

Narrative requirements at times make Malamud seek literary devices outside the Hebraic tradition while dealing with subjects which are essentially of that tradition. This mode is nothing other than the modernization of the pastoral, a putting of the complex into the simple. He aims to express “something fundamentally true about everybody” through the mode Bernard Malamud and the Critics, the Fields say:

The very flexible structural archetype the pastoral offers Malamud is the pattern of vegetation rituals and myths. Based upon the seasonal cycle of change, this pattern gives Malamud a central controlling form in the pastoral fertility myths of dying and reviving gods, of youthful heroes replacing the aged, of the son replacing the father, the primary expression of which is
found in vegetation life rituals, myths of the Fisher king, and its historical successor, the Grail quest. (68)

The Fisher king reigning over a barren land is the lower east side of New York city. The powerless and weakened “king” is the old Jewish storekeeper, Morris Bober. The youth, replacing him and bringing renewed life to the female Bobers, is Frank Alpine. He is an Italian who does penance for his crime and later becomes the grocer after Bober’s death. He adapts this archetype in The Assistant. He devises two important strategies which conceal the pattern’s simplicity and expand its significance: one, the use of multiple levels dependent upon the basic archetypal relationships and two, the assimilation of the significant modes of the narrative to a “seasonal” rhythm. The multiplying of father-son relationship serves to reinforce and extend its meanings. In The Assistant it operates structurally and effectively to increase the novel’s thematic implications. The “father-son” relationships between Morris and Frank; St. Francis as the spiritual father, and Frank Alpine, the spiritual son; Karp and Louis, Pearl and Nat, and Minogue and Ward involve many phases of man’s life, like family and society, the letter and the spirit of the law, morality and justice, idealism and materialism, love and duty.

The seasonal rhythm controls the narrative. The Assistant opens on a windy day in early November and closes after April and Passover. It shows the moral and religious rebirth of Frank Alpine after the Passover. This redemptive pattern is reinforced with myth. Frank’s circumcision in April and the conversion to Judaism after the Passover are highly significant. It is the season of nature’s renewal of life in the spring. It coincides with the resurrections of Christ; Attis and Adonis. It is also the time of redemption of the Jewish nation from Egyptian bondage. They celebrate Passover festival in honour of this event. Frank drags himself around these holidays is also significant. The Passover festival is etymologically related to an Assyrian word meaning to propitiate and also to Hebrew words meaning lame. Thus
Malamud has consciously used religious and mythic allusions. He has used purposeful seasonal changes which moves twice from wintry fall to warm spring to mark the pattern of death and rebirth. Frank undergoes a rite of initiation, begun under Morris in the tomb like store. His descent to the grocer's grave, his circumcision and his conversion from a spiritually barren life to a fertile renewed life, are all part of this rite. Here he experiences resurrection which prepares him for the new life as the grocer carrying the burden of his responsibilities, beliefs and values. He gains nothing materially, but we admire him on his heroic growth. After the conversion he grows in his relationship with Ida. Helen has mythic characteristics. According to Fields:

The Spartan Moon-goddess was called “Helen”, and marriage to her, made Menelaus a king. Her name is etymologically related to Helle, bright Goddess of death and resurrection. So that to the extent to which Helen has redeemed Frank and brought him to his goals, and could bring him to the others, she is a fertility goddess. (224)

Because of the pastoral conventions in Malamud's novels, the vegetation cycles to which the human lives are attached, the most important source of imagery for Malamud is the world of nature with its blessed elements of fields and streams, groves and parks, birds and flowers. For example, Malamud finds an objective correlative for the attitudes of his characters in the mutations of weather. Morris Bober gets wearied as November winds blow, Helen feels “tormented” by winter and thinks of Frank when the rain comes. Frank and Helen feel life within them when flowers begin to bloom and trees to bud in the spring. Birds and flowers always take the form of imagery.

In The Assistant the study of imagery leads to a description of Malamud’s imaginative world especially the pastoral and mythic mode of
description. Malamud in *The Assistant* has chosen as central characters people who are less worldly, more innocent, inexperienced and more simple than the most human beings. Empson has said, “the essential trick of the pastoral . . . was to make simple people express strong feelings . . . in learned and fashionable language”. Frank Alpine gets into trouble because he is so simple about crime and people. He gets involved with Ward Minogue because he does not recognize evil when he sees it. He gets involved with Morris Bober because he has such a simple idea of suffering.

The most important result of the pastoral convention of simple characters is the simplification of style. Malamud has handled a very complex material with a simple style because of which he is free to do other things like developing the themes to a heightened mode. In Malamud’s novels, style is primarily a function of characters. His point of view is assimilated into that of characters. As the characters are simple and innocent people, the style necessarily is relatively elemental in syntax, diction, imagery, myth, and symbol. Yet his language is fashionable and learned. The general concerns of pastoral art happen to be the concerns of modern literature and criticism. *The Assistant* probes the question of identity. It is also concerned with death and rebirth. Though Helen is unaware at the time, she says, “Life renews itself”. She states the basic truth of the novel’s pastoral vegetation archetype. It deals with the theme of suffering which is summarized by rabbi: “He suffered, he endured, but with hope.” It is concerned, more over with the problem of “the law”. Though there are manifold implications in “the law,” Malamud focuses only on Jewish law which is a selective device he employs in the novel to heighten the one specific aspect of the Jewish law. Malamud very strategically distills a people’s infinite wisdom to a simple, “I suffer for you .... You suffer for me”. One aspect, suffering, of the Jewish experience is highlighted. The near identification of this aspect with the Jewish experience involves a strategic selection and heightening of this one aspect, suffering.
In *The Assistant* Malamud retells medieval myth in a modern setting. The medieval archetypes center around a pair of characters. The novel’s principal characters Frank Alpine and Morris Bober center around St. Francis and Jesus Christ. In their relationship the morally weak Frank will learn from Bober’s spiritual strength. In the wasteland myth Bober is Amfortas, the maimed Fisher king who is waiting to be restored by Frank’s Parzival.

Malamud loves St. Francis and he uses the saint as myth in his novels. St. Francis is the spiritual strength of Frank and in fact St. Francis remains the conscience of the novel. Perhaps Malamud earned this love and respect to St. Francis from his wife, Ann De Chiara. She is a Catholic and is an Italian-American woman. After their marriage they had lived for one year in Italy, where the saint hails from. Thus in *Talking Horse* Malamud says:

I admit that Frank sees the Jew good deal as a symbol, and that there is perhaps an element of Christianity in his Judaism .... and for the Christian elements in Judaism, ideas flow backwards and forwards, and it is ridiculous to define love, charity, endurance the articular quality or province of one religion over another. I would want Frank to continue to love St. Francis as much as he may love Isaiah. If it is possible to wish a fate upon a character one has created, I would hope that his making a Jew of himself, however envisioned or achieved will lead him into a richer humanity. (86-87)

In an interview with E. H Leelavathy Masilamani in 1976 in *Conversations with Bernard Malamud*, he says:

I have been influenced by Buddha, Jesus and Francis of Assissi as you see in *The Assistant* .... what is brought out in Christianity as a result of Jesus and St. Francis .... I appreciate their response to human beings and the elements of nature ( St.
Francis responded to animals and Birds). Any stimuli can be a force for the rest of a human being's life. I read the New Testament and found it stirred deep feelings in me. (72-73)

Masako Ueno in his article “Bernard Malamud’s The Assistant: The Image of St. Francis of Assissi” in the journal Kyushu-American Literature says: “The image of the saint is sparkling in the story. Every time it shows, we see a gradual transformation is being carried out in Frank. St. Francis, Morris and Helen are the significant factors in Frank’s regeneration. St. Francis can be placed at the center because Frank has wanted to acquire the life of the saint. The others help him to approach it”(23). Thus, The Assistant is a story about Frank Alpine’s theomorphism, from his old life full of miseries, injustices to a virtuous new one. Frank assists Morris Bober for more than two years during which time he changes his life. He dominates the novel like a big hero. His theopathy is seen early in the novel. He always feels the presence of St. Francis in all his life situations especially when he commits mistakes. The saint works in his conscience and inspires him to do good. He is fascinated with St. Francis of Assissi from his childhood. This fascination develops and grows through listening, reading, and dreaming of the saint. Mystical and visionary interventions of St. Francis at the pivotal points in the novel are suggestive. As St. Francis is devoted fully to Christ, Frank is related to Morris Bober and St. Francis of Assissi. The saint appears several times in the novel giving us some idea of what Frank really is. As we go through some co-relations between the life of Frank and St. Francis, we know better how similar the two are and how his theomorphism cannot be realized without the influence of St. Francis.

St. Francis, the most vibrant youth, appears as the knight-errant of the king. Francis and his friends sing as they walk around the town. He goes for village fair and returns singing love songs at every house where there are girls. Sometimes their fathers shout at him. Then he with his friends jeers and hoots, until a bucket full of water comes pouring down upon them. But at times he
thinks: "when will I too ever feel a love that will tear me away from my parents, from my friends, and even from myself? A love that devours and burns" *(The Perfect Joy* 11). He says: "I love the moon! I love the unattainable!" *(11). History knows no more gallant figure than Francis of Assissi who surrendered wealth and set out — his body ill-clothed but his soul ablaze with love — to bring the good news of Christ's freedom to all who had the heart to listen. His holy life was a hymn of love. He called the wind and the fire; the flowers and the birds his brothers, and water his sister. He saw the image of Christ in the faces of the suffering.

This restlessness is seen in Frank Alpine. He says to Morris: "I want the moon so all I get is cheese" *(36). Frank is an Italian refugee who has a miserable past. The week after he was born his mother died: "He has never seen her face even in a picture" *(36), which shows he has a passion in his heart for a mother figure. When he was five years old he lost his father also. He was raised in an orphanage and when he was eight, he was put in a tough family to work for them. He ran away ten times. Therefore he asks "what do you expect to happen after all of that" *(37). He says to Morris Bober:

I've often tried to change the way things work out for me
but I don't know how, even when I think I do .... All
my life I wanted to accomplish something worthwhile .... a
thing people will say too a little doing, but I don't. I am
too restless. *(37)*

So magnetic is the personality of St. Francis to Frank that even his picture fascinates him. Frank Alpine looks at the picture intently:

The picture was of a thin faced dark-bearded monk in a coarse brown garment, standing barefooted on a sunny country road.
His skinny, hairy arms were raced to a flock of birds that dipped over his head. In the background was grove of leafy trees; and in the far distance a church in sunlight. (30)

Frank who is bleary, unhappy, his beard hard, dark and thin comes from San Francisco, whose favourite book is The Little Flowers which is a medieval collection of vignettes of St. Francis. The saint is seen feeding birds in the cover pages of the book. He loved the birds so much that he preached to them. Frank tries to become St. Francis. In this relationship, the morally weak Frank will draw spiritual strength from St. Francis as he draws spiritual strength from Christ. Frank has an archetypal relationship with St. Francis. Frank is full of theopathy. He says: “Everytime I read about somebody like him, I get a feeling inside of me I have to fight to keep from crying. He was born good. Which is a talent if you have it” (31) When Frank was a kid, an old priest used to tell him stories from The Little Flowers he says: "They are clear in my mind to this day"(30).

Malamud tries to strike a connection between Frank and Francis. Once Francis was at the store while his father was away on business trip. A poor beggar, half naked, nothing but a pack of bones and muscles came to him and begged for a coin. Francis just said:" I am too busy”(12). The beggar limped away. But his thoughts kept going back to the beggar. He regretted bitterly not having given him something. His remorse became so intense that he could not contain himself. He ran out after the beggar. He decided :"I won't go home until I find him!"(13). At last when he found him out he gave him the purse and said: “Here is your alms, with interest”(13). Malamud takes this account and applies to Morris Bober who can be seen running after a woman with the money she forgot to take from the store. Malamud selectively brings the images of beggars and poverty in the novel. Afterwards Francis exchanged the clothes with the most ragged wretch of the beggars. He looked himself over: "Now he was really one of the poor and a friend of Jesus Christ "(31). Thus St.
Francis discarded everything to embrace poverty as a chosen ideal. But Frank accepts poverty as an existential fact. The image of St. Francis is in his conscience. Therefore he is able to sublimate his poverty to the spiritual poverty and his life becomes a theophany.

Once Francis went to a dilapidated little church and prayed He gazed at the crucifix and Jesus spoke to him "Rebuild my church. It is falling down"(40). So he set out to reform the church. In order to rebuild the church, he takes some silk and velvet from his father's store and says: "Tell father, he can deduct this from my inheritance later on"(41). This incident echoes when Frank steals from grocer's store in order to provide the Bobers with good fortune He "felt he had brought them luck". Frank also, has started to reform the store as St. Francis tried to reform the church. Frank gives much importance to the American dream of wealth. Frank continues to reform the store. As a result "the business was better"(77). Earnings in the grocery, especially around "Christmas and New Year continued to rise"(103).

As Francis in rags, walked through the middle of a mob of big and small street people, who were hooting at him, spitting on him and pulling his hair and tattering his clothes, his father came and dragged him into the house. He locked him in the wine cellar. Thus he was imprisoned. For Francis the whole world was prison. His house was a prison. He wanted to be free. When his father tried to settle the matter with the local Bishop, Francis renounced his inheritance and gave away even the dress he was wearing. Then he said that he could then on, call "our father in Heaven" very freely and genuinely. He was so happy, for "on this day he had taken Lady Poverty as his bride" (59). Frank loves Helen, his Queen Poverty. He anxiously waits to have a talk with her. Finally they meet in the library. The talk begins with the story of St. Francis : "I was reading about the life of St. Francis in the library"(95). Frank looks unhappy: "He looks half in his grave, Sam thought. God knows what hole he
slept in last night" (30). Frank descends the stairs and gets into the cellar of the store and sleeps there. He says to Morris: "I slept in worse" (51).

In order to grow morally, Frank like Francis has shut himself from the beauty of the world in the prison-like store. Malamud keeps the reader aware of Frank's passionate attraction to St. Francis by associating Frank with images of birds, flowers and trees. As he volunteers to work in the tomb like store he is accepting the Saint's ideal of poverty, which haunts him always. The saint reads the Gospel and it speaks to him Thus: "listen to the silence and the suffering of men. Great sorrow is hidden beneath men's laughter". (29) He says: "Whoever honours God, wants nothing, whoever owns nothing, can give most of all to God. Poverty is the pearl of the Gospel"(30). It was all fine for him to go around with the poor and eat with them and give them money. He thinks "To be poor yourself, to live with the body and soul of a poor man. That is really something !" As he contemplates, he acts. When he dressed up the beggar's dress, he looked himself over: "Now he was really one of the poor and a friend of Jesus Christ" (31). The life of St. Francis gives us always a sense of the intensity of sublime and noble poverty, and thus it is appropriate that Malamud has introduced St. Francis in the novel.

Frank is so deep in the knowledge of the vignettes of St. Francis that he remembers each and every episode in it. Once, when he meets Helen, he tells her the story of how St. Francis made a woman out of the snow, thereby giving to their relationship a spiritual tone. He obviously wants to raise their love to the heights of spiritual devotion. When as the relationship with Helen becomes deeper and closer, the pure love gives way to instinctual needs. Then he consoles himself remembering that the saint too once was the victim of desires, but he endeavoured to overcome it. When St. Francis was disturbed with the thought of a family, he crept into a hole in the rocks, fell into his knees and prayed. Then he ran out into the clear moonlight and took some snow and shaped it into the figure of a human being. As soon as he had
finished, he feverishly got more snow and quickly made six smaller figures. He said looking at them:

There is my family! The big one is my wife, and the others are my daughters and sons, with the servant boy and the maid.

And I have got to work for them and support them .... But I cannot do it. I have not enough for myself. So if I find it too hard to take care of them, then I should be glad that I have no one else to serve but God! And he broke into a loud laugh. It was the laugh of someone who has been inwardly liberated. (144 - 145)

Since his childhood, Frank has always carried the image of St. Francis as one whom he admires and idealizes. He reaches the east in the pursuit of betterment parting from his old life, at the age of twenty five, the same age of Francis when he started his search for God. The pivotal point in Frank's life when he makes up his mind to take over Morris' position is identical to that of the pivotal point in Francis' life, when he ascended to Sainthood. Before he spies on Helen's naked body in the bathroom, he is awakened by the spirit of St. Francis and he tells himself: "If you do it ... you will suffer" (74) and afterwards: "It was a mistake to do it, he thought" (75). St. Francis becomes the conscience of the novel here. Malamud shows that Frank, because he is associated with St. Francis, has a natural inclination to renounce physical instincts.

Frank shows his gratitude to the Bobers by assisting Bober in the store. After Bober's death he takes up the store completely and he sacrifices his affairs and work for others. He helps everyone. He is considerate to his friends, the Fusos and ward Minogue. He wants their rebirth too. Frank says to ward: "I felt sorry for him [Bober] after you slugged him, so I went back to give him a hand while he was in a weak condition .... I did it to quite my conscience"
St. Francis is his conscience. Frank has love and respect for the weak and oppressed. He opposes holding up Morris because he is poor and weak. St. Francis too showed the tendency to help the weak, sick, beggars and the lepers. He kissed the lepers to show his love to them. He gave away the finest silk from his father’s store to the beggars. His father was angry and sorry to notice the disappearance of his best silk. Morris Bober too notices the disappearance of the milk and rolls and money from his store.

Frank assists Morris Bober just because of his pity. He loves ward Minogue, a wayward boy, and tries to straighten him up. He is sympathetic to Helen, when she loses her father, the only hope of her life, and therefore she is deprived of her desired education. He helps the poor and needy. These character qualities are the same as St. Francis:

Coming up the block, Helen saw a man squatting by one of the benches, feeding the birds .... When the man rose, the pigeons fluttered up with him, a few landing on his arms and shoulders, one perched on his fingers pecking peanuts from his cupped palm. Another fat bird sat on his hat. The man clapped his hands, when the peanuts were gone and the birds, beating their wings, scattered .... She recognized Frank Alpine. (118)

When they meet in the park, he says to Helen: "My nature is to give and I couldn’t change it even if I wanted" (119). He echoes the voice of St. Francis. Though he keeps on dropping some money into his pockets from the counter, he is remorseful. Sometimes he feels short of breath and sweats profusely and he "exhorted himself to be honest" (69). "One night he left very sad about all the wrong doing and vowed to set himself straight" (69). He is wavering between the right and wrong. He gradually comes near the saint, in the spiritual field.
When Francis's father insisted that Francis should go for the War between Assissi and Perugia, Francis was in dream of serving the poor and needy. His father flared up and snarled at him on his indifference: "Francis was killing time by carving a bird from a little piece of wood and only shrugged his shoulders and did not reply" (20). This carving of bird is reechoed in Frank's free hours. He takes a pine board from the cellar and carves something on it. Though he carves at random, it turns out into a bird flying. Malamud, purposely turns the carving into a symbolic bird to show Frank's symbolic relation to St. Francis. At a second thought he carves again and it turns out into a rose starting to bloom. This rose seems both delicate and firm: "It was delicate in the way its petals were opening yet firm as a real flower." (192). Frank is here delicate in his feelings towards Helen, as he advances towards her with the symbolic flower "rose", Helen is yet firm in her decision after the assault. Therefore she throws it into the garbage. Here he suffers for love. As St. Francis carved a symbolic bird on the wood Frank too carves on the wood a beautiful flower. So later, St. Francis himself helps Frank. He gives life to the wooden rose. As Frank resurrects into a new man this wooden rose takes life and turns into a real rose. Now Helen is ready to take it and accepts the love of Frank. Kamal N Awasthi in "Frank Alpine as Religious Hero" says:

The fact that St. Francis turns the wooden rose into a real rose shows the transformation of the sensual into the spiritual. The wooden represents the inanimate and when Frank referred it to Helen he was revealing only his instinctuality with St. Francis as his mentor and the archetypal force, Frank could not have interacted with his animate the gross, physical plane. Only from the plane of self-symbolized by St. Francis could the rose of devotion be offered to Helen. Therefore it is not Frank who offers rose to Helen but St. Francis and the implications obviously points to the transformation of Frank into St. Francis.
and Helen into Clara, St. Francis's anima before and after his renunciation. (89-90)

St. Francis after leaving his father's house, stayed with an old and poor priest, as Frank stays with the old Bober. One day he thought: "what a fool I am! I have become wedded to Lady poverty and I am living off someone! That's over now! Everybody has got to earn his own living". Thus he cleaned out the mortar bucket and went out to beg. He knocked at every door and he came to the palace door of the well known aristocratic Scifi family. A footman opened the door. Just then a slim girl with blond hair and blue eyes came with her younger sister, The girl was Clara and sister Agnes. Clara was amazed. She ran into the room and came back with some eatables. Afterwards wherever he preached in the Cathedral of Assissi Clara came to attend. She heard everything what he said about God with much interest and passion. She was influenced by this rich man turned poor and then and there she resolved to offer up her life to God. On the following palm Sunday St. Francis consecrated her to God forever. Her sister Agnes also joined her. Thus many young girls joined them and they are today known as the "Poor Clares."

St. Francis always believed that the only way to improve oneself was by self effacement. Francis took three vows of chastity, obedience and poverty. This same determination is seen in the life of Frank. After Morris's death he decides to take up his position in the prison-like store. For that he prepares himself to work hard in the grocery to help Helen for her education. He reforms the store introducing many new items. He gives to Ida ninety a month. But "he found it impossible to meet all his expenses .... For himself he spent only for the barest necessities, thought his clothes when falling apart"(240). Here he is very close to St. Francis in rags. Then one day, "for no reason he could give, though the reason felt familiar, he stopped climbing up the air shaft to peek at Helen and he was honest in the store"(242). The "familiar reason" is obviously the haunted memories of the saint. He is changed, the transition
takes place slowly. He relinquishes the past and assumes the saint figure. Masako Ueno in his "Bernard Malamud's The Assistant" says: After he [St. Francis] became a patron, he took three vows those of chastity, obedience and honest poverty. He dedicated his life to keeping the three vows and preached to his followers to stick to them.... He [Frank] embodies just the virtuous life based in the three vows (21). When Frank is in the store, he takes out the Bible and reads and he thinks: "there were parts of it, he could have written himself" (245). St. Francis too spent much of his time in reading the Bible. He got inspiration from the Bible to compose a rule for his Order. Francis while in solitude, "spent much time bent over then religious books, but he dreamed more than he read" (28). Frank too dreams more than he reads. He sees St. Francis in his dream:

As he was reading he had this pleasant thought. He saw St. Francis come dancing out of the woods in his brown rags, a couple of scrawny birds flying around over his head. St. F. stopped in front of the grocery, and reaching into the garbage can, plucked the wooden rose out of it. He tossed it into the air and it turned into a real flower that he caught in his hand. With a bow he gave it to Helen, who had just come out of the house. "Little Sister, here is your little sister, the rose". From him, she took it although it was with the love and best wishes of Frank Alpine. (246)

This convinces the reader that he has changed, totally changed. Here he has become St. Francis. They are one and the same. This dream shows that his future is hopeful, virtuous and will regain Helen's love. They both are Italians, Frank means Francis and The Assistant, the Assissi. He is Alpine too. He, from the pit and shame, tries to climb the mountain peak that is St. Francis. Finally he does succeed. He becomes St. Francis in virtue. When he becomes St. Francis, Helen accepts the flower and his love from him. Frank reaches the
altitude by his sincere effort and the honest observation of Morris's law: "to do what is right, to be honest, to be good. This means what one is to other people." Morris further asks: "Our life is hard enough why should we hurt somebody else?" (124). Physically Frank has become Morris by becoming the grocer after Morris death and spiritually he has become St. Francis "dancing out of the woods" penultimately. "One morning Francis came dancing joyfully along with a small primrose in his hand. "Rejoice! Little Brothers!" he cried. "Spring is coming! Let's praise the Lord for the sun and for the primroses!" (117).

Malamud recounts this dancing at the funeral event also. At the grocer's burial Helen throws a rose into the grave. In his desire to know where the rose fell, Frank as caricature slips and flailing his arms, falls, feet first on the coffin. He comes out of the grave. This resurrection is symbolic of Frank as he is behind the counter immediately after the funeral. As he rings the register Helen and Ida know that "the grocer was the one who had danced on the grocer's coffin". (232). Malamud associates Helen with flowers especially the rose, symbol of love and femininity. In Frank-Helen relationship, rose stands for spiritualisation of the physical instinct. When they meet for the first time, the dialogue begins with the story of St. Francis. At the end St. Francis heals him by turning the wooden rose into a real one. He has overcome his instinctuality. While he reads the Bible, he thinks "there are parts of it he could have written himself" (245). Malamud has very skilfully given him the status of the prophets and apostles who wrote the Bible. He is enlightened. He is awakened to the knowledge of the saints. The saint-ideal of poverty is realized by him as he suffers and sacrifices himself to work in the tomb-like store for the orphaned family. At the same time he draws spiritual nourishment from Bober too and enters into Jewish reality culminating in his circumcision. Thus he assimilates both Judaism and Catholicism so that he may be mystically one with both the religion. Malamud too purposely unites both the religions into Frank Alpine or he uses Frank Alpine as an instrument to fuse both into one.
Speaking of *The Fixer* Malamud himself says in an interview published in *Saturday Review*: "The book has a mythological quality. It has to be treated as a myth, an endless story." In *The Fixer*, Malamud speaks of an endless story of injustice. Frederick W. Turner in "Myth Inside and Out: The Natural" says: "Myths are endless stories for Malamud and the endless story of his novels has been the conflict between myths and the outer world." Yakov Bok leaves Shtetl to come to Kiev. At first he conceals his identity and looks at the myth from outside. When he is accused of the ritual murder of a Christian boy, he realizes his role in the myth of Jewishness. He sees himself beyond the myth of Jewishness to take up the burden of history that falls on all men who know their identity. He takes up all the sufferings in the jail. He never gives up the myth of Jewishness and the Jewish suffering. His sufferings teach him that he is not only a Jew, but he sees himself as a man, acting in the stream of events that is history. He is also the representative of the whole race. At the end Bok thinks:

> Once you leave, you're out in the open; it rains and snows. It snows history, which means what happens to somebody starts in a web of events outside the personal. It starts of course before he gets there. We're all in history. That's sure, but some are more than others, Jews more than some. (314)

Malamud has used the myths of youth replacing the aged, of the son replacing the father in *The Fixer*. Early in the novel, the father-son pair is Yakov Bok and Shmuel. Soon this is replaced by Lebedev and Yakov. When Yakov is imprisoned for alleged child murder, he finds a parental surrogate in Bibikov, who tries to save him. Finally after his two and half years imprisonment, Yakov recognizes his last parental figure in the Tsar, Nicholas II, "Little Father." In addition to these variations Malamud increases the
thematic range of the novel by offering other variations also. Malamud implicitly contrasts Shmuels relationship to Yakov with Marfa Golovs murder of her son, Zhenia. There are also pastoral scapegoat ritual in many ways. Yakov is sacrificed for the Golov child, who was supposedly murdered by the Jews. Bibikov is sacrificed for Yakov who has become a martyr to the Russian Jews. The prison guard Kogin dies for Yakovs freedom. Finally the figure of Christ serves throughout as a powerful archetype for the scapegoat figure. These variations serve to embroider the central theme by thrusting it into mans many faces of life. Shmuels and Raisl, an anagram for Israel, who is identified with Judaism itself, always raises the issue of law and justice. In The Fixer, the central action lands Yakov in the prison and so there is less action in the novel. Malamud focuses on Yakovs ability to suffer and to maintain his innocence. The narrative movement therefore depends on the seasonal changes. Malamud notes the months and seasons carefully. Yakovs story begins in November and goes through the arrest and imprisonment in April. There is also the pattern of Biblical myth. The story coincides with the period of Christs ministry. Yakov leaves the family at the age of thirty, ministers to his people for three years and goes to his trial. He goes to his trial at the age of thirty three. Malamud uses the Christ figure to insist upon the universality of the pattern. Yakov suffers for two and half years, maintains his innocence and becomes a potential hero of the people, not only of the Jews but also of all men who suffer without cause.

In The Fixer and many short stories, Malamud deviates from the tradition and takes up his own mode for the artistic purpose. The Percival myth can be identified in many short stories. The lady of the lake appears in the other stories like the woman in the Naked Nude. In the Lady of the Lake, the heroine exposes the shallowness. The hero as in the myth stories, crosses the Atlantic to find a new life. In Italy the hero falls in love with a beautiful lady Isabella del Dongo. The last name Dongo is taken from another famous figure of nineteenth century literature, who finds a new life, the hero of
Stendahl's *The Charterhouse of Parma*. Finally, Isabella as in the myth stories disappears magically into the lake. Malamud's sources of the myth material are the medieval romance. The gentle and helpful lady is only one of the forms assumed by the shape shifting *Fairy Queen*, who nurses and heals the orphan knight when he is wounded and the wicked temptress Niniane or Vivian who lure the knight to his destruction. These ladies are like Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." Other sources Malamud draws is from Loathly Lady of Chaucer, Gower etc. She appears sometimes as a lovely young well-born girl, sometimes as an ugly impoverished old hag as in the Irish tale of the five sons of Eochaid to become the king. The archetypal Pop Fisher in the guise of Salzman appears in "The Magic Barrel." Coincident with the arrival of March and the turning toward Spring, Finkle remains closeted in his room and thinks of his hopes for a better life. He then opens the magic barrel to find more photographs. In shreds of images some mythic, some terrifyingly real, the face seems to close over Leo's heart: "Spring flowers, yet age -- a sense of having been used to the bone, wasted; this came from the eyes, which were hauntingly familiar, yet absolutely strange" (208). As Sidney Richman says the ironies undercutting the story preserve it from a kind of mythic schmaltz, the myth preserves the story from the irony.

Malamud uses a number of different language styles in the novels. Sheldon Norman Grebstein in his article "Bernard Malamud and the Jewish movement" says: "In his own way Malamud captures in English what has been called an untranslatable quality of Yiddish, the admixture of jocular and the solemn, 'the fusion of the sacred and the profane' "(33). Malamud uses Yiddish proverbs and idioms and an occasional inverted word order for the Yiddish. Yiddish expressions like *vey iz mir, shalbos, treyf, goy, meshumed*, *shul, podol* etc. pervade the novel. He presents the Russian in ordinary and good prose. Malamud also uses legal language for the indictment. He liberally uses symbols, images, allegory and *mashal* in appropriate places following the Hebraic tradition.
Malamud depicts the victory of the human spirit by using an omniscient third person point of view. This selective omniscience helps him retain the objectivity, the freedom to move through time and space and maintain the focus on a single character or a few characters. He can shift into interior monologue. He also can perceive as through the character’s eyes without any interruption in the narration. Through the selective omniscient third-person point of view he is also able to range over all the subtleties of the character’s changing thoughts and feelings. What happens in the outside is filtered into the character.