CHAPTER FOUR

FICTIONAL ART

The novel unfolds in our memories like a piece of cloth woven upon a loom, and the more complicated the pattern the more difficult and protracted will be the process of perceiving it. But that is what we seek, the pattern: some significantly recurring thread which, however deeply hidden in the dense texture and brilliance of local colouring, accounts for our impression of a unique identity in the whole. (Lodge 80)

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's seminal work, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, provides a synthesis of contemporary approaches to narrative fiction, considering in particular Anglo-American New Criticism, Russian Formalism, French Structuralism, the Tel-Aviv School of Poetics and the Phenomenology of Reading. Rimmon-Kenan explains how narrative fiction differs from other kinds of narrative and focuses on the features that turn a discourse into a narrative text. She presents an analysis of the system governing all fictional narratives and suggests how individual narratives can be studied against the background of this general system. The theory formulated by Rimmon-Kenan forms the basis of this chapter which explores the technical devices used by Bellow and Parthasarathy.

Rimmon-Kenan defines narrative fiction as "the narration of a succession of fictional events"(2). It differs from lyrical poetry or expository prose because it represents a succession of events. An event is "something
describes Akaligai as an ordinary woman who simply obeys the rules in society; Kamban portrays the same character as an innocent woman as far as her thought is concerned; Kumaran Asan depicts Akaligai as a rebel, opposing male-domination. Similarly the story of the Fall of Man is described in The Bible. Milton deals with the same story from his point of view in Paradise Lost. Therefore, the same raw material is given different interpretations by different authors in different texts, depending upon the literary, social and political conditions of the age.

An event is the basic unit of any story and it changes the situation from one particular condition of affairs to another. In Narratology: The Form and Function of Narrative, Gerald Prince defines narrative as “the representation of real or fictive events and situations in a time sequence” (1). So an event is the essential unit of any story. According to Gerald Prince, there are two kinds of events—stative and active. Stative events constitute a “state” and can be expressed in a sentence. Active events constitute an “action” and cannot be expressed in one sentence. In any narrative, the proportion of stative and active events will determine the nature of that narrative. It is to be noted that the story which consists of more active events will be more dynamic than the story which abounds in stative events.

The essential similarity between Bellow and Parthasarathy is that their novels consist of a number of active events. This has become possible for them because they present the raw material in their texts from the psycho-analytic perspective. An analysis of some of the active
Moses in a burning bush” (43). Soon Henderson meets a party of naked people. In front of them is a young woman, who reminds Henderson of his daughter, Ricey. As soon as the woman sees Henderson, she bursts into loud tears. The sight of this young woman hits him very hard: “I would never have expected this to wound me as it did... Though of course the tears of women always affect me deeply, and not so long before, when Lily had started to cry in our hotel suite on the Gulf, I made my worst threat. But this young woman being a stranger, it’s less easy to explain why her weeping loosed such a terrible emotion in me” (HRK 48-49). Confronted with the weeping woman, Henderson thinks of Lily and the children and the violin and his father and all the sorrows of his life. Bellow’s description of the weeping woman is powerful and realistic: “Thus this sturdy, virginal-looking girl was crying—simply crying—without gestures; her arms were meekly hanging by her sides and all the facts about her (speaking physically) were shown to the world. The tears fell from her wide cheekbones onto her breasts” (HRK 49-50). Henderson understands why the woman weeps only when Romilayu explains to him the condition of the cattle and the cistern.

Henderson’s wrestling match with Itelo is an important event because Henderson realizes later the wrestling match has a symbolic significance. After the match, Prince Itelo treats him with reverence, and the queen’s sister, Mtalba, betrothes herself to him. The first meeting between Henderson and Queen Willatale focuses on the theme of HRK. Bellow’s imagery, especially the comparison of “the pulsation of the heart”
with "the rotation of the earth," establishes the character of Queen Willatale, who makes Henderson understand the significance of *grun-tumolani*, "man wants to live." The queen and her sister are waiting for Henderson under a thatched shed in the queen's courtyard. The queen is an elderly lady. The flesh of her arm overlaps the elbow. Good nature emanates from her. Instructed by Itelo, Henderson gives the queen a hand, but is astonished when she takes it and buries it between her breasts. Among the Arnewi, it is the normal form of greeting. "On top of everything else, I mean the radiant heat and the monumental weight which, my hand received, there was the calm pulsation of her heart participating in the introduction. This was as regular as the rotation of the earth, and it was a surprise to me; my mouth came open and my eyes grew fixed as if I were touching the secrets of life..." *(HRK 72).* Henderson realizes that the queen expresses stability in every part of her body.

Henderson's act of moving the huge Mummah in the land of the Wariri is an active event. Chapter fourteen of *HRK*, which describes how the Wariri celebrate Henderson's feat of strength, shows the outer world full of sound and fury, and the inner world of Henderson at the psychological level. Bellow creates a dream world by his narrative power. The scene is rich in technique, using the language in poetic manner and highlighting the psyche of the protagonist. "The air was my only garment now. I tried to cover up with the leaves. I was dry, I was numb, I was burning, and my mouth worked silently... The amazons were crying and chanting in short, loud, bold syllables... And I amidst those naked
companions, naked myself, bare fore and aft in the streamers of grass and
vine, I was dancing on burnt and cut feet over the hot stones" (HRK 197-
99). In his filth and frenzy, Henderson cries: "Oh, you rulers of heaven!
Oh, you dooming powers! Oh I will black out! I will crash into death, and
they will throw me on the dung heap, and the vultures will play house in
my paunch" (HRK 199). The inner world of Henderson is described thus:
"And with all my heart I yelled, 'Mercy, have mercy!' And after that I yelled,
'No, justice!' And after that I changed my mind and cried, 'No, no, truth,
truth!' And then, "Thy will be done! Not my will, but Thy will!" (HRK
199). Bellow's torrential narration carrying a cascade of images matches
effectively the rain falling in torrents: "And meanwhile the sky was filling
with hot, gray, long shadows, rain clouds, but to my eyes of an abnormal
form, pressed together like organ pipes or like the ocean ammonites of
Paleozoic times... After the gust of breeze came deeper darkness, like the
pungent heat of the trains when they pass into Grand Central tunnel on a
devastated day of August, which is like darkness eternal... And then, after
a great, neighing, cold blast of wind, the clouds opened and the rain began
to fall" (HRK 199-201). Henderson's experience in the lion's den where
Dahfu teaches Henderson to feel the lion is a powerful active event.

Herzog's experience in the New York courtroom is described with
psychological overtones. Herzog's intention is to force Valentine and
Madeleine to have a conscience. The method he chooses to achieve this
aim is to take drastic action and he is induced to act this way because he
witnesses an ugly scene in the courtroom. The function of this active event
the long blackish carved table and holds him against the wall with his forearm. He shows his genitalia to Sammler and his expression is not “directly menacing but oddly, serenely masterful” (50). Sammler is struck by his mastery and “mystifying certitude” (50). Having concluded “the session, the lesson, the warning, the encounter, the transmission” (50), the pickpocket departs. In Galloway’s words, the pickpocket is “the savage Injun Joe, committing murder in a graveyard, seeking the slaughter of the innocent in a forbidding cave. He is the sweetly nurturing Nigger Jim, but he is also Babo, the apparently docile servant of Melville’s ‘Benito Cereno’ who literally holds a razor to his effete master’s throat; or he is Styron’s Nat Turner, an obedient slave plotting murder and mayhem” (181). Galloway further says: “In addition to the role he plays in the novel’s exploration of criminal and victim, the black pickpocket is central to Bellow’s examination of the Dionysian motif” (181). Galloway comments on the pickpocket’s exposing himself to Sammler: “The moment focuses the novel’s recurrent associations of sexuality and power; it also provides focus for the random sexual energy, bordering on anarchy, which Sammler feels all around him. This is no deflected Freudian symbol of aggressive virility—knife, club, or revolver—but the thing itself, revealed in a majestical fashion to the half-blind survivor” (181). The pickpocket is a symbol of the depravity existing in the urban society. He becomes a Reality Instructor to Sammler by demonstrating his power that indicates a silent warning to the septuagenarian not to cross him. In such an atmosphere, the alienation of individuals like Sammler is unavoidable.
The meeting between Kasturi and Dean Marcun in chapter eighteen of *TB* is an active event. In a confused state of mind, Kasturi goes to Quality Hotel and meets Dean Marcun, an American, who has come to India after resigning his job in the Advertising Department in Chicago. Dean Marcun tells Kasturi that he resigned his job because he was influenced by an Indian Sadhu's talk on "You and I." He realized the futility of materialism and now he is in search of meaning in life. He tells Kasturi frankly that "all the intellectuals in India are cowards and opportunists who are always worried about their security" (*TB* 222). Dean Marcun's words make Kasturi realize that he also belongs to the category of men who "are madly running in the rat race in order to win the prize" (*TB* 232), and that he is living "among lies and pretensions" (*TB* 233).

The end of the novel, *Vēcaṅkai*, presents a powerful active event that brings an anti-climax. Sankaran, who has won the admiration of Gopu and his mother, loses all his dignity when he invites Gopu's mother to share his bed. Gopu calls him "one-legged demon" (*TB* 88). Having come to the conclusion that his father's inhuman behaviour is the sole reason for the problems, Gopu tries to kill him. This scene is highly complex, and Parthasarathy portrays the various dimensions of human psyche in a realistic manner.

In *HKI*, the last meeting between Amirtham and Banu constitutes an active event. Banu asks Amirtham whether he is prepared to divorce his wife and marry her (*HKI* 137). Amirtham is not able to make a choice
suddenly. Banu compares him to “the hero of a tragic story, trying to fly using broken wings as rocket” (HKI 139).

In CB, the conference attended by the intellectuals in New Delhi denotes an active event. The topic is the crisis that has been created because of the Bangla Desh War. One of the university professors explains unnecessarily for a long time the geographical aspects of Pakistan, quoting from Aristotle and Locke. Suddenly a young man asks the professor: “Is it necessary to analyse where Pakistan is, where India is and where Bangla Desh is? How many of us are going to talk about the problem created by Bangla Desh War without digressions?” (CB 246). The young man’s question is similar to that of the young man who interrupts Samuel’s speech in MSP.

KP abounds in active events. The end of the novel, which presents the climax, is a powerful active event, showing a perfect combination of form and theme. While Parthasarathy’s narrative power brings out the sufferings of the downtrodden effectively, his use of interior monologue focuses on the theme of affirmation. Vadivelu tells Gopal how Kanniah Naidu and his men threw the helpless women and the innocent children into fire like “throwing pieces of wood in burning fire” (KP 230). Vadivelu and Gopal run towards the huts of the poor peasants. They see “the flame rising like the tongue of a demon. The wind and the nearby trees made the fire spread in all directions. The poor people, who have been a prey to hunger and poverty, have now become a prey to injustice and arrogance. The helpless victims are being reduced to ashes. The agonizing cry of the
poor slowly fades away in the embrace of fire" (KP 230). Gopal looks at the river. It seems to him that the river is full of blood. Parthasarathy uses interior monologue here so as to reveal the gradual rise of the spirit of revolution in Gopal: “What is this? How has the river become incarnadine? Whose blood is this? How many times I have enjoyed the serene beauty of this river in moonlight! Now the same river is full of blood instead of water. Slowly and slowly increases the level of water! Blood, blood everywhere! The whole village is sinking in blood!” (KP 231).

The novel, Tivukal, abounds in active events. The conflict between Kapoor and his wife Mohini results in Kapoor’s relationship with Sammeen and finally places him in half madness. He attempts to satisfy his ego by saying that he has killed his wife (246). The encounter between Mohini and her daughter, Swarna, makes the latter murder her mother. Parthasarathy has used many active events in this novel to present the theme of alienation.

In NN, the arrival of Nirmala to the residence of Samuel immediately after her father’s death, followed by the sexual union between the two, forms an active event. The character of Nirmala is portrayed from the psychological angle and becomes highly complex. She behaves as if she were a “hysteria patient” (NN 221). The contrast between Nirmala’s attitude to sex and that of Samuel reveals the essential difference between the Hindu concept of sex based on liberal views and the Christian concept of sex based on guilt and Original Sin.
The end of the novelette, *KKP*, making an anti-climax, highlights the difference between appearance and reality. This forms an active event that shows how Parthasarathy deals with a complex theme like impotency with irony and symbolism. Usha tells Baskaran that he need not be jealous of Chopra. She says that she cannot give birth to a child by marrying Chopra because he is impotent. In this novelette, Kudupminar becomes an important symbol, indicating the meaninglessness of human life. When Usha asks Baskaran the reason why Kudupminar was constructed, Baskaran replies: “Kudupminar, is the only building that has been constructed without any reason. It indicates the meaninglessness of human existence. It is neither a mandhir nor a mosque. It is not a samadhi. It symbolizes the grand nothingness, the hollowness of the king’s mind, and focuses on the vacuum of rationality” (*KKP* 131).

*ET*, which describes Parthasarathy’s experiences in Poland, presents an active event in Chapter Eight. The Professor goes to the Market Square in order to meet Thoorsky. He wonders how the people of Poland have reconstructed without any change the city of Warsaw, which was destroyed by Hitler (*ET* 91). The atmosphere presented the picture of Medieval Europe. Then the Professor goes to Thoorsky’s house. When he is in the hall of Thoorsky’s house, he gets a strange vision of an old woman, wearing a red scarf. When he greets her, she disappears immediately without any reply. The Professor wonders whether it is reality or illusion. The presence of the butterfly, the pet of Thoorsky, increases his fear and wonder. When the Professor asks Thoorsky about the old woman,
Thoorsky replies: "If we have the ability to answer all the questions, we shall prove the existence of God in terms of algebraic calculations" (ET 104). Thoorsky's statement on the contemporary scene is significant because it reflects the novelist's view on materialism: "When I began to draw the picture, I was enthusiastic and I had a strong belief in the second coming of Christ. But the events that followed after the World War made me stop painting such pictures... Materialism, nuclear weapons and environmental degradation are symptoms of the madness of modern man... I always like to exist between illusion and reality. The butterfly is a metaphorical expression of this desire!" (ET 103).

The end of the novel, Vērpattru, depicts an active event related to the theme of meaninglessness. Before going to Pondicherry to join Aravind Ashram, Kesavan reflects on human life: "Everything is meaningless. Death is the only reality in human life. What is said by the existentialists is true. Macbeth also says the same thing in his words, 'Life is full of sound and fury, signifying nothing'... Nammalvar, after writing one thousand songs, got the same view of life!" (268). Then Kesavan goes to Pondicherry and meets a Bengali in the Ashram. He advises Kesavan to finish his studies first. When Kesavan tells him that the more one is engaged in studies, the more is the growth of atheism. The Bengali says: "Wisdom and maturity will come to a person only when atheism reaches its maximum level" (Veṟpattru 271). This event analyses the meaning of human life.
In the novels of Bellow and Parthasarathy, active events are used to constitute the theme of humanistic existentialism. However, isolated events do not make a story. They have to be combined and arranged into sequences. Rimmon-Kenan explains how events are combined into sequences and sequences into a story. According to her, the two main principles of combination are temporal succession and causality” (16). Temporal succession, that is, “and then” principle, is often coupled with the principal of causality, that is, “therefore” principle. Rimmon-Kenan discusses E.M. Forster’s distinction between “story” and “plot.” According to Forster, a story is a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. Forster states in Aspects of the Novel: “The king died and then the queen died,’ is a story. ‘The king died and then the queen died of grief,’ is a plot. The time sequence is preserved, but the sense of causality overshadows it” (93-94). But Rimmon-Kenan says that a causally-minded reader will find the causal link even in the first example given by Forster because causality “can either be implied by chronology or gain an explicit status in its own right (17).

Bellow and Parthasarathy follow the principle of causality in their novels. For example, in HRK, Henderson’s alienation caused by his confrontation with reality drives him to primitive Africa. Bellow constructs an active event to describe Henderson’s fear of death. The whole event becomes an objective correlative here. One day Henderson drives to a
place on the Vermilion Coast called Banyules. He visits an aquarium and gets a strange experience. Henderson narrates his experience:

It was twilight. I looked in at an octopus, and the creature seemed also to look at me and press its soft head to the glass, flat, the flesh becoming pale and granular—blanched, speckled. The eyes spoke to me coldly. But even more speaking, even more cold, was the soft head with its speckles, and the Brownian motion in those speckles, a cosmic coldness in which I felt I was dying. The tentacles throbbed and motioned through the glass, the bubbles sped upward, and I thought, "This is my last day. Death is giving me notice."

(HRK 19)

Henderson's fear of death reaches its culmination in the lion's den where Dahfu teaches him how to face death, making him realize the importance of "being."

Similarly, in AT, Dhruv's alienation caused by his confrontation with reality drives him to a remote village in Madhya Pradesh. When Dhruv stands before the dead body of his wife, he reflects on the mystery of death: "This is what we call 'death.' I'm meeting it now directly. Was my behaviour the main reason for her suicide?" (AT 183). Even when the Sub-Inspector of Police questions him, he does not make a reply. All the same, Dhruv is not haunted so much by the fear of death like Henderson. He quietly leaves New Delhi and goes to Madhya Pradesh to work as an
ordinary labourer in the fields. Thus, in the novels of Bellow and Parthasarathy, the principle of causality occupies an important place.

Besides the combination of events, characterization plays a vital role in "story." In *Morphology of the Folktale*, Vladimir Propp classifies the characters in a story according to their functions as hero, villain, helper, donor or provider, false hero and others (79-80). He uses the term "function" to indicate an important action performed by a character which effects the unfolding of the story: "Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action"(21). Propp also points out the functions of characters "serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled" (21). Functions constitute the fundamental components of a tale.

Rimmon-Kenan puts forward an important argument when she discusses E.M. Forster's classification of characters. According to Forster, there are two kinds of characters—"flat" and "round." Rimmon-Kenan accepts that Forster's classification is of pioneering importance but suffers from a few weaknesses. Forster says that flat characters are two-dimensional, devoid of depth and "life," but many flat characters, "like those of Dickens are not only felt as very much 'alive' but also create the impression of depth" (Rimmon-Kenan 40).

Forster views that a flat character is both simple and undeveloping, whereas a round character is both complex and developing. Rimmon-Kenan argues that there are "fictional characters which are complex but
developing (e.g. Joyce’s Bloom) and others which are simple but developing (e.g. the allegorical Everyman)” (41). Rimmon-Kenan states an important point made by Baruch Hochman in a personal conversation: “...the lack of development can be presented as arrested development resulting from some psychic trauma, as in the case of Miss Havisham in Dickens’ Great Expectations, thus endowing a static character with complexity” (Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics 41). The character of Nirmala in NN is a good example because it shows an arrested development resulting from some psychic trauma. This is a static character with complexity. X.J. Kennedy’s words are worth quoting here:

Flat characters tend to stay the same throughout a story, but round characters often change... This is not to damn a flat character as an inferior work of art. In most fiction—even the greatest—minor characters tend to be flat instead of round. Why? Rounding them would cast time and space; and so enlarged, they might only distract us from the main characters. (74)

Therefore, it is better to conclude that usually there is a combination of flat and round characters in narrative fiction and that flat characters do not undergo much change in the course of the action whereas round characters change and grow. In this sense, the protagonists of the novels of Bellow and Parthasarathy are round characters, moving from alienation to affirmation. However, most of the novels of these two writers exhibit a set pattern that shows that the hero, usually an intellectual, suffering
when she is entertaining ladies. He suddenly comes in with his "filthy plaster cast, in sweat socks." He is wearing a "a red velvet dressing gown" which he bought at Sulka's in Paris in a mood of celebration when Frances said she wanted a divorce. In addition, he has "on a red wool hunting cap" (HRK 5). Henderson does this act deliberately to give Lily "a terrible time" (HRK 5). There is a great irony in this act because the same Henderson, when he becomes the rain king, will not be allowed by the Wariri to wear any dress and will be left standing in his coat of earth, "like a turnip" (HRK 202).

In KP, Kanniah Naidu's physical appearance is described thus: "He has remained a bachelor though he is fifty years old. He has got a strong body and he looks like a thirty-year old man. His face always looks clean without the trace of hair" (41). In his first meeting with Kanniah Naidu, Gopal wonders how Naidu is keeping his appearance so "young and healthy" in spite of his affairs with many women in the nearby villages (KP 41). It involves great irony because Kanniah Naidu is impotent.

In Rimmon-Kenan's view, a character's physical surrounding (room, house, street, town) as well as his human environment (family, social class) are used as "trait-connoting metonymies" (66). In the beginning of the novel, CB, the contrast between the rich and the poor is described in an effective manner. Mukuntan thinks about the futility of spending money on colourful waterfalls and parks while the downtrodden are living in gutter. He feels that "the present generation of India is preparing
chappathis near the gutter" (CB 21). Here the whole environment becomes a metonymy of the degradation of the poor people living in New Delhi. Similarly, in DM, the outer atmosphere matches the inner thoughts of Joseph, who describes the scene, relating persons and things: "Not far off there were chimneys, their smoke a lighter grey than the grey of the sky; and, straight before me, ranges of poor dwellings, warehouses, billboards, culverts, electric signs blankly burning, packed cars and moving cars, and the occasional bare plan of a tree... There could be no doubt that these billboards, streets, tracks, houses, ugly and blind, were related to interior life:" (20). In The Victim, Bellow shows how the city atmosphere increases Leventhal's alienation. Bellow establishes a suitable context in the opening lines of the novel: "On some nights New York is as hot as Bangkok. The whole continent seems to have moved from its place and slid nearer the equator, the bitter gray Atlantic to have become green and tropical, and the people, thronging the streets, barbaric fellahin among the stupendous moments of their mystery, the lights of which, a dazing profusion, climbs upward endlessly into the heat of the sky" (The Victim 1). The city, the nature of the job, the sickness of his brother's children and his wife Mary being out of town—all these burdens create alienation and a sense of loss in Leventhal.

Another important aspect of narration is the point of view. In a short story, the writer usually maintains one point of view from beginning to end. But in a novel, the writer may introduce many points of view. For example, in War and Peace, Tolstoy describes the history of Napoleon's
invasion of Russia, shifting the point of view in and out of the minds of many characters. In recent times, narratologists have a distinction between the point of view of the narrator and that of the focalizer. Rimmon-Kenan feels that the distinction between narration and focalization is a "theoretical necessity" (72) and that the interrelations between "speaking" and "seeing" can be studied effectively only on this basis. As an example, she quotes a passage from Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*:

'You are to wait here, you boy,' said Estella and disappeared and closed the door.

I took the opportunity of being alone in the courtyard, to look at my coarse hands and my common boots. My opinion of those accessories was not favourable. They had never troubled me before, but they troubled me now, as vulgar appendages (qtd. in Rimmon-Kenan 73).

Though this is a record of things seen by the child, words like "accessories" and "appendages" are not within a child's vocabulary. The narrator here is Pip, the adult, while the focalizer is Pip, the child.

Parthasarathy has used the third-person narrative in all his novels, except in *ET*, which describes his experiences in Poland when he was working as Professor of Tamil at the Warsaw University. In the interview to the Researcher, Parthasarathy explains why he prefers the third person narrative to the first person narrative in a novel: "The use of the first person narrative has several limitations. The 'I' cannot be everywhere. As a result I may not be able to convey everything. But I've used the first
person narrative technique in my short stories. It is convenient to use the third person narrative in a novel" (Appendix I). An analysis of the narrative technique in KP will clarify the point. In this novel, the "omniscient" narrator sees into the mind of characters, moving when necessary from one to another. The narration proceeds as follows:

Chapter 1: Siva's point of view is given.

Chapter 2: Gopal's point of view is given and the flashback technique is used to link the past and the present.

Chapter 3: The points of view of Gopal and Siva alternate.

Chapter 4: Begins with Ramaiah's point of view and shifts to Siva's.

Chapter 5: The story is told from Gopal's point of view.

Chapter 6: Begins with Siva's point of view and shifts to Gopal's.

Chapters 7 and 8: Are written from Gopal's point of view.

Chapter 9: Siva's point of view is given. In this chapter, Siva's point of view is a must because Gopal is attacked by Kanniah Naidu's men and is admitted in the hospital, having lost his consciousness.

Chapter 10: The point of view of Siva and Gopal alternate.

Chapter 11: Is written from Gopal's point of view.

Chapter 12: Siva's point of view is given.

Chapters 13-15: The story is given from Gopal's point of view. The end of the novel shows a remarkable fusion of reality and supreme imagination. In reality the river is full of water. But it
ii) The second type of point of view is the *internal* point of view. Gerald Prince says that in such narratives, everything is "presented in terms of the knowledge, feelings, and perceptions of one or several characters" (51). The narrative is told through the perspective of one single character who participates in the action, or through the perspectives of multiple characters who participate in the action, offering a different point of view of the same experience. Parthasarathy's *ET* is of this type. Bellow's *AAM, HRK, HG, MDH* and *Ravelstein* belong to this category.

iii) The third type of point of view is called the *external* point of view. The narrator sees and narrates things strictly from the outside. He does not enter the mind of any character and tells what the characters say leaving the reader to infer their thoughts and feelings.

Parthasarathy makes use of interior monologue with great skill. An interior monologue is "an extended presentation of a character's thoughts, not in the seemingly helter-skelter order of a stream of consciousness, but in an arrangement as if the character were speaking out loud to himself, for us to overhear" (23). Parthasarathy employs interior monologue extensively in his novels. In the interview to the Researcher he talks about this technique:

**SS:** In order to delve deep into a character or a scene, you often use interior monologue. For example, the character of Jayaraman is *MV* is revealed through this technique. Do you use it consciously and deliberately as a technique?
IP: It has been conscious but I have used it because the situation has demanded it. (Appendix I)

Parthasarathy's concept of death as the ultimate reality, his comment on the absurdity of human existence and the alienation of man in an indifferent universe, and his compassion for the downtrodden are revealed through the interior monologue in his fiction. Mark Schorer's comment on the use of techniques is applicable to Parthasarathy's style: "... technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend to it; technique is the only means he has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning, and finally of evaluating" (71). Parthasarathy's characters reveal themselves in their interaction with a series of events through their speech and action.

Both Bellow and Parthasarathy use subtle images to reveal the hidden regions of human psyche. For example, in *Tivukal*, Parthasarathy portrays the feelings of insecurity and loneliness of Satheesh who was subjected to solitary confinement by his own mother. In *Herzog*, Bellow reveals the psychic turmoil of Herzog when he witnesses the trial of the woman in the court. These two writers have an admirable skill in describing the depths of human psyche. In *The Victim*, the portrayal of the complex relationship between Leventhal and Allbee is an example.
Jonathan Wilson makes a subtle analysis of Allbee's role in Leventhal's life:

Arriving after Leventhal's wife has departed and departing before she returns, Allbee is a convenient outlet for Leventhal's self-loathing, something that we may legitimately interpret is in part derived from both his disgust at his own sexual desires that have surfaced in his wife's absence and from his fear at what the transformation of such impulses into action may bring. Leventhal's "bad blood" is caused, we will remember, among other things, by lust ... Allbee as "dark self" is also a projected self, sometimes a personified animus and sometimes a diabolic, surrogate wife or mistress, stroking Leventhal's hair, or mysteriously entering and leaving his apartment so that the building's superintendent suspects that Leventhal has a lover. (65)

In KP, Parthasarathy has made an attempt to introduce a very complex psychological element in a novel of social realism. When all the other writers in Tamil Nadu were focusing on the Keezha Venmani carnage and the atrocities of the landlords, Parthasarathy, without worrying about the bitter criticism of his treatment of the story, tried to portray the causes behind the carnage in his own way. He strongly denies that he has given less importance to the plight of the poor peasants in the village. In the interview to the Researcher, Parthasarathy explains why he has introduced the controversial factor
The imagery here reflects the deeper psychic level of the two characters. It shows the barrenness of the alienated person's mind. The difference between the technique of the art as mere skill and the technique of the art as an aesthetic experience is that the latter emerges from a desire to share his experience in a genuine way. Parthasarathy's technique is that of the art as an aesthetic experience. This is clearly seen in his use of dialogues.

In *Radical Innocence: Studies in the Contemporary American Novel*, Ihab Hassan discusses the trends in the American novel during the later half of the twentieth century. Hassan's analysis perfectly suits Parthasarathy's fiction also. Hassan's hypothesis is that the pattern of experience in contemporary fiction is largely existential. The "existential," in Hassan's opinion, carries broader connotations: "Just as Melville could be considered a symbolic writer without belonging to the group of French Symbolists who gathered around Mallarme, so can an American novel be termed existential without benefiting from the dogmas of Sartre or Heidegger... Serious writers, such as Ralph Ellison, Norman Mailer, William Styron, Paul Bowles, and Saul Bellow, have often placed the existential pattern of experience at the center of their work" (115). Hassan mentions five interrelated aspects to suggest the main feature of the "world," the "hero," and the corresponding "structure" of fiction (116-17). First, chance and absurdity rule human actions. The hero is aware of this fact and understands that reality means chaos. The gap between intention and reality creates psychological and sociological problems in his life. Secondly, the hero encounters nothingness. His courage is the
courage of simply "being." Courage is the prime virtue because it brings self-sufficiency, conferring dignity or meaninglessness. The courage to be emerges from the realization that what is put on trial is the very existence of man, not his heritage or future. So contemporary fiction acknowledges "the nakedness of man by a parody of manners, quests, social or religious absolutes" (Hassan 116). Thirdly, the hero is at odds with his environment, with himself. His aggressions are either directed against the world or against himself. He remains a misfit, alienated from others. Fourthly, the protagonist cuts across the lines of good and evil and so there are no blameless heroes in fiction. Herzog and Dhruv are examples of this type. Finally, the hero is seldom a tragic figure in the classical sense because he has not got the complete knowledge of the happenings of things in the universe. Hassan avers: "The pattern of fiction is therefore neither tragic nor comic. It shows the hero to be a child of ironies... The form provides the hero with more freedom of action than tragedy strictly allows, and less freedom than comedy permits. Form becomes, as it were, an ironic mask, weeping and leering in one concerted grimace at the proud fallibility of man. The grimace itself is the measure of man's dignity" (118). In Hassan's view the hero of contemporary fiction "is perhaps too much the victim to be considered tragic. But he is also too much the rebel to meet the requirements of comedy"(119). So Hassan considers irony rather than comedy or tragedy as the basis of the existential pattern of contemporary fiction. He believes that irony is the traditional mode of which the existential form is a modern variant. Hassan quotes the words
of Cyrus Hay who says about the meeting place of tragedy and comedy: "This is the great irony of life that man can envision an ideal of good... and yet fails to achieve it. The failure can occasion, either tears or laughter: tears in recognition of the fact that this is the way life is; laughter at the folly of those who fail to recognize that this is the way life is" (qtd. in Hassan 120). Hassan's argument is that at the root both of tragedy and comedy lies the perception that man does not have the full knowledge of his limitations. This perception, insofar as it is a conscious insight, indicates irony.

Hassan refers to Northrop Frye's views on the "inevitable irony" and the "incongruous irony" of human life. In Frye's view, Adam stands for the inevitable irony and Christ for the incongruous irony. In *The Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye differentiates between these two aspects: "The archetype of the inevitably ironic is Adam, human nature under sentence of death. At the other pole is the incongruous irony of human life, in which all attempts to transfer guilt to a victim give that victim something of the dignity of innocence. The archetype of the incongruously ironic is Christ, the perfect innocent victim excluded from human society" (qtd. in Hassan 121). Hassan points out that between Adam and Christ, between inevitable and incongruous irony, stands the figure of Job, "a would-be rebel whose failure, unlike that of Prometheus, is more bitter or absurd than tragic" (Hassan 121). In Hassan's opinion, Job represents better than Adam or Christ the archetype of existential man. In the works of Bellow and Parthasarathy, the ironic mode is used effectively to portray the
and morality in **Ravelstein** are given in an impartial manner. In the novels of Parthasarathy, there is often a debate through interior monologue or dialogue on key issues. Kasturi’s relationship with Meena in **TB**, the two sides of the character of Sankaran in **Vēcaṅkal**, the complexity in man-woman relationship in **TA, HKI** and **VTK**, Gopal’s relationship with Pankajam in **KP**, the conflict between the mother and her daughter in **Tivukal**, the dilemma of Jayaraman in **MV**, the views of Dhruv and Sandhya in **AT**, the tension between tradition and modernity in **UV** and the conflict in the mind of Kesavan in **Vērpattru** are given with utmost objectivity. Parthasarathy clearly states in an interview that he intends to remain detached from his characters:

**JA:** Gandhiji said that not only the ends but also the means should be good. Would you comment on this, taking into consideration the following statements? “When the struggle is for justice, the choice of the weapon depends on the nature of the situation” (**CVC** 194). “We are waiting for the second coming of Jesus Christ. There may be sickle and hammer in the hands which carried the cross once” (**ET** 259).

**IP:** These are not my statements. A character speaks in a particular context. (qtd. in Albert 238-39)

What Harper Jr. says about Bellow perfectly suits Parthasarathy also: “He offers neither easy optimism nor unearned bitterness; and his honest, inspired, and relentless examination of the human condition has given his work an interest which is both timely and timeless” (64).
Though Bellow and Parthasarathy prefer the theistic side of existentialism to the atheistic side, they do not express their views explicitly on the existence of God and other religious concerns. They try to present their themes without colouring them by their opinions. Parthasarathy avers that one's belief in God is a highly personal matter. The immediate reply which he gives in the interview to Joseph Albert is significant:

**JA:** Do you believe in the existence of God?

**IP:** I don't know. (Laughs). This is a difficult question to answer... The realization of God is a personal experience. (qtd. in Albert 241)

The point is that Parthasarathy never intends to preach explicitly. He believes that some of the mysteries in the universe are beyond the knowledge of man.

Similarly, Bellow avoids his comment on the existence of God and the practice of rituals. The answer he gives in the interview to D. Venkateswarlu is interesting:

**DV:** Do you celebrate Rosh Hashana?

**SB:** No, my lady friend observes it.

**DV:** Don't you observe it.

**SB:** She does.

**DV:** What about you, sir?

**SB:** I observe her observe it. (41)

The emphasis on objectivity is not intended to reject completely the inner feelings of an author. The dichotomy between the personal vision of
the world and the aesthetic sensibility of an author always exists in a literary work. As Walter Allen says, every novelist gives in his novels "his own personal idiosyncratic vision of the world" (17). Henry James also defines the novel as "a personal, a direct impression of life" (508). Nevertheless, a good work of art presents the vision of human life from an objective point of view, though it stems from the writer's personal view.

Both Bellow and Parthasarathy are impartial in the interpretation of events and in the delineation of characters. Like Galsworthy, they portray both the positive and the negative sides of people with an artist's characteristic detachment. They are not didactic in their presentation of themes. They are able to mix different styles successfully. The journalistic form of DM is totally different from the picaresque form of HRK. **Krishna**... **Krishna** is completely different from KP or NN in terms of style; the former is an interpretation of a myth while KP and NN are novels of social realism. The aim of these two writers is to present the concept of humanistic existentialism through appropriate technical devices. The imagery in their novels is largely functional. It reveals the interior regions of human psyche. A constant movement from the past to the present and from the present to the past in the minds of the protagonists make their novels symbolic and suggestive. Their novels show a fine fusion of realism and fantasy, the country atmosphere and the urban panorama.

Both Bellow and Parthasarathy are committed writers, socio-psychological dimensions playing a vital role in their writings. But the fact remains that in their writings form and content coalesce. Their writings
prove to be works of art, their use of narrative art saving their writings from being mere propaganda.