CHAPTER - IV

EFFICACY OF WRITER'S SELF

AND BY THIS ACT OF THESE TWO PHOENIXES
NATURE AGAIN RESTORED IS,
FOR SINCE THESE TWO ARE TWO NO MORE,
THERE'S BUT ONE PHOENIX STILL, AS WAS BEFORE.

JOHN DONNE
"AN EPISTALAMION OR MARRIAGE SONG"

Self has various obligations not alone to itself but to society, to the existential forces from outside, to/from contingencies, the predicament that alters its natural and stable progress, to interpersonal relationships, to convictions and thoughts, emotions and feelings. These are few of the numerous causes that alter Self, split Self into its 'various looks' or multiple selves which psychologists refer to as presentation selves or manifestations from where it is not very easy to decipher a unified whole in the traditional sense or in the modernist sense - acquire a dissolution of selves through consciousness neither magnifying the issues nor diminishing values that concern them, accommodating or rejecting each aspect according to its context. Any individual has, for that matter, access only to the restricted range of his selves and at times alone (as in the case of Murdoch's Mischa Fox or Bellow's Herzog), the capacity to probe deep into the selves of other characters/individuals around, in
order to develop upon its own stand and validity. There are not many individuals who have fully developed this potential except in the case of professionals of clinical psychology or psychoanalysts and among professional writers. The former two are instructed by the knowledge of their profession as how to deal with their case studies; while the latter is either compelled to use his intuitive capacity to comprehend the other selves or is capable of doing it spontaneously. He splits his own selves into bits and fragments, isolates them and fixes each of them into the various characters involved in the discussion of the novel he creates. He then makes them react - each as separate individuals or entities - compelling them to remain informally natural, individually suited to the context that requires a specific behaviour from them.

In this regard, the writer as a professional, excels the psychologist or psychiatrist or psychoanalyst whose knowledge comes forth from acquired instructions. While the writer need not necessarily have authentic, approved knowledge of the subject he creates, he often does it out of intuition coupling this with his own comprehensive view of various experiences involved in life. It is this spontaneous capacity to create numerous characters, each so totally different from the other, within a single framework of a novel or discussion.
that marks a writer as 'excellent' and his lucid pen as 'mighty' and 'powerful'.

This is not a mere extrapolation of the experienced writers in concern, but justification rendered to the extraordinary potential made manifest by such protagonists as Bradley Pearson in Murdoch's The Black Prince or Charlie Citrine in Bellow's Humboldt's Gift who are writers themselves. Murdoch's Bradley Pearson deserves greater commendation in comparison with Bellow's Charlie Citrine, for the excellent maturity of Self, which the protagonist shows right from the beginning of the novel.

Bradley Pearson in The Black Prince is a love-obsessed protagonist, an egoist, who has a fine capacity to make authentic observations or inferences upon the selves of the other characters, existence, God, human predicament, reality, and above all on what is most valid to any writer such as art and artist. His authenticity rises from his own self-analytic capacity or one should say 'spirit' in which he gloats, but what brings about the predicamental failure or contingental denouement for Bradley is the frequency at which he falls in love with Rachel (wife of Bradley's contemporary writer Arnold Baffin) and her daughter, 18 year-old Julian, young enough to be 58 year-old Bradley's daughter.
Contrary to Murdoch's opposed idea to romantic love, here Bradley's disgrace is brought about mainly by his callousness to morality. B.W. Jefferson believes that a novel like *The Black Prince* with its romantic nuances is meant to show more of the possibilities of such predicaments in life than the show of love shared between Rachel - Bradley - Julian - which appears slightly exaggerated. The point Murdoch attempts to make here is that in such matters as love anything can happen, but the frequency at which these instances seem to recur in the novel indeed involves a certain deal of conceit ("Iris Murdoch" 57-58).

The conceit, however becomes a necessary evil, for Bradley's 'unselfing' triggers off from its axis. Bradley who is love-obsessed, including his falling in love with his ex-wife Christian as she claims towards the close of the novel, makes a compromise with his predicament by figuring the very origin of the calamities which is his own Self and resorts to a mood of calm resignation. He then allows the menacing evils of the other characters to pervade over him freely watching them in silent amusement, thus proving that his Self is not lost to its calamitous predicament. Gradually, this deliberate scheme which quite absurdly corners Bradley, intensely impels his desire for 'truth'. From a negative stand of mere 'physical'
existence, Bradley becomes a staunch believer of truth and seeks after truth incessantly binding the urge to all his activities, specially his opinion on art and artist, in his affair with Julian, in the reality of it all at the trial scene when he is being condemned for the alleged murder of his contemporary writer and friend, Arnold Baffin, out of professional envy.

Bradley's very predicament becomes his impetus to Self and from then on "the basis of all valuation" (Illie, Unamuno 12) is found in his consciousness, writings and demeanour. The novel itself is Bradley's contemplative narrative after the crisis is over and he discloses the entire happenings pondering over the events in his life, how he was led to them, forced to indulge in them.

There is not much of a tragic sense made evident in the foreward that Bradley himself conveys at the beginning of the novel. Instead, Bradley assumes a tone of voice which indicates "knowledge of the truth and the real gained by breaking the hypnotic trance" (Goodall, Alien Protagonist 569) of self-indulgent love done wilfully which only heaves up blatant reality in all its malevolence to stare with indifference upon the sufferer. Some of Bradley's strikingly contemplative words are in the foreward:
Though I am a creative person, I am a puritan rather than an aesthetic. I know that human life is horrible. I know that it is utterly unlike art. I have no religion except my own task of being. Conventional religions are dream stuff. Always a world of fear and horror lies but a millimetre away. Any man, even the greatest, can be broken in a moment and has no refuge. Any theory which denies this is a lie.... True politics is simply the drying of tears and the endless fight for freedom. (BP XVIII)

At the end of the violent drama, Bradley is able to re-establish a much saner view of life and his foreword is vindicative of the fact that he has at least then begun to think independently without being influenced or cajoled by a ruthless adulteress as Rachel. The contemplation rendered here is not limited to Bradley's plight alone but a voice of experience that is extended or made general for the entire human multitude and their vulnerability to existence. Here, Bradley speaks in terms of the various degrees of freedom, in a totally non-religious sense - the all pervasive potential of reality which cannot be contained or controlled within the meagre strength of the will of man (Contemporary Writers 22).

Quite resolutely, Bradley recalls later the first instance when Rachel dragged him into physical temptation. Being the puritan that Bradley is, he does back out instinctively, but as he himself puts it, he yields, not wanting to offend her. His first kiss to Rachel alters his
entire life entangling him in a myriad of sexual perversity one after another - leading him even to the extent of a hasty, thoughtless negligence of his hysterical sister Priscilla who commits suicide. There is a touch of pathos in Bradley's recollection of a narrative:

...[This thing, kiss] had its consequences, including some very unexpected ones. There are no spare unrecorded encapsulated moments in which we can behave anyhow and then expect to resume life where we let off. The wicked regard time as discontinuous, the wicked dull their sense of natural casuality. The good feel being as a total dense mesh of tiny interconnections. My lightest whim can affect the whole future. Because I smoke a cigarette and smile over an unworthy thought another man may die in torment. I kissed Rachel and hid from Arnold and got drunk with Francis. I cannot, altogether regret... But the past must be justly judged. (BP 95-96)

But later, Bradley is trapped to make a decision. And this decision grips him unclementfully through the rest of the novel.

Inspite of indulgence, Bradley wonders at the depth of truth in Rachel's coaxing temptations used to entice him. She extols the illicit bondage to the heights of a religious vow. Her perverse diabolism reaches its utmost when she says that once they achieve this they could have Arnold almost enslaved. Despite Bradley's attempts to flee Rachel's lustful avarice he is forced to traverse vehement enticement. Bradley does not
drown himself in the influential power of her words though he yields to it for he unselfs even then inspite of his physical excitement being a scrupulous observer of Self and life:

Guilt and fear, endemic in my blood, prickled indistinguishable at that moment from desire, but prophetically announcing themselves. At the same time, I was deeply moved by Rachel's confidence in me. Perhaps the new world of which she had spoken really existed. Could I enter it without disloyalty? (BP 110)

Beneath the traditional puritanic feeling in Bradley, there's something quite unconventional and puzzling about his pursuits on the whole. This perhaps is because Bradley does not draw a clear-cut distinction between his irrational love and God and at one instance even feels a certain piety about the sexual commitment with Julian. This merger is convenient and attractive to Bradley's consciousness to delve in his illusory world unscathed by the prick of guilt. Bradley depends heavily upon Rachel's flatteries and Julian's teenaged perplexity and like a teenager deforms the cautions of his Self foolishly. The women may have directly or indirectly initiated Bradley into falling topsy turvy in love. But after the initiation, it is 58 year-old Bradley who accelerates the affairs and almost all the characters in the novel are caught in a whirlwind of absurdly reciprocative love. Murdoch gives her characters the freedom of choice and it is left upto
Bradley or the other characters to find where lies the reality behind these pursuits, specially to

...find the truth to decide what is true and righteous love and which is its counterfeit self-love [that is love that arises out of some personal or inner-motive]...From the tempest of love that engulfs the novels characters gradually emerge [other] situations. (Hagen, Twentieth Century Literature 261)

While in love, he sees these commitments as luring and as pacifying to a man made lonely by an incompatible marriage. But later, when his unselfing intervenes, the situations engulf him in turn and make it too late for him to make an all too sudden withdrawal from the mess. As Winsor observes about Murdoch's novels in general, Bradley cannot perceive a world apart from his own concepts and convictions. All that fall in Bradley's view are assessed from Bradley's self concept - as truthful, sincere and austere. He tries to see depth in Rachel's words or Julian's charm because he is unable to separate himself from his commitment to them and he strives for a complete union. Bradley identifies his Self with illusion without anticipating the dangers involved which is also an absurd step leading to the destruction of the Self. This childish world, Self and the illusory predicament of Bradley's existence are merged together as one and maintained against all threats through a series of fantastic incorporation (Iris Murdoch 396).
Bradley has only himself left to convince about the austerity involved in Julian's love for him:

Nor did I envisage suffering.... To the pure lover in his moments of purity the idea of suffering is vulgar, it portends the return of self. What I rather felt was a dazzled gratitude. (BP 173)

Love is something that has substituted itself in place of his Self. In order to promote himself in the growth of this new concept of love or Self, Bradley gives it a new philosophical and even moral interpretation "concordant with the changes" that occurs in Bradley's new concept. Bradley endlessly pursues the subject referring to it as a "vision of selflessness" (BP 174) and also as a release from Self that should render a fresh foothold in a totally new place which could be reserved specially for those concerned individuals alone (BP 174). Bradley tries to give a positive dimension to his feelings that his love for Julian made him become virtuous.

...the joy of love made a void in...[him] where...[his] self had been.... He was purged of resentment...of late... of all the mean anxious fears that compose the vile ego. It was enough that she existed and that she could never be mine. I had to live and love alone, and the sense that I could do so had almost made me god. (BP 194)
He comprehends his Self but then fills that space with love and later with void - an empty annihilated feeling of total surrender, yielding his very being unto its domination. This stage is explicable in the light of Murdoch's own view that such a sense of "Freedom is knowing and understanding and respecting things quite other than ourselves" ("Sublime and the Good" 270). Bradley, though does not declare his love to Julian and later is victimized by his own rapturous impulses.

By and by, the pressure of love changes into a traumatic experience for Bradley, when Arnold and Rachel interfere and Rachel almost ridicules him of being cuckolded by Julian whom, she claims brims with such wistful repetitive fantasies every now and then with few other men too (for instance, one of her own teachers). Bradley, in the course of events, had been sane enough to even dissuade Julian after thoughtlessly motivating her to love him. But, once the utterance of sheer madness is over, Bradley though, thrice older than Julian and definitely more mature than everyone else, is unfortunately pitted against Julian's urgency to find excuses to reciprocate his love, though she actually has not had or perhaps does not feel any real love for him. Once again, in this context, Bradley the earlier discouraging (fatherly) lover loses his weapon of self-defence - that is - his rationalisations, and feels as if "Powers older than
Christ" (BP 249) have quite casually made their entry and occupied a place of their own between Julian and himself. Bradley is penalised at the hands of illusory emotions and the agony prolongs when they decide to marry until Arnold takes Julian away to Italy. Bradley, perhaps, is seen to analyze the duality of his Self at this instance and makes a strenuous compromise with himself as his 'counsel' within darkens (BP 279) to caution him repeatedly.

Bradley's love-illusions are caused perhaps because of the depravity he suffers in his married life. He considers his ex-wife Christian as "a witch ... and a low demon" (BP 96). He meets her on the pretext of discouraging her from her divorcee who laughs in excess with Arnold Baffin, claims that she did not need him after all, and that she merely wants to be "friends" with him. The complication in Bradley lies in his mind which bears the consciousness of a writer. Bradley knows his needs and senses the implicit cue of all his (female) relationships as soon as he is made aware of it. But unlike that of Bradley's concept of truth and sincerity, these women characters do not let him thrive upon the reality of his Self, themselves being exploiters, victims of obsessions, illusions and base predicament.
In a marriage, when love is made to appear as a certain mode of commercial exchange or treated on par with currency where one merely gains or loses, then in such petty compromises made, the man and woman in question commit the gravest crimes against love (Hagen, Twentieth Century Literature 260). The tenacity of Bradley's self-will abstains him from being victimized by the coquettishness of his ex-wife. But Christian's very failure to lure him back into her deplorable excitement becomes Bradley's very weakness. Bradley, firmly turns away from her vicious attempts only to be trapped unduly by the enticement of the other two women. Bradley who wavers between the enthralling fantasy of three women in a way, is noticed to have deserted his sister Priscilla, quite deliberately, though his Self is repugnant to the ruthlessness of the deed, at a much later stage. Bradley knows the nuances of these flippant relationships each based on his own desires, whims, moods, needs and cravings, but he, quite obstinately refuses to exorcize their pervasive tendencies. It is a psychological procrastination on Bradley's part which allows those errant miscreants to perturb the wholeness of his Self.

The selves of these fellow characters conceal their morally illegitimate values to which they adhere for the sake of their own personal benefits. Each shows an inclination to have relationships outside their marital circle at random,
without any moral scruples - for instance, Rachel with Bradley, Bradley with Julian, Arnold Baffin with Christian, Roger (Priscilla's husband) with Marigold (Roger's mistress) and this leaves Priscilla abandoned to her fits of hysteria and Francis Marloe forlorn with no love from any end. A close network of misplaced human relationships are created and the protagonist unlike the others discussed in the earlier chapters is 'adversely' trapped in this vicious circle that drives him right to the very end of a morbid prison life.

It should also be noticed that Bradley's 'unselfing' reveals the drawbacks of his obsessions and unravels the basic repressed thoughts and anxieties in his mind or in the writer's mind, as well as lends a comprehensive understanding to the fallibilities in the other characters without showing much agitation, for instance, as in the case of Arnold Baffin's confession to Bradley of his falling deeply in love with Christian his ex-wife. The piece of information does not move Bradley emotionally. He is indifferent to it and moves sordidly in the anxiety of his appointment with Julian instead.

As the affairs are revealed one after another, the entire lot of characters in the novel are fixed in an emotional mess of affairs and the mess is too closely woven to manage any disentanglement, even if the protagonist decides to
do so. While this ironical state exists, a slight justification for Bradley's puritanic Self is that he alone does not deliberately will an adulterous affair, while the rest of the characters personally plant it in their lives for their own personal exhilaration.

All the evil that the story of the novel precipitates urges Bradley's writer's consciousness, to goodness, truth and sincerity. Bradley is a distinct writer whose sensitivity is laudable for he makes no discrimination or distorts no facts and discloses them as they occur to him. He adheres to truth quite staunchly while in comparison with him, Arnold shows no such concrete potential, though Rachel in her postscript falsely claims that Bradley was envious of her husband's successes.

Much of Bradley's narrative is made elite and impressive by his untiring comment on creative art and the artist. This aspect becomes the subsidiary value of the novel. Bradley at several instances of unselfing, brings out a fine identification between art, artist, Self, reality and God. This writer's Self so well exposed in the novel stands in support of Bradley's self-sufficiency, his strict love for what is real, true, and uncontaminated, and his guileless understanding of his fellow-characters.
Bradley and Arnold share the same professional field and Bradley does not deny a mixture of feelings for Arnold of "resentment, love, remorse and fear" (BP 56). Bradley's unselfing gathers momentum when he writes with the writer's voice rather than as a lone sufferer. According to a writer, presentation of truth or pursuit of it is what matters and Bradley is dedicated to this principle in his artist's Self and abides by it even at the face of the final hazard that occurs to him. The other characters live and derive pleasure for the moment and are easily contented with that achievement. As far as Bradley is concerned, as a writer, there is a spontaneity in the flow of his self analysis.

Bradley's narrative is an unbiased instance of dedication when he hauls up truth from his own inner recesses of mind, all that is 'disqualified' and contemptuous within him and within the selves of the other characters and suavely tries to compromise with the 'yet to come', however hazardous or destructive that may be. In order to accommodate the anticipated threat to whatever is candid in him, Bradley, at first, has to come to terms with his own inner repressions, the fears, the desires, with that which lies unknown in waiting for him, and only then would he be able to perceive some kind of signifying order in the chaos-dominated world outside (Waugh, Feminine Fictions 34).
Bradley knows what any man would be upto faced with the predicament as his - be it in the context of creative art or predicament of existence. He contemplatively observes:

We defend ourselves by descriptions and tame the world by generalizing. What does he fear? is usually the key to the artist's mind. Art is so often a barrier. So art becomes not communication but mystification. (BP 56)

An artist has a 'probing' mind that makes excuses for all human errors rendering a comprehensive view of all possibilities that silences even the most indignant voice that opposes it. This is perhaps why Bradley believes that art is a barrier at such instances becoming more than a medium of simple communication. The artist in exposing various nuances of truth, mystifies the deed or act of an individual where the offence grows lesser in its transgression and at times even pardonable. This is an advantageous aspect for which Bradley is exploited by the other characters in the novel who defeat him by abusing his creative, imaginative potential.

Bradley firmly believes in the credentials of art. Art does not succumb to the tempting, vagrant changes of existence but progresses with an unalterable steadfastness that is indeed laudable in the face changing existence. Bradley himself authenticates this view:
Characters in art can have unassailable dignity, while characters in life have none. Yet of course life, in this respect as in others, pathetically and continually aspires to the condition of art. A sheer concern for one's dignity, a sense of form, a sense of style, inspires more of our baser actions than any conventional analysis of possible sins is likely to bring to light. A good man often appears gauche simply because he does not take advantage of the myriad mean little chances of making himself look stylish. Preferring truth to form, he is constantly at work upon the facade of his appearance. (BP 95)

Bradley's words are indicative of the fact that a writer's Self has the greater access and advantage to the rendering of a combination of a very strong, authentic self-awareness mingled with an equally dedicated 'Self' examination of what is impersonal and simultaneously permit a historical determination of all aspects of human behaviour which serves to promote interpretations from various angles from a total assessment of which truth or reality can be arrived at (Waugh, Feminine Fictions 35).

This virtuosity can be attained only if art and life are kept separate (that is, without being utterly subjective and biased) and this in turn would lead to excellence if one aims at it (BP 176). Here, his writer's Self speaks from a lacuna looking out into a world "devoid of evil".

The strains of Bradley's unselfing process is made visible through the entire novel at variegated instances but...
holds a remarkable affinity to reality and the more sane view of Self in the foreword. Bradley senses the prime neurosis of destruction of Self in his affair with Julian and plans for the future are wrecked by the diabolic schemes of Rachel. He indulges in "monotony out of which value springs" (BP XVII). This silence, and the urgency Bradley has for its realisation perhaps comes as a reflection of his creative consciousness which in general has an underlying notion that through creativity - the unravelling of the numerous consciousness of both fictional and real characters and their predicament, a writer would be enabled "to re-discover a sense of the destiny of our lives" as Murdoch herself puts it in her article "Against Dryness" (Culley, Theory and Practice 338).

Bradley at various crucial instances makes pondering remarks on several questions of existence. These comments are simple but true and are thought-provoking leading to a debate in the minds of the audience themselves. Bradley's sister, Priscilla, for instance, recalls her hateful moments with her husband Roger, and Bradley consolingly approbates that life after all is indeed unjust (BP 59). However, the deeper irony in marriage as an institution itself is brought forth in his explication of his sudden decision to meet Christian, his ex-wife, inspite of all the evasiveness of such an encounter he had shown until then:

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Marriage is a curious institution... I cannot see how it can be possible. People who boast of happy marriages are,... usually self-deceivers if not actually liars. The human soul is not framed for continued proximity and the result of this enforced neighbourhood is often an appalling loneliness for which the rules of the game forbid assuagement. There is nothing like the bootless solitude of those who are caged together.... and it is fortunate, as the years go by, if it can communicate within itself....[for] there is hell in pure form...[in such a cage]. (BP 64-65)

Bradley is able to make such a punctilious reference to marriage in general owing to his own sifting of his Self, in an effort to come to terms with what is his own. Bradley consciously or unconsciously accuses his marital plight as a prologue to all his misappropriations and misinterpretations in life. In a way, Rachel is approximately correct in accusing Bradley of being an egoist, for despite Bradley's rootedness to Self, he does swerve off track for a while in illusions and returns with disillusionments in the voidness where Self once was vivid. And as long as such egoistic tendencies are retained in the consciousness, whatever is merely available alone forms the conception of Self and transforms that into a personal identity however fleeting and tentative it may be (Waugh, Feminine Fictions 40).

Looking back into his past, Bradley's narrative takes a different twist, and the Self's voice makes eloquent proceeds
of even the most impenetrable predicament of existence, for instance, the question of 'good'. And the twist in the narrative is Bradley's surprising withdrawal from mediocre existence to a self-absorbed analysis of the unpleasantness made too casual in life. In response to Saint Paul's words that 'All things work together for good for those who love God', Bradley wonders:

...but what is it to love God? I have never seen this happening.... There is no triumph of good, and if there were it would be no triumph of good. There is no drying of tears or obliteration of the sufferings of the innocent and of those who have undergone crippling injustice in their lives.... Even as I write these words,... I feel the very darkness of my own personality invading my pen. Only...in the ink of this darkness can this writing properly be written? It is not really possible to write like an angel. (BP 80)

As a writer, Bradley is far away from giving an erroneous impression of himself. He has cast the spell that devoured him all along and is completely out of an all too-self-deceptive slumber to step outside on to what is hard reality, too frustrating to present easefully. The difficulty in understanding Bradley does not lie in his contrasting presentation of selves seen in his narrative. The actual difficulty lies in his past deficiencies and the unheroic commitments added to the romantic scope of the obsessions
(Jefferson, Iris Murdoch 55) inspite of being a lover of truth, reality and Self. In consequence to the contingencies in the novel, Bradley, of course, falls short of Self for a little while. But Bradley is caught vilely by the trap laid by Rachel after which he has to take sides with his own Self, and accept the ruthless destiny that opens itself before him. The illusory aspects vanish from his Self automatically at this instance and Bradley unselfs to the audience, the pointlessness of his past while his Self persistently watches him and guides him through from any further indulgence in illusions.

At Bradley's age, perhaps, his love for Julian may be a crazed manifestation of an insecure mind, but Bradley's predicament, at first, evokes pity and sympathy in the reader. However, Bradley resorts to a hyperbolic sense of attachment for Julian and very nearly annihilates the existence of God, placing himself as a substitute in His place. In this context Waugh's observation on 'subjectivity' of Self holds ground, for here, Bradley though satirises all other contingencies of existence, his maturity slackens slightly in a slightly perverse direction in order to convince his own 'self-manifestation' as self-enhancement itself. The struggle which is psychological here is also meant "for survival in a world of competing egos" that might indulge in ridiculing or mocking of such a Self and therefore Bradley's Self attempts to
define or convince its own interests defensively against all those other forces liable to mock him (Waugh, Feminine Fictions 44). The irony in such a contemplation of Bradley is that he knows that the ecstasy and glory of love make the world vivid to the beholder provided the affair is a happy one but an unhappy one is a mere revelation of pure suffering. Here in such a form of obsessive love Bradley 'enjoys' the affliction, unwilling to part with it and is unmindful of the parting or separation of Self even if it impairs his sense of balance or judgement.

With the dawn of this obstinate view to which Bradley adheres unwillingly to the end, occurs Rachel's deft homicidal framework and Bradley's victimization to it. There are two noticeable ways in which Bradley's unselfing functions here: the first one is the dominant obsessive Self that suspends itself into a divinity of love for Julian where Bradley's creative Self is a thinker and the kind of truth he pursues is one that interests him. The second one, on the other hand is Bradley's Self which longs to know truth and thereby comprehend predicamental reality which is an end in itself (Patka, Existentialist Thinkers 88). Bradley becomes preoccupied with Rachel's schemed predicament for him after which Bradley's Self's amusement in Julian's thoughts diminishes in the novel once the bare reality grapples his life.
The world is perhaps ultimately... a place of suffering. Man is a suffering animal, subject to ceaseless anxiety and pain and fear, ... the endless unsatisfied anguish of a being who passionately desires only illusory goods. ... This is the planet where Canter reigns, where people... die like flies from floods and famine and disease, where people fight each other and spend whole life times telling lies out of fear. This is where we live. (BP 298-99)

Bradley is thus impelled to come to terms even with certain relationships that he loathed until then. Just as he shunned Self, Bradley loathed the intermittent appearance of Francis Marloe in his life, but after the rest of the illusions are fortunately impaired, Bradley encounters Francis and feels as if he is in the presence of someone who was "making" him:

I felt for the first time since my return to London, that I was in a real place and in the presence of a real person.... I felt as people feel who after much ailing become suddenly far more ill and helpless relaxed into the awfulness of the situation. (BP 314)

Bradley makes a compromise with Self, reality and existence but his Self returns with a certain affliction - the affliction of sin and guilt and of having performed an endless dance of vileness that has now brought about his own downfall. Bradley's sympathetic situation worsens when Rachel makes adverse, inimical references to him, as a malicious, spiteful destroyer and a black spiteful destroyer whom she had failed to place at a safe distance. Being the very embodiment of danger herself (to Bradley) she tells Bradley that he was an unhappy
and awful person who destroyed happiness when he saw it and sardonically claims that it was Julian and herself who made him real.

The image of Bradley worsens in the eyes of the jury and Bradley very nearly feels something of being actually wicked. A sense of empty absurdity pervades the Self of Bradley and then he is unable to deny that there does exist some kind of absurdity inherent in a man's life. But Bradley does not become a annihilated (Heinemann, Existentialism 116) protagonist totally owing to the sheer will of his Self and saves himself from total dejection and depression.

Bradley's unselfing comes to his rescue all through the novel. It is sheer preferability of sex to reality that Bradley agrees and readily indulges in it. Sex, as he knows cannot give Bradley the freedom or dissolution of illusions that he desires. But then life is closely knitted with all such aspects and therefore he yields to these "shadows of a real" (BP 113). He further attempts to preserve Self by suffering and readily yields to suffering, as he readily yielded to love. He believes that he

...had been confronted [at last] with a sizeable ordeal... This was not something to be wasted. I had never felt more alert and alive in my life, and from the vantage point of my
new consciousness...[I realised] what I had been: a timid incomplete resentful man. (BP 331)

The contortions of the mind relax gradually into the Self and "discover deep things", and Bradley "...saw himself ...a new man, altered out of recognition" (BP 336). Earlier Bradley had found his Self quite evasive writhing between subjective and objective help finding truth a difficult idea to grasp.

Paul Illie analyses Unamuno's theory of Self and claims certain points quite applicable to Bradley's unselfing process. The burden of keeping Bradley's Self intact now lies within his own psychic energy by viewing himself both subjectively and objectively and then to synthesise the two and arrive at the Self's compromise, the mortal predicament within himself (Illie, Unamuno 96). But Bradley is oblivious to Self for a short while owing to an imbalance in the subjective, objective perceptions of the Self.

Bradley the writer, and his unselfing, revolve around a play of psychological emotions and relationships and the Self of Bradley is caught in the trauma of arresting further distortions of his predicament, Self and hazards of existence. Bellow's Humboldt's Gift also concerns the consciousness/unselfing of two writers such as Von Humboldt Fleisher (poet, older, deceased), and Charlie Citrine (novelist, survivor,
narrator), and his unselfing reveals a Self caught in the complicated whirlpool of "art and money, sex and death, above all the tension between the world of the cash and culture nexus" (Bradbury, Saul Bellow 87), and ideals to which art generally relates itself.

Murdoch's Bradley Pearson is led from issue to issue, all of which are commitments made by the protagonist himself, owing to his interpersonal relationships and illusory pursuits. The novel is a play of Bradley's writer's consciousness assessing the predicament that engulfs him and also an unselfing of a writer's creative imagination, his contradictions and verdict upon the layman's bungling incompetence in existence. Bellow's two writers, Von Humboldt Fleisher and Charlie Citrine, are like Murdoch's Bradley Pearson and Arnold Baffin. But unlike Arnold Baffin, Humboldt casts an intense power and control over Charlie Citrine and it is by being provoked by Humboldt's predicament for a junk of interpersonal relationships that Citrine makes an effort to unself in order to make amends for his poet-friend for the filth of Chicago. The novel, because of this ambiguous plot, seems to be a merger of a three dimensional consciousness, one, as provoked or inspired by Humboldt, the other by Charlie Citrine himself, and yet another, a comment on the violent Cantabile.
There is a certain tension in Citrine's mind between his own profound, intellectual comprehension of Chicagoan existence and a superabundant knowledge of his own predicament. Citrine is powerfully framed and his predicament is not a mere emotional drama of illusions or obsessions as that of Bradley Pearson's. But his consciousness or unselfing reveals a mixture of dreams, illusions and bare facts of death, truth, reality and Self, especially pointing to the disparity that prevails in the co-existence of these aspects, that makes life all the more complicated.

Bradley as a writer is envious of Arnold Baffin, and on the contrary Citrine is envied, admired, praised, exploited, condemned yet offered a legacy by Humboldt. So at the very outset, the relationship between Humboldt and Citrine is not apparently far-fetched or quite remote like that of Bradley and Arnold. Instead it involves an emotional, intellectual, predicametal and financial admixture. Murdoch's Bradley is intellectual as a writer and has a fine command about the various aspects of existence but Bellow's Citrine shows greater intensity of concern as a writer about what he writes, what he thinks and feels, about his own predicament and that of others, especially about the vagrant obnoxiousness of Chicagoan contingencies. Citrine, as an effect of these aspects, unselfs all that he experiences with Humboldt and strives to make
compromises with those that alter or impede the stream of existence. In the unselfing process, Citrine too reveals his illusions, death fear, opinions of reality, existence, truth, sex, life in Chicago, alienation, God, love, religion and above all about Self and the exquisite concern of artist and art. What makes Citrine more ardent and impressive than Bradley is the peculiar, innate drive he shows to come to terms with himself though almost through a large part of the novel he apparently analyses the other characters and their predicament. The verdict however, is for Citrine himself.

Contrary to Bradley's predicament, Citrine in his unselfing process shows the audience that his Self is conscious and shrewd in picking up the roots of its own errors from the centre of Chicagoan contingencies. As a writer, Citrine is able to sift more freely through the streets of Chicago to locate the 'origin' of decaying and obnoxious attitudes from therein rather than being a mere emotional wreck as Bradley.

Similar to certain obvious traits in Bellow's protagonists, both Humboldt and Citrine are motivated by certain false values, such as "money and success" in the case of the former - a "pursuit... which has perverted a whole civilization, turning millions of people into slaves of the social system, enemies of themselves," and victimizes the
latter at the heads of the violent Catabile like those "monsters with murder in their hearts" who never follow why life has been so bitter (Podhoretz, Doings and Undoings 222).

For Citrine, sex is his earnest obsession which he eagerly indulges in with Renata, though his writer's Self sees it as a "personal participation in the triumph of American Civilization" (KG 9). Citrine is "in terrific shape" (KG 8) and his 'voluptuous friends' range from Denise to Renata. Citrine repeatedly loses one or the other of these women either through death or some disillusionment.

Citrine yearns for warmth, love and affection as Renata observes much later in the novel when she deserts him for Flonzaley. In this context, both Murdoch's Bradley and Bellow's Citrine suffer similar disillusionment. Bradley's affairs are emotionally serious ones, though he is well aware as an unselfing protagonist should, that they are all illusory. Citrine's indulgences apparently wanton, yearn for an everlasting, immortal relationship' and he longs for Renata's return to him from Flonzaley and weeps on reading her letter that she is leaving her son Roger to him as an apt kind of companion. The predicament, their effects and results are the same for both the men, however, at one point or the other, they realize that love has been faked or feigned while the
physical aspect alone has been treated with careful ingenuity as a make-believe world of being perpetual. Citrine remains more sturdy in the face of disillusionment, in comparison with Bradley.

Several women promote the unselfing of Citrine just as was Bradley's plight. In Citrine's case, his ex-wife Denise, Renata, Demmie, Naomi Lutz and even Humboldt's wife Kathleen 'generate' his unselfing consciousness. Citrine as a writer, reveals intense understanding of human fallibilities, their psychological drawbacks, and physical inadequacies for which he makes generous allowances. For instance, he sympathises the insomnia-ridden ramblings of Demmie, tolerates the avaricious, legally-monitored pursuits of his ex-wife Denise, and the problems of Humboldt's wife, Kathleen. The magnanimous sufferance he shows when Renata unanticipatedly and silently leaves him for another is also to be noted.

Citrine's brother, Ulick's, adulthood relationship too is yoked with money. This 'relationship' claims money in the form of a cheque every now and then and Ulick doubles it for Citrine and awaits appreciation for the thoughtful help rendered and is displeased when no such acknowledgement arises from Citrine. For Citrine 'money' is merely a contingental necessity to pay Denise, to entertain Renata and pay Swiebel.
and Sorel. In fact, as mentioned earlier, he devalues it and its American harangue, whereas Denise, Humboldt, Julius and Cantabile relate themselves with Citrine through this - almost the only medium of transaction, discussion between them and Citrine. It was impossible to think of Ulick without his wealth (HG 355). In this very acknowledgement of the void reality that dwells in the relationship between the two brothers, Citrine's desire for a more tenacious relationship is made obvious though the hopelessness of it is divulged. As Marcus Klein observes:

It is sheer weight of chaotic existence that first of all defines them. The novelist is distracted, Bellow says in one of his discursive pieces...there are more things that solicit the attention of the mind than there ever were before. The novelist is menaced with "death by distraction", and not only the novelist: everyone on every level is exposed to the danger. We are menaced by the sheer distraction of sheer wealth. "The world is too much with us, and there has never been so much world", Bellow has said elsewhere. There is so much money now and there are so many possessions. "Love, duty, principle, thought, signi-ficance, everything is being sucked into a fatty and nerveless state of well-being". The fat gods of the new materialism are all about us demanding our energies. (Malin, Saul Bellow and the Critics 95-96)

The attitudes of Julius and Denise can be grouped under a category of void relationships while Humboldt's attitude with regard to money as personal avarice born of its insatiability and Cantabiles as a Chicagoan impulse in all its unaltered
originality. For instance, when the monetary-oriented relationship of Citrine and Cantabile reaches its climax the conversation between the two is dramatic and commercial as that of a deal made between a manufacturer and a consumer:

"Mr. Barbash will settle your bill,"...[Citrine] said. "Now go away, Cantabile, our relationship has drawn to a close." Let's become strangers again. (HG 483)

Inspite of Citrine being an intellectual protagonist, his errors lie in the gross fact that he "...was still explaining ...[himself] in full to people who couldn't have cared less" (HG 483). As Fuchs comments:

No special fate, no precious dawn, no tantalizing bird, no passionate program, no martyrdom will be his, given typical American conditions, and Chicago will supply these in abundance. Luciferan pride is ridiculous. Humility may be more like it, or atleast a saving humor. And Cantabile is there to teach their uses. (Vision and Revision 241)

These relationships foil Citrine's efforts to come to terms with his Self and reality. Each of these four relationships is a representation of the Chicagoan material avarice in itself.

Cantabile requires money and his handy victim is Citrine whom he cannot afford to lose. Citrine's narrative before his first encounter with Cantabile builds up racuous suspense and at the meeting Citrine observes the farcical incongruity between Cantabile's appearance and his threats:
But through the cracking elegance of dress there was a current, a desperate sweep, so that the man came out, so to speak, raging from the neck up. Though he was on the other side of the street I could see how furiously pale he was. He had worked himself up to intimidate me. (HG 80)

Despite being an ingenious protagonist, Citrine's drawback is his incapacity to outdo these dominant exploiters of his Self. Instead of defying them Citrine dances to their tunes and allows them to mandate his Self like a helpless absurd element of existence. At one instance, Cantabile even points out sarcastically, "When are you going to do something and know what you're doing" (HG 86). Citrine is exploited by Cantabile, but proves to be yet another reality-instructor, common in Bellow's novels, besides Humboldt. Though being tough in his dealings with Citrine, Cantabile is seen gradually receding into a mutual companionship with Citrine specially when Citrine begins to unravel the cues to his Self dropped to him through Cantabile's words. And Citrine find Cantabile's psychic molestation of his Self quite irresistable at times, as do many of Bellow's protagonists. This controversial contingency in the novel can be explained as follows:

The reality teachers are not, however, necessarily enemies; often they love the protagonist, want, in the manner of a father, the best for him. But it is in the manner of a father, a judgemental father and the protagonist opens himself up to their judgement. (Clayton, Saul Bellow: In Defense of Man 273)
Cantabile, is a vile judgmental father who exploits Citrine at one instance, apparently lends him support at another, and strangely guides him to face the bare reality of Chicagoan existence. Cantabile is the vile executive of Citrine's matters here and 'closely' commands him to give his (elite) wife Lucy the information she needs for her Ph.D. on Humboldt the writer-poet. Citrine is seen refusing to comply with the demands of Cantabile as an assertive vindication of the usual Bellow-protagonists' singularity. In other words, it is the 'wakefulness' that occurs sooner or later to the Bellow-man unlike the Murdochian men's prolonged inaction. Citrine's 'wakefulness' can be assessed by Eric Eaton's comment on the location of individual Self. The power of the external forces, (as that of Cantabile's here) in a peculiar way make possible the birth or upheaval of the individual Self and its various complex selves (in Citrine). This force has always remained a source of progressive extension of energy and information to seek out the details of any level of existence. The individual involved thus realises and compromises both his subjective feelings and also is equipped "to objectify his thoughts and perceptions". This further enhances itself as a certain capacity to "reflect" and "communicate" and even "integrate" all paradoxical questions that affect the Self. Thus Eaton says "man enriches his inner-world" ("Dangerous Paradox" 7).
Citrine's remark on himself is a fair, impartial judgement of himself. Like Henderson, Citrine too observes:

I often said "Wake up!" to myself, and many people also have cried, "Wake, Wake!" As if I had a dozen eyes, and stubbornly kept them sealed. "Ye have eyes and see not". This, of course, was absolutely true. (HG 46)

Bellow himself believes the following regarding the American protagonist's predicament created by American writers:

[The American protagonist] Labouring to maintain himself, or perhaps an idea of himself (not always a clear idea), ...feels the pressure of a vast public life, which may dwarf him as an individual while permitting him to be a giant in hatred or fantasy. In these circumstances he grieves, ...complains, rages or laughs. All the while he is aware of his lack of power, his inadequacy... the nauseous pressure of the mass media and their weight of money and organization, of cold war and racial brutalities. (Bradbury, The Novel Today 55)

The female characters do not mislead Citrine so much as the male characters do and his plight is unlike Bradley's. Citrine is found to be in strenuous captivity of 'fatigue' and 'boredom' and as a writer chooses to write on the same. This loathesomeness is caused by some inner despair, the cause of which is variegated beginning from the malaise of Chicagoan life down to his failure to comfort Humboldt in his final days, his tortuous, juggling appendix Cantabile, and above all the awareness of the inevitable, annihilation of the span of
earthly existence. These memories alternately assault Citrine's Self; though he does not alienate himself so obviously as many other Bellovian or Murdochian protagonists, the thought of death hinders the progressiveness of positive selves.

Ever since Citrine learns of Humboldt's death, he realises the void, the absurdity of human existence. He recalls, how death was writ all over Humboldt and that in the morgue Humboldt's poems added another void, absurd dimension to his existence. The fact becomes a sterner, sturdier stuff with the reality that Citrine would meet Humboldt only in the next world. In the context of death, it is said that

...Looking forward, we anticipate various events, but we know also that somewhere along the line we shall have no more part in the events of the world. Just as there was a beginning to our histories, so there will be an end - death.... Psychologists have been learning in recent years of the very profound influence that the anticipation of death has upon people who perhaps never say anything about it.... death is not simply the termination of life, not just an event that comes along at the end of the life but itself enters very much into the story. (Macquarrie, Existentialism 194-95)

Citrine's unselfing constantly reveals an obsessive fear of death. More than the fear of death, the thought of death depriving him of all powers, relationships, merits, happiness,
isolating him in an unknown obscure world seems to nag Citrine's consciousness. There is an obvious deal of frantic element in seeking consolation from this idea of death when Citrine utters the following words sitting in a dark bar with Naomi Lutz:

...I traced this to the idea that soon after death, when lifeless body fell into decay and became a lot of minerals again, the soul awoke to its new existence and an instant after death I expected to find myself in a dark place similar to this bar where all who had ever loved each other might meet again. (BG 213-14)

Though Citrine's hope is idle, still it is an echo of a consciousness too wary of death. Perhaps such companionship in death makes a world of difference according to Citrine, though the parallel he tries to reinstate here is the obscure fact of the inevitability of isolation death.

Citrine's unselfing is a juxtaposed bundle of analysis of the urban predicament in Chicago and the constant death fear the cities' malaise emanates. Citrine's repeated remarks, comments, opinions and observations of death are self-analytic of a protagonist who is deeply engrossed with the idea of coming to terms with reality and thereby the Self. In all the analysis made so far the question of death has been quite psychological - an innate fear ensnared in the minds of the protagonists. And these protagonists either overcome the fear, or come to terms with it or accept the finality of death.
In Citrine's case however, the death fear is not psychological merely but is a predicament which he understands is common to all citizens of Chicago and beings of existence. And Citrine alone sees it as yet another factor which cannot be extricated from the life of man. In Murdoch's novel Bradley's acceptance of the court's final verdict which perhaps could be death, is a magnanimous role-playing on Bradley's part; whereas Citrine's following words make him a virulent protagonist.

Citrine, at least, by the end of his efforts to comprehend death does not cow down in awe or fear of it but takes it in his stride as that of a sick taking up a physical exercise for the extortion of the sickness.

I was obliged to investigate, to satisfy myself that death was final, that the dead were dead. I could think of the human scene as a battlefield. The fallen are put into the holes in the ground or burned to Ash.... You could simply assume that they had been forever wiped out, as you too would one day be. So, if the daily papers told of murders committed in the streets before crowds of neutral witnesses, there was nothing illogical about neutrality. On the metaphysical assumptions about death everyone in the world had apparently reached, everyone would be snatched, ravished by death, throttled, smothered. This terror and this murdering were the most natural things in the world. (HG 263-64)

Citrine proclaims death to be as simple as that and he decides to meet Dr. Scheldt to discuss other topics rather than spend time contemplating an unannounced invader as death. He refers
to death as the "problem of problems" which is spared undefied by any other system of thought. All other subjects, disciplines and systems of thought are rivalled by some other kind of it. But death alone stands singular, unmatched by any other equally serious offender. Citrine alone stands apart in his Self's comprehension of death. Citrine's most striking words that qualify death as incumbent of human existence are a classical score of observations:

...Unless you conceive death to be a violent guerilla and kidnapper who snatches those you love, and if you are not cowardly and cannot submit to such terrorism as civilized people now do in every department of life, you must pursue and inquire and explore every possibility and seek everywhere and try everything. (HG 441)

America, as far as Citrine is concerned, is a place that contrives or generates all forms of evil and chaos. This mean predicament is a practical way of life there and Chicago is capable of bearing within a cross-section or a sample representation of all such modern malaise. Whatever psychological turmoil Citrine suffers, his unselfing finds the roots of all these in the American predicament itself for the effect is after all reciprocal according to Citrine. "With every one sold on the good how does all the evil get done?" (HG 65). Here, Citrine seems to make excuses for his highly opinionated unselfing, in anticipation of rendering an
instruction or two to the reading public and above all in seeking a reconciliation with his Self. Like Bellow's own Albert Corde and Murdoch's Mischa Fox, Citrine recovers the versimilitude, at the base of the Chicagoan existence, though the "Self" Citrine uncovers is comparatively minimal in its psychological involvement. The success of Humboldt's Gift depends on the protagonist's unselfing and the degree of fascination that Citrine's 'higher thoughts' elicit. It is even believed that such men as Herzog and Citrine are autobiographical (Wilson, Bellow's Dangling Dean 166-69). Their unselfing is a hypersensitive revelation of the conglomeration of existence rather than the simple, bounded predicament that the Murdochian Bruno or Bradley is restricted to. Illie observes that the Self whether psychological or predicamental,

... acts in society, [and] it is subject to the interpretations of the people around it, and to our own minds as well. We think of ourselves as being a certain way, and our neighbors imagine us to be something else. [Self, then could either be enslaved by such verdicts or even idealized]...[and] we ourselves can become our own tyrants... either we try to live up to the image others have of us or we conform to the ideal image of ourselves...both...[of which are in a way] detrimental...[unless the true] self which is permanent and constantly evolving, takes many forms in the world as time passes. These...selves are real and authentic, but they are temporary, like individual manifestations in time of a basic, lasting self. (Unamuno 105-07)
The selves of Citrine's are likewise multidimensional and multilayered. Citrine compares the mind to Chicago.

My mind was in one of its Chicago states.... In a Chicago state I infinitely lack something, my heart swells, I feel a tearing eagerness. The sentient part of the soul wants to express itself. There are some of the symptoms of an overdose of caffeine. At the same time I have a sense of being the instrument of external powers. (HG 66)

Citrine ponders "mind without culture was the name of the game, wasn't it" (HG 69). This psychological condition of Citrine can be further explicated by Illie's analysis.

According to his version of Self:

...man and the world exchange qualities with each other as they interact, each affecting the other with its own nature. This transmutation is important because it is not based on a meaningless subject-object relationship. Instead, there is an interlocking series of subjects and objects that shift position according to their roles. And it is this shifting which allows for the intermingling of external reality and inner ideality. For example, the social self is an object with regard to the contemplative self, but it is a subject with regard to the world. By existing as both subject and object at the same time, it provides a link to the general duality of man and nature. Moreover man is able to identify himself by his awareness of the fact that his various selves - mythical, real, concrete and abstract - are participating in the world while existing independently of it. They are his, and yet they are naturalized by the world, and the world is not his, but it is spiritualized by him. (Unamuno 111-12)
Akin to Illie's version of Self, Citrine arrives at Chicago in the hope of writing a significant work. His subject is "boredom". There is something of a radical image of Self that Citrine finds in the Chicagoan premises which cannot be ruled out from his consciousness. Perhaps it is an unconscious effort on Citrine's part to purge his Self of the urban junk that foils his smooth, otherwise dogmatic unselfing process.

Citrine mentions his Self's own subconscious echo which makes a compromise with the profound deterrent profligacy of the ruinous state of existence be it Chicago or Citrine's implicit Self amidst all its persecutions. This again can be further understood by Illie's analysis:

Man must have this sense of possession before he can develop a sense of identity. He perceives the fact that it is his self which is in the world and then he acquires the feeling of identity with the self. Here, then, is the process by which a self is acquired. We begin with consciousness, then naturalization and possession...identification [that dissolves in predicament]. (Unamuno 112)

As long as Citrine's refuge in Chicago lingers in the novel, Bellow hangs a melancholic absurdity about his protagonist and Citrine quite unscathedly recoils to the predicament.

It is vital to point out that the resentment between Humboldt and Citrine is not based on emotional rivalry or
incongruous affairs, but is because of the 'material' factor which predominates the American society, and the easy fame that Citrine gains as a creative writer in comparison with Humboldt. Citrine is a tactful, opportunist-writer who dissolves his skill to the need or the demand made of a writer in the urban context, while Bradley softens into his predicament with a magnanimous air.

Citrine is ravaged by such base realities that affect his writer's sensitivity. Denise's opinion about Citrine that what he really wants "...is to get rid of everybody, to tune out and be a law unto...himself" (HG 43) is an intriguing verdict upon Citrine's ingenious contrivance of Self. Citrine, procures an identity of Self, for himself as a precautionary alternative to those mortal, material sufferings of Humboldt. He prefers to ward away from himself the blatant reality of miseries that Humboldt suffered. Citrine's initial strife is to come to terms with reality, which by itself paves way for an easy dissolution of Self into the matrix of an agonizing and diverse existence in an American context.

Citrine in all his intellectuality knows his Self as much as he knows Chicago. Like few of Bellow's protagonists he tries to objectify his personal experience, specially because as far as Citrine's case is concerned his unselfing tunes forth
from a writer's consciousness. Therefore, Citrine's brilliant opinions, generalizations and verdicts have to be accepted as a writer's immortalization of what is obtruse, perverse and obnoxious. This is a reservation for a writer's writing skill alone, especially perceiving things through what a controversial society like that of Chicago has to offer. This condition can be further exploited by the following comment on Bellow protagonists:

Bellow's heroes can avoid choosing any fixed purpose in life.... they all long to give themselves away, to know their purpose, but at the same time they are afraid to commit themselves to any fixed state of being and drift into "endless becoming". To mature is to admit change and consequently to admit death.... to accept limits and consequently to admit death. Behind the walls, Bellow's heroes boil over an inner fury of self-revenge and self-justification. They retreat from external strife into internal strife which is staged as an enclosed drama. The life of mind becomes a substitute for creative life. One part of the self replays its experience before another critical self that continually analyzes and evaluates the performance. (Klaug, "Heroin in the Middle" 468-69)

Being a writer, Citrine's 'enclosed drama' is unselfed by way of discussions with professors, writers, thinkers, friends and female associates, nymphomaniacs or violent Cantabables. All their responsive verdicts do not jeopardize Citrine's Self and only promote Citrine's interpretation of existence and thereby make his Self more accessible to himself.
It is obviously noticeable, that each of Citrine's discussion with the other characters in the novel throws a more intense light upon the track of his Self. Even the Dean, Albert Corde in Dean's December and Mischa Fox in Flight do not show such excellence in their intellectual capacity for analysing the predicaments of existence. For instance, Citrine perceives his Self in the light of Chicagoan predicament predominantly, besides his own consciousness, and also in the light of all the views of the other characters in the novel. Each of these characters has a say or an assessment about Citrine, each of which gradually acts as an exordium to the 'selves' within Citrine. The sensitive writer, with an open-eye to all contingencies around him, wonders about his Self:

Wasn't this a court of equity, a forum of conscience? And hadn't I tried in my own confused way to bring some good into the world?... and having pursued a higher purpose although without even getting close, now that I was aging, weakening, disheartened, doubting my endurance and even my sanity, they wanted to harness me to an even heavier load for the last decade or so.... Besides, as suffering went, I was only in the middle rank or lower. So out of respect for the real thing I clammed up. (HG 232)

In this contemplative utterance, Citrine loathes the imposition of the verdicts of the other characters upon him. He has the bearing of a personality that cannot be easily manoeuvred away from the purpose after which it pursues. But as becoming of
any genius, Citrine lends a patient ear to all assessment, sifting from them each of his fragmentary form of selves. And from the stifling congestion he apparently seems to suffer here Citrine much later in the novel observes:

Just as soul and spirit left the body in sleep, they could also be withdrawn from it in full consciousness with the purpose of observing the inner life of man. The first result of this conscious withdrawal is that everything is reversed. Instead of seeing the external world as we normally do with senses and intellect, initiates can see the circumscribed self from without. Soul and spirit are poured upon the world which normally we perceive from within... This external world we no longer see, for we are it. The outer world is now the inner. (KG 393)

Citrine as a writer is out to demolish all the devastating forces that impede his strife for Self. He initiates this effort by a primary confrontation of all chaotic forces and rendering them adequate comprehension from his genial intellect. He allows Cantabile to lead him to the ruinous construction site, Renata to give free vent to her nymphomaniacal perversities, Humboldt to criticise his writing artfulness. But it is also noticed, that with equal tenacity, he severs Cantabile's relationship, magnanimously understands Renata's separation and compromises with the different reactions of Humboldt. This elaborate comprehensiveness is the reverberation of a writer's understanding of the juxtaposition
of the opposites in life such as "optimism and pessimism, hope and despair, self and society, good and evil". As Bellow says,

...art has something to do with the achievement of stillness in the midst of chaos... It relates him at once to the Romantics and the transcendentalists who affirm their belief in the peaceful conditions, the pastoral mode of life. The movements made by a Bellow protagonist are often erratic, and the seminal image in his fiction is the image of a person lost in self-analysis and in search of something positive beyond the Chaos of the finite. (Pal, "Motion and Stillness" 58)

Citrine speaks of Self that is beyond the chaos of Chicago, not because his Self has a transcendental element but because he brings forth a soulful, human Self into the various selves that 'role-play in the performance' of existence. He recalls that he is a mysterious misfit in the society. And what sickened his consciousness earlier was his incongruity. But then he does reinstate that "...When you got out of the sensible world, you might feel parts of the soul awakening that never had been awake before" (HG 223). For the sensible world was "...a beautiful place [where he]... felt that demon-selves and silly-selves and loving-selves were intermingling" (HG 248). Citrine's answer to his analysis of "what a human being is" (HG 89) is answered when Citrine comes to terms that "the world was being reconstituted and the old structure, death and all" (HG 329) unravels in a state of gaiety to him to vanish
into the surplus contingencies of existence as does any other predicament that recedes into oblivion.

Though Citrine's intellectuality is swaggered by the American chaos, his Self remains quite unaltered by reality. Therefore, Citrine is as much tempted into alienation or isolation from relationships as is Bradley; he adheres to the responsibility he owes to the society as a writer and as an individual. This perhaps is a reflection or an echo of Bellow's own predicament as a novelist. As Bailey observes of Bellow's techniques,

Bellow regards his alienation from the development towards a social and political definition of literature as vitally necessary. ...Bellow has continued to maintain that, in order for literature to avoid a devaluation to the status of amusement, the writer must create in a condition of pure subjectivity and inwardness. (Bailey, Saul Bellow's Recent Works 75)

Citrine is a protagonist who is left in the midst of a godless American world where death is final. His endless wayward relationships make him typical of American existence; it is again Citrine's (or Bellow's) depiction of his Self as a critic of American society, where "The disjunction between the ideal and the real, the world dreamed and the world observed" are juxtaposedly analysed from the point of view of a writer (Fuchs, Vision and Revision 277). If Murdoch's Bradley owes
his Self or selves to his mere innerworld of experiences,

Bellow's Citrine

...had to evolve into a character who had reached a pinnacle of professional triumph in imaginative work to express the irony of mind in a money society and then view it with equanimity. (Fuchs, Vision and Revision 248)

an equanimity quite unmatched by his counter-half.