CHAPTER: 1

INTRODUCTION

Time, History and Memory define human life and make us human in American - Jewish fiction. Study of these factors enriches the whole human race. Jewish-American writers have tended to avoid evoking the Holocaust directly and to repudiate nihilism that it implicitly suggests. To know about the Holocaust directly or indirectly provides the information about brutalities done on a certain group of human beings or "The Chosen Ones".

American - Jewish women writers are oppressed in two ways: One because they are women and the other because they are Jews. The present thesis intends to focus on their plight and also focus on the sorrows of all the women in the world, the so called "Second Sex", because the men consider themselves as "First Sex". And this I intend to do by analyzing the powerful works of two Jewish-American women writers Cynthia Ozick and Erica Jong. But before committing for pen to the detailed study of their novels it is necessary to understand American - Jewishness with the help of following factors;
a) Hebrew in America:

The oft quote adage that "Hebraic mortar has cemented the foundations of American democracy" was undoubtedly coined because of the influence of the Bible on early American society. It was the theological interest in the Bible that led to the study of the Hebrew language at various educational institutions beginning with colonial times when Hebrew was a required subject of study. That the seals of such universities as Yale, Columbia, and Dartmouth still retain Hebrew inscriptions attests to the high regard in which the language was held. The large number of Hebrew grammars and lexicons published in U.S. country over a long period attest to the popularity of biblical and Hebrew learning among non-Jews.¹ Judah Monis, a converted Jew who was professor of Hebrew at Harvard, was the author of the first grammar, entitled A Grammar of the Hebrew Tongue, which was published in 1934.

The very first book printed in the American colonies, The Bay Psalm Book (1640) consisted of a translation of the Psalms and contained Hebrew type and a preface by Richard Mather on Hebrew poetry and the Hebrew language. There is also the fascinating report
quoted by Henry Mencken in his book *The American Language* that at the close of the American Revolution some members of Congress proposed that English be prohibited and Hebrew be substituted for the language of the mother country.

Despite the early interest in Hebrew in America, the fact remains that Hebrew literary activity among American Jews is of comparatively late origin. It was not until the advent of the increased Jewish immigration during the second half of the nineteenth century that we have the beginnings of publication in Hebrew. Until that time, the small Jewish population had few Hebrew scholars, and the use of the language was limited to religious purposes. The few examples of secular Hebrew usage by Jews, such as the Hebrew commencement address delivered in 1800 at Columbia College by Sampson Simson, the first Jewish graduate, remain but oddities.

By the middle of the nineteenth century there was a slow influx of rabbis and religious functionaries who brought with them the knowledge of Hebrew, which they tried to foster here. Such men as Isaac Leeser, Sabato Morais, Benjamin Szold, and Henry Vidaver included Hebrew writing and scholarship among their interests. Gradually the arrival of East European intellectuals widened the audience for Hebrew endeavor. Among the early East European
rabbis was Joshua Falk, who in 1860 published *Avne Yehoshua* (The Stones of Joshua), a commentary on the Ethics of the Fathers. His book has the distinction of being the first Hebrew book printed in America.

The American Hebrew press had its inception with the publication in 1871 of *Ha-Zofeh ba-Arez ha-Hadashah* (The Observer in the New Land), which lasted for some five years. Its editor was Zvi Hirsch Bernstein, who sought to provide the new immigrants with a link to the Old World and to create an organ that would help integrate them into their new life. To further these aims, Bernstein solicited contributions from Hebrew writers in Europe and encouraged the publication of material on American life and history. Except for the publication in Chicago of a Hebrew supplement of the Yiddish newspaper *Die Israelitische Presse*, no other journalistic effort was made until the end of the 1880s.

The widespread study of Hebrew has been strengthened by the rapid rise of the Hebrew day school movement and the proliferation of programs of Jewish and Hebrew studies in colleges and universities. The National Association of Professors of Hebrew, consisting both of Jewish and non-Jewish members, sponsors publications and conferences to further the cause of Hebrew. An
additional factor that has led to an increased awareness of the role of the Hebrew language are the varied study-abroad programs for American Jewish youth conducted by the universities in Israel. In the United States, the Kaplan method for the study of Hebrew, introduced in Israel, has won wide acceptance and has resulted in the establishment of a large number of Kaplan courses.

b) Holocaust and the Jews:

During the Nazi era, the American national myth of exceptionalism- a belief in Americans special destiny governed polices and passions. American's struggle with the depression and its unpleasant memory of having been manipulated into entering world war I promoted an isolationist mood. Few actually landed the ascendant national socialist movement in Germany (Pro- Nazi rallies in America, though frightening were Marginal), but few actively-opposed the Nazi persecution of German Jews. After the Nazi boycott of Jewish stores in April 1943, for example, American reporters expressed outrage (briefly), but the Roosevelt administration remained indifferent.

In fairness, the signs of sustained anti - Semitic violence in Nazi Germany were not easy for Americans to discern. The boycott
was after all, a failure an indication that the situation might improve. Decrees in the spring of 1933 forbidding Jews to hold office seemed unimportant during the next two years of relative calm. Even the Nuremberg laws of 1935, prohibiting Germans and German Jews from mixing, seemed innocuous, interested in projecting a positive image to the rest of the world, especially during the Berlin Olympics in 1936, the Nazis were not eager to risk notoriety by enforcing racial policies.

Events in 1937-1938 draw the concern of the west for the first time. As the Nazis prepared for military dominance, they searched for ways to become self-sufficient independent, above all of Jewish participation in the Reich's economy by "Aryanizing" (Confiscating) Jewish businesses, they hoped to pressure Jews into leaving the Reich. Faced with the prospect of refugees seeking political asylum, the western nations, led by the United states, met in Evian, France in July 1938. That conference presaged the world's indifference to the worsening situation in Nazi occupied Europe, No nation was willing to open its doors. There was not even a resolution condemning Nazi anti-Semitic practices. The United States delegation announced only that it would continue admitting German and Austrian immigrants (among others), at the unimpressively rate of about
27,000 per year. (Between 1938 and 1941, the United States accepted a total of 124,000 immigrants) Sentiments at home were the decisive factor; these reflected the intense support for strict quotas; American seared competing with refugees for scarce jobs, and many prone to anti-Semitism, were especially opposed to admitting Jews. Unintentionally, the Roosevelt administration sent a signal to the Nazis. The Nazis could feel free to find a radical "solution" to the Jewish problem.

The American entry into World War II in 1941 at last mobilized the nation against the Nazis. Although fighting to preserve democratic ideals, and determined to win the war, Americans showed little sympathy for the victims of genocide. Even when reports of the death camps, in 1942 - 1943, alerted American officials to the horror, no one with any authority budged. They wanted more evidence. At most, Roosevelt promised to reface European Jews only through an allied victory. When, for example, it become possible to bomb the death camp Auschwitz - Birkenau in 1943 - 1944, the Allies practically went out of their way to avoid doing so. Ways were found only to bomb a synthetic rubber works and SS barracks, approximately 7 kilometers from Auschwitz. With the exception of the War Refugee Board established early in 1944 to
separate Jews away from the Nazis, and the Oswego project (the relocation of hundreds of Jews to Oswego, New York), Jews were invisible victors of the Nazis. Only when the Allies liberated the death camps in 1945 did a few Americans finally begin to accept the enormity of the Nazi crimes.

Until the late 1970s, Americans were, for the most part, unwilling to grasp fully the facts of Nazi annihilation of close to six million European Jews. But there were several dramatic developments that momentarily did disturb their apathy. First was the prosecution of Nazi criminals before the International military Tribunal (IM) in Nuremberg in 1945 - 1946. In assembling the evidence, the prosecution offered explanations for the carnage that the world first learned about towards the end of the war. However, by focusing attention on Nazi criminals, the IMT maintained the veil that blinded the western world to the victims of the Nazi inferno.

During the 1950s, concern about the Nazi era receded to an all time low. Most survivors who managed to start a new life in the United States wanted to return to a 'normal' life their voices, which would eventfully stir people's consciences, were momentarily still.³ But one event aroused, renewed interest was the publication of Anne Frank's diary. That moving testimony of one young girl's life in
handing in Amsterdam fascinated (and still fascinates) readers, especially young students who can easily understand Anne Frank's adolescent struggles. By expressing her ideals and hopes, however, it avoided discussing the suffering endured by so many Jews and other victims in favor of preserving a faith in mankind. Emblematic of the historical amnesia that characterized the 1950s, the diary overshadowed two seminal textual studies from this decade that defined the scope of the Nazi assault: Leon Poliakov's "Harvest of Hate: The Nazi program for the destruction of the Jews of Europe " (French edition, 1951; English edition, 1954) and Gerad Reithinger's" The Final solution: The Attempt to exterminate the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945).

The year 1961 was the first of two major turning points in America's struggle to remember the Holocaust. Tellingly, Americans were still dependent on others for their information and insights. The lessons that Holocaust centers strive to teach deal, for the most part, with the consequences of prejudice and discrimination, the virtues of democracy and how a commitment to democratic practices can help protect future generations from totalitarian temptations. Indeed questions for discussion that end a unit in a curriculum for example, typically ask students to consider what they might have done, had
they observed the persecution of Jews and what they believe are appropriate responses to the world wide persecution of minorities today. The Holocaust era, therefore, provides ample case studies to sharpen a student’s normal and civic self awareness. This is an important educational objective, but it is not complete. It defines the historical study of the Holocaust era merely as a pretext for an interior discussion of issues facing Americans today. As a result, the programs and publication sponsored by most centers give less importance than they should to the Holocaust era itself. Although, devoted to remembering the Holocaust, they are ironically engaged in more than little avoidance of the subject.

Ambiguity has characterized American reactions to the Holocaust in the past and today. This is true because Americans find themselves in the convenient position of not feeling forced to confront the Nazi past, the way Germans and Austrians are having defeated Nazism. Americans, again and again, have been able to affirm their distance. By clinging to the national myths of the democratic experiment and historical exceptionalism, they have succeeded in keeping aloof. (The disclosures of French collaboration with the Nazis and French wartime anti-Semitic initiatives have corroded the governing French-Gaullist myth of a nation that
mobilized itself to resist the Nazi yoke). But any past, and surely one so deeply resonant as the Nazi past, invades a present day American life in spite of all the cultural defenses erected against it.

Less explicit but at least as potent, is the legacy of the Holocaust era in the lives of other Americans. Is there not, for example, a new awareness that a nation can implement a policy of human extinction, and has not that awareness introduced an urgency to the basic impulse to survival? Has not this dreadful knowledge reinforced an anxiety about the future of humanity? Isn't it now accepted that innocent civilians can be mysteriously deemed an enemy and defined as a target for all our assault? This is the embryonic logic of modern terrorism and contributes to the terrorism with which we still live. Given the proximity of violence in our time, is it any longer morally defensible to remain an onlooker? Doesn't such proximity confer new responsibilities on individuals as witnesses. After the Munich pact (the treaty authorized in 1938 by British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to appease Nazi imperial ambitions) isn't neutrality the moral equivalent of complicity? Americans like to see themselves as the main purveyors of ideals formed during the enlightenment, that intellectual revolution promoting faith in reason and progress. But
no one the least bit familiar with the Holocaust can doubt that scientific progress can yield destructive as well as productive results. (In the shadow of the Holocaust, such technological hallmarks as the factory and its furnaces railroad trains, and medical discoveries forebode something deeply ominous). Religious and legal codes of ethics and the supremacy of the law have also been survived by Nazi practices and are susceptible to misuse. And the Holocaust emerged from an advanced civilization, nurtured by the same ideals as those Americans cherish, no American can doubt that as civilization progresses so does its destructive potential.

Traditional American myths and ideals have proven resilient in the face of the Holocaust. But do Americans clinging to these beliefs from faith or from doubt? If from faith, the Holocaust has irrevocably transformed the postwar world.

c) **Jewish Orthodoxy**: 

Orthodox Judaism is the oldest of the three major branches of Judaism as established in the United States. It is committed to the maintenance of the Mosaic code as outlined in the "Torah" (Bible), the oral law (Talmud), and Jewish law as interpreted throughout the
ages by the major rabbinic figures of their times and codified in the "Shulhan Arukh" (the code of Jewish Law)

The first congregations in the American colonies were established in accordance with orthodox ritual. This Shearith Israel, the oldest congregation in the United States, founded in New York in 1654, was orthodox. The ritual used by most of the colonial congregations was the western European version of the Sephardic rite. Besides congregations, the early Jews also established "Mikvans" (ritual baths), set up 'Kosher' (ritually slaughtered) meat slaughtering facilities, and closed their stores on the Sabbath. Yet the New World with its professed policy of religious freedom posed many obstacles to traditional Jewish living. There were no rabbinic authorities, and the small numbers of Jews made inter marriage a problem. Indeed, while the congregations were organized on traditional basis, only a small number of their members were in fact completely observant. The fact that America was not looked upon favorably by the European rabbinic authorities encouraged most observant Europeans. Jews should not come to America. (This attitude only changed in the mid twentieth century with the rise of Nazism in Germany) The United States did not have a fully ordained resident rabbi (Jewish priest) till they arrived from Germany in
1881, few other orthodox rabbi followed suit. Yet until the 1840s Judaism in America was based on Orthodox ritual, although there were few outstanding leaders or scholars. Gershom Mendes Seixas (1746-1816), the cantor and spiritual leader of New York's Shearith Israel Synagogue (Jewish Church) was perhaps the period's best known Orthodox leader, but he was largely self educated and hardly a scholar.

The arrival of thousands of central European Jews in the United States in the late 1830s and 1840s not only increased the Jewish population in the United States but also saw the start of the reform movement, among the arrivals were influential reform leaders such as Isaac M. Wise (1819-1900), David Einhorn (1809-1879), and Samud Adler (1809-1891). They and other reform rabbis led a spirited and often bitter struggle to break the orthodox hold on Judaism and establish reform Judaism where they were largely successful in this struggle, they faced vehement orthodox opposition in their bid to reform Jewish ritual and synagogue practice. Isaac Lesser (1806-1868) Stands out as the most prominent among the important orthodox Jewish leaders in mid nineteenth century America. From his pamphlet in Philadelphia and his newspaper, "The Occident" (1843-1868), he led the battle against the reform
movement. Among his achievements was the establishment of the first American rabbinical college, Mainmonides College (1867) in Philadelphia. Other orthodox leaders were the previously mentioned Rice, who was the chief authority on Jewish law in the United States, Bernard Illowy (1812-1871) and Morries J. Raphael (1798-1968) of New York.

By the end of the civil war, reform had come to dominate the Jewish religious scene in the United States and orthodoxy found itself on the defensive. Orthodoxy was limited to several dozen synagogues in the United States. One group of orthodox Jews were the old line Sephardic and German congregations who chose to remain loyal to their traditions. These "western" orthodox loyalists were led by Sabato Morais (1823-1897), Henry Pereina Mendes (1852-1937), Bernard Drachman (1861-1945), and Henry Schnce Berger (1848-1916) of Baltimore. Another group of orthodox Jews were the recent immigrants from Eastern Europe centered in New York city. Their spiritual center was the Beth Medrash Hagadol Synagogue on New York's lower east side. Its rabbi, Abraham J. Ash (1813-1888) was regarded as the group's senior spiritual leader. The western and Eastern groups, although sharing a common allegiance to orthodoxy, differed on many points such as the
modernization of synagogue services, use of English and religious liturgical ritual. Thus there was little co-operation between them, and ultimately, the western orthodox group developed what orthodox later became conservative and modern orthodox Judaism. The eastern European orthodox groups evolved into a more fundamentalist orthodoxy.

The mass immigration of hundreds of thousands of Jews to the United States from Czarist Russia starting in 1881 reinforced orthodoxy within 10 years, hundreds of new orthodox synagogues and prayer houses were established. What had been perceived as a dying orthodoxy suddenly underwent a revival. Besides synagogues, traditional orthodox institutions evolved, such as Kosher butcher stores, ritualariums (mikvah), religious schools and the like.

However, leadership and organization was lacking because there were no prestigious scholars among the new comers and hardly any English-speaking orthodox rabbis. Thus, each group of Orthodox Jews developed its own way of solving these problems.

The "western" orthodox groups, with the financial support and moral encouragement of prominent reform lay leaders such as Louis Marshall (1856-1929) and Jacob Schiff (1847-1920) established the Jewish Theological Seminary (1886) as a rabbinical seminary to
train English speaking secularly educated rabbis for all segments of American orthodoxy. Indeed, until its reorganization in 1902, the Seminary was an orthodox school, whose faculty consisted of men like Morais, Mendes and Druchman. Yet the eastern European orthodox population and rabbinate looked down the seminary because of its inferior level of Talmudic study.

The western group also established the Union of Orthodox Jewish congregations of America in 1889 as a means of solving the leadership and organizational problem of American orthodoxy. This organization, however failed to attract any significant following among the eastern European Jews until well into the twentieth century.

The eastern European Jews sought to solve the problem of rabbinic leadership by setting up a Chief Rabbinate for New York. In 1888, they installed a well-known Lithuanian rabbi, R. Jacob Joseph (d.1902), as Chief Rabbi of New York. Although this experiment failed the fact that a man of Rabbi Joseph's stature would come to America encouraged other eastern European rabbis to immigrate to the United States. By the twentieth century, there were a number of competent rabbinical authorities residing in the north east. Following Rabbi Joseph's death in 1902, these recognized
eastern European rabbis formed an organization called *Agudeth Ha-Rabbonim* the Union of orthodox Rabbis of the United States.

This group sought to set standards for therabbinate and exert leadership on behalf of Orthodox Jewery in the United state, and it remained the most significant orthodox tribune until the 1950s. Among its leaders were rabbis Eliezer Sihler, Israel Rosenberg, Moses S. Margolces, Bernard Levinthal and Gaffen Tobias The problem of producing future generations of native rabbis for the United States did not generally concern the Eastern European orthodox leaders as they could always import European rabbis. This attitude greatly hurt orthodoxy in its efforts to pass its traditions on the second generation, American born Jewish successors. Yet, in 1897, a small traditional *Yeshva* or Talmudic academy, was started in New York on the lower east side. It was not designed as a rabbinical college but rather as a place of study for young European rabbinical scholars who had come to America, even so, a number of these refugee scholars did eventually become rabbinical and educational leaders in the United States. This small school named for the late Chief Rabbi of Kolna, Isaac Ethanan Specter (1817-1896), eventually grens to become Yeshiva college and later *Yeshiva* University under the leadership of Bernard Revel (1885-1940).
By the beginning of World War I, a full-scale orthodox Jewish life existed in most Jewish communities in the United States with 500 or more Jews. These communities have synagogues, rabbis, teachers, ritual slaughters and schools among life was located in major cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Baltimore. But orthodoxy could not hold the second generation American Jew. The powerful forces of assimilation, secularization, socialism upward mobility and Americanization in general made orthodoxy look "old world", primitive, foreign, and associated with the and associated with the poverty of the first generation immigrants. Orthodoxy had failed to produce an English-speaking rabbinate and had not set up any meaningful effective school system to teach its beliefs to the younger generation. Yet, it must be added that a small number of American born or educated youth did remain orthodox and attempted to build an American version of orthodoxy.

With the end of World War I, orthodoxy faced new challenges. As mass emigration from eastern Europe to the United states declined, orthodoxy was found dependent on attaining the loyalties of second generation American Jews. As a religious group, Orthodoxy was challenged by conservation Judaism, an outgrowth of the previously orthodox Jewish Theological Seminary.
Conservative Judaism, its loyalty to tradition, yet was in favor of significant change in ritual, liturgy, and practice; In its battle with orthodoxy, it held upper hand until well into the 1960s.

However, the small group of second generation orthodox followers took step to build a new and more attractive orthodoxy, which was organized in New York City. The Rabbi Isaac Elhanan Rabbinical School was reorganized as a high school (1916) and a college - Yeshiva - (1925) and formal rabbinic American trained, English - speaking, orthodox rabbis. Under the leadership of Bernard Revel, Yeshiva College became the undisputed center or Talmudic scholarship and orthodox Judaism in the United states until well into the 1970s. By the late 1920s, a small cadre of English - speaking orthodox rabbis were in place. The Hebrew Theological College, an institution similar to Yeshiva college, was founded in Chicago in 1922 with rabbi Saul Silber (1881-1946) as its president. Several smaller rabbinical schools also existed in Brooklyn and the lower east side at this time. Graduates of these schools as well as other English speaking orthodox rabbis, founded the Rabbinical council of America in 1935. Among the prominent members of the Rabbinical council were rabbis Joseph H. Lookstein (1902-1979) rabbi of New York's fashionable Kehillah Jeshurun Synagogue and

Together with the union of orthodox Jewish Congregations and the newly created National council of Young Israel Synagogues (1912), a loose alliance of English - speaking orthodox congregation aimed at second and third generation Americans, was created and thus, the institutional framework for what was to be called modern orthodoxy was put in place. With the appointment in 1939 of Rabbi Joseph B. Solvent Chik (b.1903) as head of the Talmud faculty of Yeshiva college, modern orthodoxy gained a respected and influential leader who was to dominate modern orthodoxy well into the present.

As modern orthodoxy emerged, there was also the corresponding development of a new movement was centered in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, around the mesifta Torah V'daath (f-1917), directed by Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz (1886-1948). Under Mendelowitz's leadership, this school had grown from a small elementary school to include a rabbinical program with
prominent scholars on the faculty. What separated Torah V'daath from Yeshiva college was a more restrained attitude toward secular education, interpretation of Jewish law. Yet at the point (the 1930s) all were part of the same orthodox grouping.

During this time, one could also detect the beginnings of a home grown American Hasidic Movement. Although tens of thousands of Hasidism (mostly labavitch) had arrived in the United States prior to the world war I, few any were able to pass their traditions on to a second generation. Following a year long visit to the United States in 1929, the sixth labavitcher Rebbe; Rabbi Joseph I Schnerroshn (1880-1950), revived interest in Hasidism among American orthodox youth. Several small lubavitch groups were established in New York, and several dozen young Men travelled to Poland to study under Schnnershon's tutelage.

The 1930s also saw the establishment of a number of orthodox Jewish high schools, which eventually grew into rabbinical colleges. Among the better known were Yeshivah chaim Berlin in Brooklyn (1939), under the leadership of a charismatic scholar from Europe, Rabbi Isaac Hunter (1907-1980), Yeshivah Tifferth Jerusalem (1934), in Manhattan under the leadership of Rabbi Moses Feinstein (1895-1986), who was eventually to become the
leading authority on Jewish law in the United states; and the Ner Israel Yeshiva in Baltimore (1933), under the leadership of Rabbi Jacob I. Ruderman (1901-1987). Yet, until world war II, orthodoxy in the United States was still dominated by the old line Yiddish-speaking rabbi, synagogue, and laymen. The voice of orthodoxy was still predominantly the voice of the poor, the refugee, and the uneducated.

With the rise of Nazism in Germany and later in Austria, a new stream of Jewish immigrants arrived in the United States. Among them were a small group of highly dedicated and educated orthodox Jews. A group of orthodox Jews from Germany reorganized themselves in the Washington heights section of New York under the leadership of Rabbi Joseph Brever (1892-1980) This group, known as Khal Adas Jeshurun, built a full scale orthodox community with a synagogue, school system, and a Kashruth network. This group played an important role in proving that orthodoxy could be transplanted to the United States, with its strict standards intact.

Austrian refugees included a large number of orthodox Jews who belonged to the strict separatist tradition of Hungarian Orthodox and synagogues in New York under the leadership of
scholars like Rabbi Samud Ehrenfeld (d.1970) of Mattesdorf, Austria and Rabbi Levi Y. Grunewald (d. 1980) of Deutsh Kreutz, Austria. Grunewald was responsible for raising the standards of Kosher milk and meat in the United States and laid the groundwork for the post world war II Hasidic influx to New York.

The onset of World War II brought tens of thousands of orthodox Jews to the United States in the period between 1939 and 1951. Among these were prominent rabbis, Yeshiva deans, Hasidic leaders and their followers and lay orthodox Jews. As a rule, the new immigrants were better educated in Judaism than their American counterparts and more concerned about Jewish education for their children.

A group of American orthodoxy, known as Yeshiva world, was organized around the Agudah Israel of America, whose dominating figure was Rabbi Musha Sherer. The Agudah was governed by a council of Torah sages consisting primarily of Yeshiva deans. Since 1945, its membership has included Rabbi Aaron Kotler, Moses Feinstein, Shneur Kotlar (d.1982) Jacob Kaminestsky (1891-1986), Israel Spiro (1897-1987), Isaac Hutner, and Jacob Ruderman. The organ of the Agudath was the Jewish observer.
The Modern orthodox camp, the Yeshiva world, and Rabbi Mindel Owitz joined force to organize the Torah U' Mesorach Movement (f. 1944) the National council of Jewish Day Schools, which sought to establish orthodox day schools across the United states. By the 1960s the movement came under the domination of the 'Yeshiva World'. Schools were established in cities with 5000 or more Jews, and a number of high schools and seminaries were also established.

d) Reform Judaism:

Also known as Liberal or Progressive Judaism, Reform Judaism is one of the principal branches of Judaism in the United States and Canada. It is also the largest and longest-lived movement in "liberal religion" in world history. Developing first in West European Jewish communities, most importantly in Germany during the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century, Reform's greater institutional success in North America was predicated on the broad appeal of both its highly adaptive religious program, especially its reduction of ritualism, its attempt to link Jewish religious values with American political liberalism, and its emphasis on the aesthetics of worship.
For most of its first 100 years, with the exception of the original Reformed Society of Israelites (1825-1833), which was led by a handful of Sephardic Jews, American Reform Judaism almost exclusively attracted Jews of Central European origin or descent. During the 1920s, East European Jews and their descendants began to joint Reform temples in steadily increasing numbers and by the 1940s constituted a majority in the movement. Following World War II, sub-ethnic differences diminished in general among American Jews and thus played virtually no role in the shaping of the reform Movement began changing again during the 1970s as the rate of mixed and conversionary marriages soared. From its inception, the American Reform Movement has largely maintained a middle-class social base. It has also been appealing to a significant portion of the socioeconomic elite of the American Jewish community.

Reform Judaism was the first religious movement among American Jews to organize itself on a denominational basis. It pioneered a three track-system of national, or federal, governance in American Judaism that subsequently was adopted by the branches of modern Judaism in North America. Reform's institutional super structure includes an umbrella organization of independent
synagogues (the Union of American Hebrew Congregations [UAHCL], a seminary system (the Hebrew Union College/Jewish Institute of Religion [HOU - JIR], and a professional association of rabbis (the Central Conference of American Rabbis. By the beginning of the 1980s, over 750 American synagogues with more than a million individual members were affiliated with the Reform Movement. Outside of North America, Reform congregations are represented by the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

The basic mode of governance in the American Reform Movement is Congregationalist. Power is principally vested in the board and officers of the individual synagogue. However, since World War II the federal institutions of the movement have dramatically widened the scope of their operations. The UAHC presidency, a professional position held by a rabbi since 1943, is the most visible and, perhaps, most influential leadership role in the movement. On the other hand, the authority of the congregational rabbinate, inherently weak because of the Reform Movement's tradition of trusteeism, its liberal theology, and more broadly, the constitutional separation of the institutions of state and religion in the United States, which has generally limited the power of the American clergy, has been a topic of considerable discussion within
the movement. In part, professionalism and traditional respect for the rabbinic office function as mitigating factors. However, Jewish scholarship, the traditional basis of rabbinic power, has largely given way to the individual rabbi's powers of persuasion, personal warmth, and pastoral skills as the basis for his or her authority at the local level.

e) **Ideology:**

Unlike their counterparts in Europe, early American Reformers did not initially seek Halakic justifications as part of their effort to adapt Judaism to the American cultural milieu. Rather, influenced by the American belief in the sovereign self, they began with their own religious present and then drew eclectically both from contemporary culture and the cumulative Jewish tradition to express and validate their understanding of Judaism. Subsequently, the American Reform Movement generally remained more radical than its counterpart in Germany. Although currently more favorable inclined toward a number of traditional practices than in the past, the overall religious ideology of the movement remains as liberal as ever. For example, the CCAR's 1983 endorsement of patrilineal
descent can be seen as one of the most radical policies ever adopted by an official body of the Reform Movement.

The initial theology of the American Reform Movement was deistic. Although popular religious thought in Reform largely remains in line with that of general American civil religion, an elitist theology, first articulated in Germany and subsequently brought to the United States and Canada by immigrant rabbis during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, is usually presented as the official "religion" of the movement. Two doctrines - Progressive Revelation and the Mission of Israel, derived from classical Jewish sources and Romantic German (Hegelian) philosophy-shaped the ideological character of American Reform during its formative years. In the Reform tradition, revelation was understood in terms of neither a historical theophany at Sinai nor philosophically determined truths. Rather, it was redefined as an ongoing process of individual and collective inspiration in Jewish history. Not only did Progressive Revelation account for the development of the written (Bible) and oral (Talmud) law, but it also sanctioned the work of the reformers themselves. In short, it held that religious change was divinely sanctioned and that the Reform Movement and the Jewish people were God's vanguard on earth.
The second concept, the Mission of Israel, proved more problematic and was gradually abandoned by the Reform Movement. Basically, it maintained that the dispersed Jewish people were a "light to the nations" and that they served as the apostles of ethical monotheism with the goal of creating a just society on earth. "Mission" theology thus helped justify and define the continued existence of the Jewish people in the postemancipatory era.

However, the mission concept was more than a mere universalistic reinterpretation of Judaism's ancient theological view of history. It was a radical reformulation of the idea of the chosen people. It committed Reform Judaism to the maintenance of Jewish endogamy and also provided the movement with a buttress against Christian missionary activity. Universal salvation, mission theology taught, was a Jewish obligation.

It its heyday, the mission idea not only complemented the more enduring notion of progressive revelation, but also gave the American Reform Movement a triumphalistic edge. Closely allied to the nineteenth-century belief in infinite human progress, Reform's mission theology was shaken by the terrible carnage of World War I. Subsequently, it was all but abandoned as Reform reconciled itself with Zionism and embraced Jewish particularism during the 1930s.
An echo of the mission doctrine remains in the movement's commitment to social justice and political action. For the most part, however, contemporary Reform Judaism has lost much of its messianic urgency, and its religious program increasingly serves as a handmaiden to American Jewry's "civil religion" and its Darwinian-like theology of "sacred survival." In limited circles, especially among rabbis and select intellectuals attempts to redefine Reform theology in term of religious existentialism with an emphasis on personal spirituality have been highly successful.

f) **Jewish-American Fiction:**

Contemporary Jewish America fiction is based on some traditional beliefs about the nature of the world, human beings and art. It assumes that however difficult to assess, the world and human life have meanings, that human beings can, to a degree, know the world and that people must live with moral choice and responsibility. Jewish American fiction does not necessarily mirror the world realistically. Indeed fantasy is a major resource of some of the leading writers of Jewish-American fiction.

To read literature is to enter a realm of words which may be elegantly or intricately arranged, but this arrangement bears no
special relationship to the reader's lives and readers are not to try to look through the words to an nameless vision informing them. Since history is seen as a unintelligible flux of phenomena, the efforts of the shaping or ordering imagination to discover or impose meaning are at best ridiculous or fraudulent.

Implicitly, all Jewish - American fiction depends on humanistic assumptions which contradict those of post modernism. Indeed one of the principal values of Jewish - American fiction as a body of work is as a counter example that questions or repudiates most experimental writing since world war II.

Saul bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philp Roth, Tillie Olsen, Grace Paley, Cynthia Ozick, Erica Jong, Herbert Gold, Joseph Heller, E.L. Doctorow, Stanley Elkin. Hugh Nissensons, the list of important Jewish - American fiction writers is staggering in both its variety and excellence. Indisputably, the emergence of American - Jewish fiction writers since World War II,\textsuperscript{6} as Mark Shechner calls it, "a social movement that has had enormous literary consequence. But it is not more than a sociological fact.

Writers who consider the category of Jewish writer valid have vastly differing conceptions of what makes a writer or work Jewish. Jewish tradion and Jewish history, especially centuries of dispersion,
exile, precariousness, homelessness and powerlessness, gave rise to a distinct historical attitude toward humanity and heroes. Pervading Yiddish culture and literature is a questioning, in fact an underplaying of conventional heroism, even a distinct anti heroic bias, no doubt in part based on clear perception of the self destruction resulting from usually vain gestures and a powerless victim's sense of how what passes for the heroic can be egotistical, narcissistic, and brutal. Simply servicing decently and living to tell the tales are often problematic. Being a Jew means being part of a chosen people with a distinct sense of uniqueness purpose and calling. Because the covenant is between God and a people, because Jewish immortality is traditionally seen in terms of survival of the group rather than the individual because in historical fact the continuation of the Jews has been a real question, the world - view is deeply and pervasively social rather than individual oriented toward the group rather than any one person. If the heart of the Protestant experience is the individual soul in relation to god and the heart of Catholicism is the Church, then the heart of Judaism is the family, the biological family and the wider family of the Jewish people.
g) Jewish-American women writers:

Anzia Yezierska, Tillie Olsen, Grace Paley, Edna Ferber, Cynthia Ozick and Erica Jong are some of the important Jewish-American women writers. Anzia Yezierska arrived in America late in the nineteenth century from the Pale and still a child, settled with her family on the lower Eastside. She ran away from her home before she was twenty in order to take advantage of the liberty that she believed America offered to all of its citizens. Living through a period of abject poverty she nevertheless managed to acquire a university education and published her first story in 1915. A number of others that appeared over the next few years were collected in her first volume of tales, "Hungry Hearts" (1920), many of which reflect her own ambivalence between her awakened sense of freedom to live independently and the compelling attraction of familial mores she had left behind in the ghetto.

While, Yezierska's basic problem was a matter of Jewish identity in a free America. In Tillie Olsen's work, faith is recognizably Jewish, she carefully peoples her fictional New York with Puerto Ricans, Blacks and Chinese, and her pervasive political and social message is universalist. The most stirring example of a story that is both deeply Jewish and yet very explicitly committed to
a Universalist vision is her great "Tell me a Riddle" (in the collection of the same name, 1961). Olsen herself suggests this double ness. She considers herself an atheist and proudly describes her father as "incorruptibly atheist to the last day of his life", on the other hand she says, "I still remain with the kind of Yidishkayt I grew up with". What she means by her Yidishkayt is the Jewish socialist background which fostered two essential insights first, "knowledge and experience of injustice, of discrimination of oppression, of genocide and the need to act against them forever and whenever they appear" and second an "absolute belief in the potentialities of human beings".

The stories of Grace Paley explore loosely knit neighborhood relations and emphasize the high values gained through social interaction in the city. Paley's first collection of stories, The Little Disturbances of Man" (1959), introduces New Yorkers who reappear in later ones, including "Enormous changes at the last minute" (1974) and "Later the some Day" (1985). She presents a microcosmic view of America with her assortment of neighborhood New Yorkers, black and white, Jewish and gentile, whom she shows in the midst of ordinary activities- at home, in the park, at school on the street, and in the subway. Paley's characters may well be
emotional, but her women in particular are often outspoken, independent, capable of confronting their day to day problems and coming to terms with even the most trying of them, problems over parents, children, lovers.

Edna Ferber has been called a regional novelist of the west because several of her best sellers have dealt with specific reas, west of the Mississippi though that may not be n appropriate designation. Never a devout Jew, Ferber yet understood and experienced the effect of anti-Semitic prejudice in her own life and consequently it is not surprising to find her dwelling on that theme in some sort of her most enduring novels.

In "Cimarron (1930), a novel of the Oklahoma land rush and its aftermath the popular prejudice is directed chiefly against the nearby Osage Indians until they become wealthy through the discovery of oil on their reservation, whereupon they are suddenly regarded as attractive objects of commercial exploitation. In this novel too, a Jewish merchant is ridiculed during his early years in Oklahoma, and although he accumulates great wealth through shrewd investment, he remains an alien figure in the community as well as an undeveloped one in terms of literary character. In "Great Son" (1945) set partly in Alaska during the Gold Rush but
predominantly in Seattle, Ferber again shows her sensitivity to ethnic prejudice, particularly against Jews and Orientals, but it is in 'Giant' (1952), a sprawling novel of Texas during the first half of the twentieth century, that she makes that theme most pronounced. The understandable regional resentment toward ideals such as nobility, honor, democracy and fairness however overlooked the national implications of Ferber's western portraits in that although she focuses on limited geographical areas, she often dilates the scope of her critiques to attack hypocritical national attitudes toward celebrated American values.

Cynthia Ozick's self-definition as a Jewish Writer (a more pronounced and conscious identification that has been made by any other major American-Jewish writer) is reflected in her brilliant use of specifically Jewish sources. In fact, in much of her best fiction Jewish sources are the fictional core. "Puttermesser and Xanthipe" (1982) is built around a sticking piece of Jewish folklore, the golem, an artificially created human being endowed with life by supernatural means.9

Ozick's most effective stories and novellas are not only steeped in internal Jewish life and lore to a degree that sets them apart from the work of her contemporaries and predecessors, they
are actually Jewish assaults on fields of Gentile influence. Though she admires the transforming magical kind of art Ms. Ozick is, in fact, an intellectual writer whose works are the fictional realization of ideas. Her reader is expected, at the conclusion of her stories to have an insight to understand the point of events rather than to respond to their affective power. Because she is a Jewish writer who prides herself on the "Centrally Jewish" quality of her work, Ms. Ozick has hit letters, poems, parodies, stories. The characters in Cynthia Ozick's first collection of stories *The Pagan Rabbi* are uncommon, and though there is a category of fiction known as "the Jewish-American Novel", Ozick's Jewish characters would not be at ease in the company of the people who appear in the work of Malamud, Bellow, Roth and Co.

Best known for her novel 'Fear of Flying' Erica Long has received both popular and critical recognition for her frank, satirical treatment of sexuality. Her works have been interpreted both as pioneering efforts in the movement toward an authentic and free expression of female sexuality. Some critics have noted that attention to the risque elements of Jong's fiction has eclipsed her treatment of serious social issues in her fiction and poetry. With her iconoclastic challenges to a literary establishment that had never
fully assimilated the achievement of renegade precursors, Jong pushed American letters to be more open of the idea of a woman writer's aspirations to come out of the kitchen and dine at the table of literature in her own right. Her poetry, fiction and essays, as well as her much profiled personal life, depict a particularly robust version of "having it all" bread and roses; work and love; poetry and prose; children and career; laughter and lust, fortune and fame and fun.

Jong's famously autobiographical fiction, jarringly honest poems and compellingly candid memoirs have been taken to heart by women readers around the world. The world struggling with the age-old challenges that Jong's mother faced and that Jong herself negotiated with such aplomb. Targeted by traditionalist critics for being too subversive, Jong has been wounded but not vanquished.

CONCLUSION:

For the Jewish-American writers of the twentieth century, the locus of the conflict was in the erotic excesses, the frenzy of the characters. The significance of eros in twentieth century, whether they used Freudian theory or not, is apparent. Eros is the point at which the conflict is embodied, it is the mental spiritual embodiment
of the conflict. In turn, the Hebraic and American versions are called marriage, adultery, and seduction, making decisions whether to marry and to whom, whether to commit adultery or seduce are part of the conflict. Relatedly, whether to honor the traditions of the past or to adapt to the present are also part of the conflict. In short, it is in the context of the pressures to be American, to acculturate, even assimilate, that Jews by and large live. It is in this frame of reference that Jewish - American literature reflects the experiences and the tensions that develop between the atavistic pull of the past - of tradition, ritual, mitzvoth - and the seemingly stronger pull of the present and future of getting ahead, adoption, compromise mixed with the wish to be ethical and be loved, all in the modern context of alienation, disorder and chaos. The study of the works of Cynthia Ozick and Erica Jog will certainly be helpful to explore the above mentioned factors of Jewish - American literature at a full length.

Notes :-


3. *Jewish America History and culture, an Encyclopedia*, vol. 429, P.No. 30


8. Ibid

9. Cynthia Ozick, *Puttermesser and Xanthippe* in *Levitation*, *Five Fictions*
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