Chapter IV

HIDDEN POTENTIALS IN MAN
Chapter IV

Hidden Potentials in Man

Bernard Malamud investigates in his fictional world, the inborn resources in man, which help him to overcome the inhuman situations, in a morally degenerate world. Very often critics feel that the central theme of his work is the “development of the hidden strengths of ordinary and often awkward people”.1 This ‘hidden strength’ stimulates Malamud’s characters to fight relentlessly against the degrading aspects of society and empower them to reach beyond the odds of life. Malamud’s protagonists acquire a direct moral victory while fighting against the flaws in their own characters.

Though Malamud’s protagonists are prone to human weaknesses like sex, self-centredness and egotism, they manage to pass beyond the inhuman conditions of life by struggling towards moral integration. As such Malamud’s heroes are gifted with the redeeming power of perseverance. They fight against their misfortune peacefully, by upholding human values. And in the process, they learn from their struggling and sufferings and hence develop a new moral outlook. Sandy Cohn asserts, “Malamud believes that in each man there is the capacity to learn from his suffering and to become better morally”.2

A typical Malamud protagonist revolts against his present condition by accepting the particular circumstances. This enables him to uphold his individuality. Each Malamud protagonist begins his quest in order to find his true self and towards the end of his quest, finds his identity by adapting
himself to the society. This is because Malamud thinks that a man can attain his identity only through the acceptance of the society around him. So we find Malamud’s heroes are always bent on finding a new identity and with it a new rapport with society”.  

Malamud’s characters are never totally crumpled by their suffering. They act as representatives of all suffering men who long to be better than they are. The theme of moral regeneration through suffering is effectively characterized in Malamud’s fiction. And as such, suffering acts as a means of redemption, liberating both the sufferer and those for whom he suffers. 

The sequence of the protagonist’s various experiences leading to moral growth, therefore, should be evaluated with reference to Malamud’s views on suffering. Initially, the protagonist chases his chosen vocation with utmost enthusiasm. While striving towards his aim, he understands that his ambition is a false one. Also his various interactions with the society guide him to view life at a new, different perspective. Thus, by the end, the protagonist gains a kind of self-awareness necessary to meet the challenges of this world. His insistence of the new identity eventually turns out to be an act of transcendence in which all selfish motives are eradicated. And he adapts himself to the world through the agency of some moral principles created within. Now he is no more a victim of circumstances. The measure of the protagonist’s heroism depends on his capacity to transcend the world within himself and outside depending on
the inborn potentials. Each Malamud novel characterizes some measure of heroism, based on the hidden potentials in man.

A significant characteristic of the moral struggle of Malamud's protagonists is that they always stick to their comic sense. As Mark Goldman observes, Malamud's comic fiction "is a rich, complex mixture of irony and satire, fantasy and moral fervor". Persistently they laugh at others and also at themselves so as to reduce the pain in their hearts. As such we find Malamud's protagonists trying to redeem themselves from life's agony, anxiety and disillusionment, by maintaining their comic sense even during the time of crisis.

Bernard Malamud's first novel *The Natural* is the story of a competent baseball player named 'Roy Hobbs'. The first part of the novel describes the ventures, victories and failures of the nineteen-year-old lad who wants to become the best there ever was in the game. Roy Hobbs, equipped with Wonderboy, the bat he has hewn from a lightning blasted Oak tree, is full of selfish motives. In the 'Pre-game', Roy is on his way to Chicago, through the night, 'moving toward dawn' (p.9) in search of better opportunities. He is full of hopes about his future in the game. "I feel that I have got it in me-that I am due for something very big" (p.31). On the train he meets Harriet Bird, 'a snappy goddess' (P.30) and gets attracted to her. But Harriet Bird tests his moral awareness as she feels that he is full of selfish desires. She asks him as to what he plans to accomplish as a baseball champion. Roy Hobbs in his selfish preoccupation gives the
disappointing answer that he will gain fame and wealth. So Harriet shoots him down with a silver bullet. Thus his associations with Harriet make him suffer for fifteen years.

In the second part of the novel 'Batter up', we find Roy returning to the baseball field after fifteen years, with very fresh hopes. But still he is egotistic and self-centred. Roy’s chasing of Memo reveals his selfish desire to fulfil his lust. Since he is immature, he chooses Memo, the selfish and money-minded seductress. But the events of the first part of 'The Natural' resemble with the incidents of the second part. This symbolism throws light to the author's conviction that the measure of success lies in part in the protagonist’s response to his own past actions, thereby getting away the inherent weaknesses.

It is a lamentable fact that Roy never understands his responsibility towards others in the right spirit. He acts as a toy in the hands of the American materialistic society. His life’s ambition 'to be the best' in baseball is a false dream which drags him to his own downfall. But Roy, striving hard to attain the impossible dream, does not realize that his dream is “already behind him somewhere back in the vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic, rolled on under the night”.

Malamud’s true hero is not a man with excellent records, but one who can triumph as a man too by upholding the moral aspects of life. This notion has a prerequisite, a perception on the part of the protagonist about his past errors and inadequacies. But Roy gets perplexed at the very
thought of accepting or even revealing his obscure past. He feels “Ashamed to be recognized, to have his past revealed like an egg spattered on the floor”(p.52). So he tries his level best to conceal his past from the prying sports writer Max Mercy.

Iris Lemon should have been a model for Roy in his approach towards his past life. She has accepted her past sufferings by devoting her life to the care of her daughter. Being the victim of a lustful man at a young age, Iris is the very exemplification of meaningful suffering. She later reveals to Roy that her tender feelings for the child have compensated mainly for what she has suffered. Also Iris tries to convince Roy, the need of suffering. But Roy gets repelled instantly because he is not ready to accept and learn from his past sufferings, so that the future would be more promising.

Iris says, ‘It (suffering) teaches us to want the right things’. ‘All it taught me is to stay away from it. I am sick of all I have suffered’. She shrank away a little (p.149).

Here we see, Roy cannot accept suffering in the true spirit because of his selfish, materialistic ambitions.

Marcus Klein remarks that suffering is “the one possibility of love”. But Roy does not view suffering as the symbol of oneness with others or a means of participation in the lives of others, thus sharing their sorrow. While refusing suffering, Roy cannot develop inwardness with his own human identity. In the try-off against the Pirates, Vogelman notices with dismay the degeneration of Roy. “Look at him standing there like a
goddamn gorilla. Look at his burning eyes. He ain’t human"(p.216). The fact is that even though Roy wins the game, he does not crave it for others.

His own material interests move Roy. “He fails to see beyond his own petty needs to the needs of others. Thus he betrays himself. Roy does this by being an egotist who thinks only of what he wants from the world”.

From the very beginning, Roy cannot enjoy friendship with his own teammates. He likes to be identified all by himself. The force of an obsession’ says Herbert Gold, “cannot be communicated; the obsessed person clings to his loneliness”. He gets provoked by his likening with Bump Baily in the newspapers. And his co-players doubt whether Roy is for the team or for himself. Olson says he is for the team, but Cal Baker remarks: “Those big guys are always for themselves. They are not for the little guy. If he was for us, why don’t he come around more? Why does he hang out so much by himself?”(p.87). After Roy’s victory, his admirers throw a party to observe ‘Roy Hobb’s Day’ and bestow on him many presents. But Roy does not take them seriously and even fails to thank them for their favour. He asserts, in over-confidence. “I will do my best-the best I am able-to be the greatest there ever was in the game”(p.108). The fans who exalt him to the heights of glory seem to be of no use to Roy. He feels no commitment towards them. Even though, the fans dearly love Roy, Roy does not love the fans.

Iris tells him to be a hero for others rather than for himself. According to Iris, what a true hero embodies is something greater than
mere breaking of records in the field. Roy would become a real hero only if he can win as a spiritually developed man, capable of undertaking moral commitments. This kind of heroism demands as a pre-condition, the recognition of the unpleasantness and inadequacy of his selfish, materialistic dream. Subsequent upon this realization comes suffering and self-sacrifice. By undergoing the unique experience of suffering, an individual gets the following insight. He realizes that however hostile life’s surroundings be, those overwhelming situations cannot defeat the spiritual strength of a man because man has got sufficient inner potentials to rely upon. But Roy is not courageous enough to endure suffering and hence he rejects Iris Lemon, the very embodiment of suffering. Iris tells Roy that suffering teaches us to want the right things at the right time. But Roy learns nothing from this apprehension. He rejects Iris because he cannot adjust himself to the reality that she is a grandmother.

The first time Roy plays an unselfish role is when he plays for the recovery of his ardent fan. Just before the game, the father of sick boy requests Roy to win the game so that his son who worships Roy may get rid of sickness. Just before the game, it is Iris who provides Roy the necessary confidence to win the game by standing herself in the stands.

By Iris’s compassionate act, she wins the confidence of Roy. Unconsciously drawn towards Iris, Roy reveals to her his sufferings, his disappointments and his dreams. He tells her “My god – damn life didn’t turn out like I wanted it to ------ ‘I wanted everything’” (p.146). Sidney
Richman asserts that in Malamud's world, confession implies 'dawn of love'. And we find, the real love of Iris Lemon urges Roy to determine to win the game, which he has already planned to throw by being a 'sell - out'.

On the day of the final try off against the Pirates, a ball thrown by Roy accidentally hits Iris. When Iris unlocks the secret that she is pregnant by him, Roy exclaims 'Holy Jesus'. And then he kisses "her hard belly, wild with love for her and the child" (210). The word 'wild' refers to Roy's sensual desire, his 'natural' position in which he still exists.

The last scene of The Natural however presents a different Roy, one who has recognized the inadequacy of his false dreams and has gained a realization of his responsibilities. He mines a hole in the earth to bury his bat, the Wonderboy. And the breaking of the bat indirectly implies Roy's admitting his transience. Rightly he feels that 'the bat had willed its own brokenness' (220), which means Roy is now prepared to suffer. The very next moment he removes his dirty uniform, which is symbolic of discarding his degenerate, corrupt self and changes into 'street clothes'. He accepts Iris Lemon who is made pregnant by him and also grasps his inability to learn from his past experiences. He remarks: "I never did learn anything out of my past life, now I have to suffer again" (p.222). At last suffering makes him perceive the significance of love and humanism — "the God - given fire of decency and determination, that enables him to overcome everything arrayed against him". 10

Finally Roy finds reality in Iris's understanding of human relations
and also he realizes the value of suffering. He gains this insight because of the goodness within him. Thus the career of Roy which begins in ignorance culminates in mature self-understanding. Roy proves that “Life consists of achieving good not apart from evil but in spite of it.” By looking into the career of Roy Hobbs, we realize the fact that only by depending upon the goodness within, man will be able to deny the demands of the world. Thus an individual can regain the world by relying upon the hidden potentials in him.

Frank Alpine’s association with the poor, old grocer, Morris Bober forms the main drama of The Assistant. The theme of spiritual redemption through suffering is clearly brought out through the evolution of the mind of the central character ‘Frank Alpine’. Towards the end, Frank emerges as a morally matured fellow by undergoing severe suffering. Therefore, Ruth B. Mandel rightly denotes, “Bernard Malamud’s The Assistant offers (an) affirmation for the possibility of human salvation and identity through a consciously constructed personal ethic.” While going through the novel, the reader gets impressed by the truth that man’s spirit triumphs even in the worst circumstances. And that man is not a constant entity but a dynamic being, always moving towards the best because he has got the inner potential for redemption in him.

Frank Alpine, a wanderer comes to the east in order to free himself from the bindings of the past and to start a new, worthwhile life. “He (Frank) continued to feel he deserved a better fate, and he would find it if
he only once – once – did the right thing – the thing to do at the right
time” (p.85). His aimless existence in the past continuously bothers him. Hence he wants to achieve something better than before in the remaining years. Unlike Roy Hobbs, he has a different vision about life – ‘a more worthwhile ambition’ (p.120). And therefore he deserves our appreciation and sympathy for ‘his great struggle to overcome his past’ (p.175). As Giles B. Gunn views it, Frank “evinces a much larger capacity for suffering than Roy and a greater willingness to learn what it has to reach him. He is more intensely aware of his own mistakes and is thus able to exhibit a greater sympathy for the plight of others”. 

Frank’s involuntary fascination towards Morris Bober reveals his capacity to undergo ‘creative’ suffering, through which he can gain spiritual salvation. He knows ‘more about life’ and gives ‘the impression of greater potential depth’ (120). Frank always regards St. Francis of Assissi as his spiritual guide in the affairs relating to morality. He remembers the story of the saint, told to him by ‘an old priest’, in the orphanage, in his younger days. Also he views himself as ‘an honest man’ (51). Even Morris notices in him “not a bum but a boy who has gone through bad times” (63). Helen too views him as “more than just an ordinary person” (94).

He sometimes appeared to be more than he was, sometimes less. His aspirations, she sensed, were somehow apart from the self he presented normally when he wasn’t trying, though he was always more or less trying; therefore when he was trying less. She could not quite explain this to herself, for if he could make himself seem better, broader, wiser when he tried, then he had these things in him because you couldn’t make them out of nothing” (p.109).
It is clear that Frank lacks the necessary experience to activate these hidden potentials in him.

Frank’s taking up of the job as an assistant in Morris’s grocery store has many intentions. One thing is that Frank being a wanderer, the store acts as a shrine for him. Secondly since Frank wants to expiate his crime against Morris Bober in the hold up case, he decides to serve Morris Bober without money. And the most important reason is that he wants to win Helen’s love. In the beginning, he regards the grocery store as a ‘long dark tunnel’ but gradually it proves to be a refuge for him. Here he submits himself to severe moral apprenticeship under the guidance of Morris Bober and finally comes out as a morally matured fellow.

From the very beginning, we watch conflicting impulses in Frank Alpine’s mind, symbolized in the two contradictory images. He wants to lead the glamorous life of a Crime King and at the same time he worships in his innermost heart, the saint, St. Francis of Assissi and desires to be like him. He admires St. Francis because of the saint’s kind, compassionate nature.

Morris Bober, through his own life demonstrates such qualities of goodness, poverty and compassion, which are evident in St. Francis of Assissi. As the luckless owner of an unprofitable grocery store, Morris labours sixteen hours a day, barely making out a living. Though he is a very poor man in worldly terms, he is spiritually very rich. The purity of his heart is evident in his living for others. For many years he has been getting
up so early in the morning to give a Polish woman, her daily three-cent roll of bread. As he is a socially committed man, he regards it his duty to attend to her needs. Even then she insults him because he is a Jew.

Frank's association with Morris Bober in the grocery store provides him with enough chances of redemption through suffering. Frank's doubts concerning the suffering of the Jews and the reason of Morris's particular suffering are definite clues to the changes happening in Frank's personality. He cannot understand Morris's passive suffering for the sake of others. Even the grocer's assertion that he suffers for Frank makes no change in Frank because he is not so morally developed to grasp man's commitment towards others. Later when Frank understands that Morris Bober has known for a long period, his participation in the hold up case, he starts perceiving the meaning of Bober's saying 'I suffer for you'. Having known about Frank's sins, Morris hides them to redeem Frank. Morris takes upon himself the responsibility of Frank's life and suffers for him just as Jesus Christ suffered for our sins. When Frank gets this insight, he starts sharing Morris's burden in the grocery store. Here we see, one can attain salvation by suffering for others and "each character is the instrument of the other's salvation". Hence in The Assistant, Malamud "demonstrates his commitment to redemption and renewal through suffering by clearly moving his hero upward to sainthood."

Frank is worried about creating for himself, a worthwhile, new life. While working in the grocery, the picture of Helen haunts his mind. He
consciously tries to promote his associations with Helen by visiting her constantly at the library during evenings. Also he 'steals from Bober's cashbox everyday' (p.64). The conflict between good and bad aspects of his character is revealed by his impulse to help the Bobers and to rob them. Even though Frank thinks, it is wrong on his part to take advantage of Morris Bober, the good man, he cannot obstruct himself from stealing money and lusting after Helen. While the baser self promotes him to steal, Frank's conscience troubles him. As a result, he keeps a record of the money he has stolen and plans to return the money when he has enough. But this puts Frank into moral dilemma.

On days he felt this way he sometimes got headaches and went around muttering to himself. He was afraid to look into the mirror for fear it would split apart and drop into the sink. He was wound up so tight he would spin for a week if the spring snapped. ..... These were his worst days and he suffered trying to hide his feelings. (p.78).

Jonathan Baumbach reveals "------- Since he wants more than anything else to be a good man, his crimes are a means of self-punishment, each time he pockets money from Morris's register, he torments himself with guilt". In this way, he engages himself in the baser instincts and then torments himself. "He is not yet good enough to stop, but already too good not to suffer the consequences of his own acts". Thus we realize that Frank has got the inborn potential in him to distinguish between good and bad and is willing to progress towards moral integration.

The inability of Frank to face his own image in the mirror is symbolic
of his guilty conscience resulting from his exploitation of the Bober family. Hence in order to expiate his pangs of guilt, he decides to help the Bobers in future. Also he prepares himself for a confession of his misdeeds towards Morris:

He saw only one way of squeezing through the stone knot; start by shovelling out the load he was carrying and in his mind by admitting to Morris that he was one of the guys that had held him up (p. 82).

Thus Frank consciously strives for a better life because each day he becomes aware of his misdeeds all by himself. He desires "to change his life before the smell of it suffocated him".

After becoming The Assistant of Morris, Frank develops instincts of reform, for Frank has the inborn attraction to goodness. In addition to Bober’s courtesy, Helen also behaves towards Frank in a friendly manner. As a preparation to join the college, she motivates him to read Russian classics like ‘Anna Karenina’, ‘Crime and Punishment’ etc. Frank sincerely goes through them for the sake of Helen and gets influenced by these classics. She loves him and expects him to control himself so that she can love him fully one day. The grandeur of Helen’s love urges him for self-reform. "With the idea of self-control came the feeling of the beauty of it – the beauty of a person being able to do things the way he wanted to, to do good if he wanted; and this feeling was followed by regret – of the slow dribbling away, starting long ago, of his character, without him lifting a finger to stop it" (141). Thus we see Frank continuously undergoes self-examination because of his innate desire to be good.
But he finds it very difficult to leave the habit of stealing. Almost everyday he steals from Bober's cashbox. For self-consolation, he justifies his stealing habit by saying that without him, the business of Morris would not have flourished. One day, while pilfering money from the cash box, Morris catches him directly and fires him for stealing money. Morris gets so enraged by this act that he turns Frank out for "he (Morris) did not want the criminal around"(148).

Frank's assault on Helen in the park obstructs his aspiration for moral betterment. With this criminal act, Frank's sense of guilt rises to its climax. Even then he is fully confident that he will overcome his evil temptations gradually. Thereafter, Frank imposes self – punishment to discipline himself. He undertakes rigorous penance to liberate his mind from the sins he committed and also to achieve moral integrity. As a disciplinary step, he apologizes to himself, "to (Helen's) shadow, to the floral fragrance she left in the air. To himself he confessed his deed, but not to her" (164).

He then determines to make expiation for the crime in any possible way. Hence he embraces much suffering to get the dreams of Helen fulfilled. James Alexander says "------ You must read that each man has choices which he must make, and that there is good in each man".19 During the time of Morris’s illness, Frank works honestly in the store, in order to save the grocery and also offers his selfless service to the Bober family. Because of his inner struggle to become a good man, he confesses to
Morris Bober, his participation in the Bober's hold up. And he promises that he has changed. "I am not the same person I once was. I might look so to you but if you could see what's been going on in my heart you would know I have changed. You can trust me now, I swear it, and that's why I am asking you to let me stay and help you" (176). Thus Frank's readiness to stay with a good man like Morris Bober reveals his inner spiritual earnestness.

Frank's redemption occurs in continuous stages. He sticks to the grocery store, even after Bober's death. Also his attitude towards Helen changes. He now does not look at Helen with lust. But rather he considers her as his little sister and feels responsible towards her. He works hard to send Helen to a college for higher studies, a thing she always pined for. Seeing the change in Frank, Helen behaves in a friendly manner towards him. And she reflects upon the many ways Frank has been helpful to them recently.

He had kept them alive. Because of him she had enough to go to school at night---------. He had been one thing, low, dirty, but because of something in himself – something she couldn't define, a memory perhaps, an ideal he might have forgotten and then remembered-he had changed into somebody else, no longer what he had been. She should have recognized it before. What he did to me he did wrong, she thought, but since he has changed in his heart, he owes me nothing (p.215).

Here Helen perceives the fact that Frank has changed because of the innate potentials in him.

Frank toils hard in the store to improve the financial condition of the Bobers. In addition to this, he occupies himself with a job in a night
coffeehouse. From there he returns to the store, early in the morning to give the first customer, her three-cent roll of bread. This touches even Ida and she asks him “Why do you work so hard for nothing? What do you stay for?” Frank says ‘for love’. This is love in a large sense covering his love of Helen and also his love of humanity. Thus Frank represents “the qualified effort of human transcendence”. In his progressive change from criminal to saint, compassion leads up to “the painful emergence of selflessness from selfishness”.

Now Frank has become inseparably associated with the suffering of the Jews. Through the unique experience of suffering, Frank ‘the free man’ has changed to a man with responsibilities. By taking over the store, Frank re-enacts the life of the dead grocer, whom he has at first detested. Suffering now shapes his identity as in the case of Morris Bober. He receives from Morris Bober, the values of secularism, truthfulness and compassion. He also realizes the need “to want for others that which he wants also for himself”(p.203). Now Frank is ‘a good man’ with ‘a good heart’, which is the essential qualification for being a Jew. Towards the final stage, we see Frank’s enthusiasm to get him circumcised. This serves as a clear proof of his inner longing to be good like Morris Bober. For Malamud believes that man has got sufficient inborn capacity to alter his life for the better. In a note for the Norwegian translation, Malamud wrote: “the apprentice character interested me, as he has in much of my fiction, the man who as much as he can in the modern world, is in the process of
changing his fate, his life". Thus the novel deals with the unknown ‘hidden strength’ of man which helps him to bear suffering without compromising with the human values. The ‘hidden strength’ of both Morris Bober and Frank Alpine rests in their compassion.

In his next novel *A New Life*, Malamud fictionalizes the moral development of a sensitive protagonist, emphasizing the theme of redemption by the hidden potentials in man. The protagonist S. Levin, grows from ignorance to knowledge by his various experiences in the society. The novel reflects Malamud’s firm faith in the superiority of the human mind. Malamud believes that man’s fate and surroundings cannot crush him totally because he is unconsciously sensitive to those factors that object to his humanity. The novel exhibits “an act of spiritual autonomy, perfect enough to persuade us that the possibility of freedom from the determinings of history and sociology still exists". It’s protagonist S. Levin, though susceptible to human weaknesses, possesses a better awareness of life, conditioned by some basic principles. As a result, he values life more than anything else does and with the help of the inner potentials tries to survive as a morally matured human being. He develops for himself a way of life based on love and compassion, thinking that it would provide him a stable life. And at last, the protagonist opts for life, reinforcing Malamud’s belief that “There are unseen victories all around us – it’s a matter of plucking them down. It takes effort, the kind of courage that causes man constantly to fabricate the means of his preservation".
Malamud dramatizes S. Levin as having gone through the stimulation for revival of life. His past life bothers him very often and this prompts him to seek a worthwhile life in Cascadia. Levin reveals about his past life that after his mother’s suicidal death, he has taken to drinking for several years. But then he has experienced a sudden spiritual realization. “I came to believe what I had often wanted to, that life is holy. I then became a man of principle” (p.196). So he longs for a meaningful life founded on morality, which Levin believes is necessary to ‘protect the human, the good, the innocent’ (p.239). In Levin’s opinion, one can exist as a true humanist, only by doing selfless service to others. “Those who had discovered their own moral courage, or created it, must join others who are immoral; these must lead, without fanaticism. Any act of good is a diminution of evil in the world” (258).

From the very beginning of the novel, we find Levin as a man of stern morality, who has got the inborn potential for goodness. He tells Pauline Gilley, immediately after his entry into their house that he has retained one or two ideals, to give his life the appropriate value. From the east, he comes to the west to attain a new identity with respect to his newly formed ideals. His aim is to “help the human lot, notwithstanding universal peril, anxiety, continued betrayal of freedom and oppression of man” (p.230). Hence Levin fights on two fronts, so as to redeem him and the society. In the Cascadia College, he fights against those evil forces that destroy society by creating anarchy among people. As a teacher, he suggests the idea of introducing
the liberal arts into the curriculum of the Faculty of Arts. By this method, he plans to induce real human values in the students. He also criticizes strongly, the orthodox outlook of his colleagues. But the Cascadia society with its conservatism and narrow mindedness acts as a foil to his newly developed ideals.

On the personal level, Levin has left behind him the habit of drinking and has awakened to a sense of life’s holiness. But he has “not yet awakened to the love, which makes these principles an actuality”. What Levin is in search of is not real love, but ‘romantic love’, the fulfilment of his baser instincts. And while trying to satisfy his lust, he goes through some loveless affairs, all ending in disappointment and humiliation.

Levin’s affair with Pauline also starts on a sensual plane. But on satisfying his selfish needs, Levin fails to reciprocate the love expressed to him by Pauline. He tries to restrict his relationship with Pauline. The result is that his guilty conscience torments him and he suffers from terrible rectal pain. Then relying upon his inborn, hidden capabilities, he learns the lesson of discipline and the need to submit himself to a ‘personally delimiting involvement with other lives’.

In Malamud’s fiction, the difficulties and sufferings of his protagonists bring forth the innate hidden potentials, which enable them to fight against the odds of life. Since Levin is a liberal humanist, he has got firm, consciously created faith in the human rights. So in Levin’s view, morality becomes the acceptance of responsibility for ‘human rights’.
Through his innate struggle for goodness, he realizes that "the main source of conscious morality was the love of life, anybody's life" (p.249). Commitment to Pauline enables Levin to evolve the mental courage, necessary to meet the challenges. Also his struggling in the department enables him to sacrifice his future life for the principle of responsibility. Levin cannot avoid the true love of Pauline on account of human freedom. Even without the feeling of love, he would hold on to her, out of morality, out of his principle of commitment.

"No matter what he had suffered or renounced, to what degree misused or failed feeling; if Pauline loving him loves, Levin with no known cause not to will love her. He would without or despite feeling. He would hold on when he wanted terribly to let go. Love had led him, he would now lead love" (p.324).

Thus from selfishness, he moves to selflessness and care for others.

Levin's moral maturity can be viewed towards the end of the novel. He resigns his job, without any prospect of a new one and accepts Pauline and her adopted children on spiritual grounds, thereby reinforcing his devotion to his ideals. Seeing the extra ordinary courage of Levin, Gerald Gilley gets amazed and asks him "Why take that load on yourself?" Levin retorts that "Because I can, you son of a bitch" (p.344). Here we find that Levin takes upon himself the responsibility, even though he does not have to, because he believes that he can support them. This act of Levin reveals that he has gained sufficient inner strength and capacity to take care of the burdensome Pauline and her children. Levin's reply is an outward declaration of the potentials, which he has gained through his mental
struggle. Now he can make a choice and suffer for the fulfilment of his choice. "Levin finds his new life in a new relationship". He accepts responsibility denying his selfish impulses, both in love and in aspiration; he takes it as a "stern moral imperative".

By undergoing suffering, Levin has gathered self-knowledge and has also learnt to choose the proper way of life. The career of Levin ends up in sacrificing himself for a set of values or what he calls 'ideal'. Now he does not love Pauline with the passion and fervour of the past. He accepts her for the sake of his principle, a personal code of morality. Thus, at last, Levin wins victory on moral grounds because he has found his real self and has learnt to accept his fate and surroundings. According to Ruth R. Wesse, Malamud's characters have "the potential for suffering, submitting to loss, pain, humiliation" and also the potential "for recognizing himself as.........himself".

Subsequently Levin triumphs in the social circle also. After thirty years, Gilley's book 'The Elements of Grammar' gets eliminated from the syllabus. Also the Dean of Arts Faculty appeals to C.D. Fabrikant for handling great books programme, which was originally Levin's idea. Out of compulsion, the authorities have to redesign their academic programme in favour of the liberal arts. Thus, reinforcing his own freedom, Levin redeems the Cascadia society affirming that "any swamp can be transformed into an arena by aspiration". Levin does grow in moral stature and the "only true heroism in Malamud's work is the heroism of growing up".
In *The Fixer*, we see the panic-stricken story of agony and distress, changing into a story of human triumph. The novel upholds the author's belief that man can win over the snares of history, if he depends upon his inner human potentials for courage and strength. Just like Malamud's earlier heroes, the protagonist of *The Fixer*, 'Yakov Bok', is an ordinary man. But he wins a through victory by fighting restlessly, relying on his inner resources as a human being. He makes use of all the strength at his disposal to protect his life and human essence. Thus Yakov Bok becomes the true embodiment of man's capacity to grow spiritually in the middle of adverse surroundings. The novel demonstrates Malamud's faith that man has, despite all his weaknesses, a hidden potential, an 'opposing self', which always motivates him to defend his human dignity.

From the beginning, we feel that Yokov Bok is specially selected for suffering. In German, the word Bok means goat. So his name implies the kind of scape-goat that he will become at the hands of the anti-Semites. They accuse him of ritual murder of a Christian boy and put him in prison. In the novel, Malamud brings forth the change that suffering brought on Yakov's mind, emphasizing the overpowering nature of human mind. Stephen Farber rightly points out that "Malamud tries to capture in the novel the invincibility of the human spirit." Yakov evolves uncommon spiritual resources in an atmosphere of torture and suffering, and at last emerges as a hero of all time.

Like Malamud's former heroes, Yakov Bok also has a wretched past.
His mother passed away ten minutes after his birth and his father was an accidental quarry to two drunken soldiers, who "shot the first three Jews in their path, his father had been the second" \(^{(p.8)}\). Being an orphan, Yakov struggles hard for making out a living. He says "In my dreams I ate and I ate my dreams" \( (p.9) \). Right from his early childhood, he has practised the work of a handyman, a fixer. In spite of his hard labour, he suffers from poverty. In addition to this, his wife, Raisl, has eloped with somebody after seven years of childless marriage.

Yakov is impetuous and over enterprising. He craves for "good fortune, accomplishment, affluence" and "a comfortable home, good business – may be a small factory of some kind – a faithful wife, dark haired, pretty, and three healthy children------" \( (p.25) \). These dreams make him impatient. Yakov is spiritually attached to his tools and enjoys working with those instruments. Also he likes to read books of spinoza. He tells his father-in-law:

"Those that can't sleep and keep me awake for company, I've told you what wants; a full stomach now and then. A job that pays roubles, not noodles. Even some education if I can get it, and I don't mean workmen studying Torah after hours. I've had my share of that. What I want to know is what's going on in the world" \( (p.15) \).

So he leaves the 'Shtetl' in search of a new life in 'Kiev' in order to 'get acquainted with a bit of the world'. In the drive for materializing his dreams, he shaves off his Jewish beard and tries to assert his own individual identity. Also he rejects Judaism and the Jewish God.

At Kiev, 'the Jerusalem of Russia', Yakov lives in continuous threat of
being detected as a Jew. Also he cannot entertain the idea of returning to the 'Shtetl', his native place. For sometime, he stays in the Podol district, without earning much. Once he rescues an over drunken man, lying in the snow and this humanistic act helps him to gain a good job. The old man, Nikolai Maximovitch Lebedev, turns out to be a member of the anti-Semitic organization called 'The Black Hundreds'. As a reward, he offers Yakov the job of an overseer at his brick factory. Yakov's accepting the job requires his living in an area forbidden to the Jews. But out of material wants he accepts the job.

But Yakov's ambitions go in vain, as he becomes a victim to the treacherous plot invented by the anti-Semiticites. They charge him of the ritual murder of a twelve-year-old Christian boy. Having been arrested, the police have taken him to Kiev prison. Then we see, Yakov slowly advances from a state of unsteady moral values to an authentic code of values, tested and confirmed by experience. The more he is inhibited that much he wanders in his mind. In the prison he thinks more about himself as his freedom is lessened to the verge of illusion. He understands that the main cause of his present miseries is his dissatisfaction with himself. He has selected the wrong kind of opportunity, rejected his own identity and past life. The Shtetl, which he earlier wanted to escape, now seems to be a place of bliss.

In Malamud's view, man has got sufficient inborn potentials to guard himself from difficult situations. While in prison, Bok acquires some release
from his agonies and worries through his dreams and hallucinations. Also
from these dreams and visions, he extracts strength and courage to fight
against the adverse circumstances. Yakov consciously attempts to liberate
himself, by inventing in fancy, situations he would enjoy.

You sink into your thoughts and try to blot out the prison cell.
If you’re lucky it dissolves and you spend a half – hour out in
the open, beyond the doors and walls and the hatred of
yourself. If you’re not lucky, your thoughts can poison you
(p.193).

Thus Yakov frees his thoughts from utter hopelessness. He perceives that
the first step to gain freedom is to come “out in the open beyond doors and
walls and the hatred of yourself” (193). And he begins to live with hope and
vitality.

He accepts his weaknesses and physical inadequacies, and tries his
level best to make use of the very little freedom he still has. “There was
cleaning out ashes, and making and lighting the stove. There was the
sweeping of the cell to do, urinating in the can, walking back and forth”
(p.194). Thus in confinement, he finds freedom. “Tormented in solitary
confinement, he struggles with his Tzarist tormentors, with his Jewish
heritage, with his God. Querulous, impotent, quixotic, the minimal hero
finally emerges from a prison into which all men are born”. Yakov takes
up the same methods of existence, which the survivors of the Second World
War had accepted. He suffers and endures every mental and physical
torture with calmness and hope.

They’re trying to unhinge me, the fixer thought, and then they’ll
say I went mad because I committed the crime. He feared what
he might confess if he went crazy; He strove with himself, struggled, shouted at him to hold tight to sanity, to keep in the dark unsettled centre of the mind a candle burning (p.224).

To break ‘the monotony of long stretches of time’, Yakov discovers diversions. Many a time, he summons up Psalms he heard in childhood and says them loudly. At times he talks to himself. He thinks of Spinoza, especially about how he was put on trial for his new ideas. Frequently, he envisions God, fighting with him, against his enemies in the battle, but God comes to him only in ‘a loud Ha! Ha!’. He reads whatever he gets in the solitary cell and tries to understand it. Thus Yakov outlives the cruelty of history with the help of the hidden capabilities in him, which come to light at the time of predicament.

Yakov derives motivation for survival from what others tell him. Bibikov feels pity for him because of the nature of his crisis. He tells Yakov: “Yakov Shepsovitch, what more can I tell you. Take heart in the truth and endure your trials. Sustain yourself in your innocence” (p.159). Fetyukov, a fellow captive, encourages the fixer not to “lose hope. The stones of the bridge may crumble, but the truth will come out” (139). Gronfein, another prisoner, instructs him that to stay alive means maintaining the chances of life. “As long as a man stays alive he can’t tell what chances will prop up next. But a dead man signs no checks” (p.143). Ostrovsky, the lawyer who calls on Yakov in the prison, tells him not to permit himself “to be provoked. Remember – patience, calm, you have a few friends” (280). These promises, though verbal, induce in Yakov self-confidence and prompt him
to fight continuously, upholding the human attributes.

He demands a trial and awaits it hopefully, even though he does not know when the trial would occur. “It was unending waiting for something that might never happen” (195). Nobody knows about it, not even the authorities. Yakov feels that he will be “here for ever. The indictment will never come” (177). Though crushed to ‘the lowest ebb of his life’ (284), Yakov does not lose hope. He is completely confident that he will keep going till the day of his judgement. “I’ll live, he shouts in his cell, I’ll wait, I’ll come to my trial” (247). Inclined to prove his innocence, he gathers boundless courage and capacity for tolerance, which weaken his oppressors spiritually. The inborn potentials in him help him to develop such extraordinary qualities.

Yakov becomes aware of the significance of his own self, as the authorities try to kill him, by poisoning his food. Their ventures to take his life motivate him to live longer and win over them. Once, the jail authorities poison his food, thinking that the poisoning will lower his spirits and will prompt him to confess the unperformed crime. At this focal point, Bok understands that, he can negotiate with his life. Since the poisoning effort, Yakov refuses to take food, unless he is allowed to have food with his fellow prisoners. Thus, when a starving man undertakes fasting, his oppressors miss that chance also, to oppress Yakov. In this way, he overwhelms his enemies by his hidden, inborn potentials.

The more Yakov’s physical strength deteriorates, the more he
acquires mental strength by depending upon his inner resources. Sidney Richman remarks, “Yakov is helpless but determined to remain a human being, innocent and unbroken under conditions specially devoid to crush out life and spirit.” Both the prison warden and Grubeshov, the Prosecuting Attorney get more and more tense, as they cannot understand the fixer’s future proceedings. Grubeshov, in particular, gets nervous, as he cannot make Bok confess the crime. He tries in vain to blackmail Yakov. He tells Yakov that the Tsar has taken special interest in the case and that the delay to confess the crime might result in annihilation of the Jews. He even promises Yakov safe passage out of the country, if he confesses the uncommitted crime. These promises toughen Yakov mentally, instead of weakening him, as he gets a clear vision about his importance to the state at large and people in particular. “The price he had already paid in suffering makes it impossible to compromise and at that point, though he doesn’t know it, he has the government at his mercy, rather than vice versa.” Thus, even though Grubeshov tries his level best to make the ritual murder case a believable one, by twisting the reality, he cannot do that because of Yakov’s unyielding will power.

His unwillingness to accept responsibility of the crime, even in the prospect of freedom from the prison, is indirectly related to his respect of freedom. The fixer does not want release from imprisonment by sacrificing his principles. Yakov suffers in the prison for no fault of his. And the continuous suffering adds to his self-knowledge that in turn becomes “the
entry into a significant community of selves". Hence he asserts spiritual freedom in the solitary cell by opting to be active both mentally and physically. He turns down his earlier plan of committing suicide and chooses to live. His desire to stay alive in the middle of torture and pain, asserting his rights, weaken the Russian authorities. They detect that while they can kill his body, they cannot destroy his spirit because of the hidden potentials in him. "To die in prison would be to accept his role as victim and confirm his appointed guilt. Therefore he must stay alive, and by refusing to disappear in death, force the government to bring him to trial. His mission, he comes finally to see, is simply to survive". Thus he finds out his new inner self-capable of resisting any temptation to destroy his life.

Now he is no longer afraid of the state, which oppresses him. He also refuses the pardon from the state knowing fully well that it will label him and his oppressed race as criminals. Even though he is not afraid of the corrupt state, he gets infuriated at the very thought that it needs a Jew as victim to load over the guilt. He would not sign the confession paper affirming that he performed the murder involuntarily, under pressure. That might release him from the confinement, but it will trouble his conscience. For, by holding his race responsible for the crime, he would deny the experience he has gained so far. He becomes sensitive to the history of the Jews and their inhuman existence. He then determines to live for his people and to protect them at any cost. "He’s half a Jew himself, yet enough of one to protect them. After all, he knows the people; and he believes in their
right to be Jews and live in the world like men. He is against those who are against them" (p.246). Thus Yakov commits himself socially to his role as redeemer of his oppressed race. Friedman writes on Yakov’s suffering: “Yakov, for all his initial alienation and continuing agnosticism, has at last earned the right to suffer for others, and he begins to recognize that he is responsible for all his people, that long suffering nation without a country, alienated by birth and history, whose trials and traditions Yakov had mocked by his rejection”. Now he realizes that the only method to sustain one’s self – honour is to devote oneself socially. Hence he decides to take upon himself the responsibility of all those people, oppressed by similar entanglements. He may not win his case in the court, but has acquired nobility and self – respect by being a champion of all oppressed people, irrespective of religion and nationality.

It is Spinoza, who inspired Yakov to create within himself this kind of spiritual freedom. Yakov admits: “When I was reading Spinoza, I stayed at night after night. I was by now excited by ideas and I tried to collect a few of my own. It was the beginning of a different Yakov”(p.192). He calls to mind, Spinoza’s saying, “--------a free man in society had a positive interest in promoting the happiness and intellectual emancipation of his neighbours” (p.73). Hence Yakov realizes the fact that the objective of freedom is to invent it for others. In this way, Yakov matures morally to the level of surpassing his confinement, as he thinks that he has the inner potential in him to bear it. Thus what we trace in The Fixer is “the imprisonment of
Yakov Bok's psychological and moral self and his gradual emergence from that spiritual confinement.  

Yakov extends courtesy to his wife when she comes to the prison to meet him. She has come there to secure Yakov's approval, regarding the fatherhood of her bastard child. He succumbs to her wishes, as he perceives that the failure of the marriage partly rests on him also. She has left him because of his utter disregard towards her. In his eager desire to fulfil selfish interests, he has denied love to her. Her barrenness also has added to worse the situation. Once he realizes his own errors, in his relationship with his wife, he overcomes his earlier hatred of her. He reveals "At first I cursed her like somebody in the Bible curses his whorish wife——-- But now I look at it like this: 'She had tied herself to the wrong future" (p.193). He regrets about his past actions and feels sorry for her. He accepts Raisl and her illegitimate child as his own. Thus we see "freedom of the spiritual self is a necessary condition for freedom in a relationship with another".  

Yakov acquires moral victory by forcing the authorities to take him to a trial. Whether Yakov wins or loses his case in the court is of little importance, since Malamud's aim in this novel is to uncover the spiritual growth of man in adverse circumstances. Bok's imprisonment helps him to gain spiritual freedom. He degrades the hardships of suffering as it has most certainly "toughened his character and will, stripped him of arrogance and false pride, and increased his compassion and charity, thereby
enabling him as Shmuel had admonished, 'to fix his heart';'. Tony Tanner aptly remarks in this context, “The real trial is not a matter of sentence or acquittal. But the imprisoned years which preceded, during which a man has the chance to derive some meaning from what he is caught up in”. Thus in his attempts to overcome the inhuman conditions, he becomes the champion of the whole humanity.

Yakov outlives the trappings of history with the help of mental courage and self-control. Most of the time, we find him morally stiff and disciplined. Though he cannot predict, what will occur to him next, he is fully confident of himself. Also he recognizes the right and the wrong aspects in the real sense, and never allows himself to be taken up with material benefits. Yakov Bok discovers that “only in our endurance of the incredible disparities and sufferings of ordinary existence, do we grasp and experience the more fundamental spiritual reality and identity of our lives.” He fights for his own life and in the course of time he attains spiritual freedom. Malamud himself has once told. “My aim was to show how Yakov could stand up under the terrible strains to which he was subjected”.

In *Pictures of Fidelman*, Malamud depicts Arthur Fidelman as an “artist – manque, the man who wants to find himself in art”. Fidelman's crucial problem arises from the inter-relation between his life and art. Hence he cannot succeed in his selfish adventures relating to painting and love. By travelling through many Italian cities, Fidelman acquires self-knowledge. Jeffrey Helterman considers *Pictures of Fidelman* “not
precisely a novel, but rather a series of vignettes built around a single character - a Jewish American art student, who later becomes a struggling artist and finally a successful artisan, named Arthur Fidelman.". 

Towards the end, Fidelman perceives the responsibilities of life by means of his associations with Susskind, the Jewish refugee and Beppo, the bisexual glass blower. Howard M. Harper Jr. remarks, "Fidelman, the faithful man, is the passionate pilgrim journeying through various archetypal ordeals toward salvation." 

Arthur Fidelman, the committed art critic arrives in Rome, to conduct his study on Giotto. And the first man he comes across is a Jewish Schnorrer, Shimon Susskind, who tells him: "I know you were Jewish ----- the minute my eyes saw you". But Fidelman denies the remark by asserting that he expresses himself best in English and therefore not a Jew. Actually, Fidelman wants to escape from his Jewish identity and his past life, marked by failure as painter. In Malamud's fiction, as long as the protagonist operates within some restrictions, he experiences a kind of freedom, which is unreal and self-destructive. And he acts under the constant urge to attain material success. Fidelman, the egoistic art critic is full of selfish desires. So in order to attain moral maturity, he should first get rid of his egoism and understand that he cannot flee from his past. Fidelman should transcend the self and the world, by creating a set of values, a moral code of behaviour, within himself based on the inner potentials in him.
In Rome, the self-styled art-critic meets Susskind who reminds him about his obligation to others. Even then Fidelman refuses to give Susskind his second best suit, which the latter wants to protect himself against the coming winter. When Susskind steals Fidelman’s manuscript on Giotto, Fidelman gets grief stricken and begins an active search for Susskind. Though Fidelman is Giotto scholar, he has not yet perceived the message of compassion that Giotto’s life and art conveys. After a long search, he meets Susskind and immediately offers his second best suit to him. “Here, ‘Susskind’, he said in a trembling voice, offering the bundle, ‘I bring you my suit. Wear it in good health’” \(^{50}\) (p.32). Susskind also gives back the suitcase to Fidelman, without asking. On opening the briefcase, Fidelman gets upset, as it is a vacant one. He realizes the fact that Susskind has burnt his chapter. He cries out in utter disappointment, ‘You bastard, you burned my chapter’. But Susskind asserts that he has done a good deed to Fidelman, by burning the manuscript because in the chapter, even though the words were there, the spirit was missing. On hearing this, Fidelman loses his control and chases him. But he fails to catch Susskind. Anyway, in the middle of his quest, Fidelman has ‘a triumphant insight’. Then he shouts with grief ‘Susskind, come back’------ ‘The suit is yours. All is forgiven’ (p.33). But Susskind flees without a stop. ‘When last seen, he was still running’. Now all his efforts become fruitless and there is no need to chase Susskind now. Fidelman realizes the value of compassion now. Thus, towards the end of the first chapter, “Fidelman the Esthete, through
understanding if not through love, becomes Fidelman the compassionate.\textsuperscript{51} Even though Susskind seems to be an ordinary man, he guides Fidelman towards self–realization. And Fidelman, by exploring his own self, realizes the value of compassion.

After the destruction of the manuscript by Susskind, Fidelman starts rewriting it with fresh hopes. But soon, he discovers that he cannot do well in the second attempt as he did in the first. Fidelman needs some substantial experiences behind him to develop his concepts. The phrase 'something solid behind him' refers to his Jewish past, the experiences he has gained so far. So he makes an urgent search for Susskind. Goldman points out that, what Fidelman pursue is "the real missing chapter of his own past, of himself".\textsuperscript{52} So the rejection of the past life refers to the denial of life, and hence the denial of the chances of growth, even though it is for socio–economic well being.

Towards the end of the search, Fidelman returns to his own self. He learns to discipline himself and to accept responsibility of others, relying upon the inner capabilities in him. With the help of Susskind, his liberation as a human being takes place. Now Fidelman is no more an egoistic person and he well understands the meaning of humanism. ex: -Fidelman climbs the staircase and sees his sister in death – bed, sees, this is his own Jewish fate.

However, Fidelman’s final salvation from the prison of self takes place when Beppo makes Fidelman aware of his own deficiencies and
possibilities. Beppo forcibly makes sexual assault on Fidelman. Thereafter he learns to create both art and life. Fidelman undergoes rigorous apprenticeship under the care of Beppo, both in love and in the art of blowing glass. Fidelman insists Beppo to teach him at night, the craft of blowing glass and hence they work together very late at night. When Fidelman tries to apply his half knowledge of art into glass blowing, Beppo advises him as “You're doing the same things you did in your paintings that's the lousy hair in the egg. It's easy to see, half a talent is worse than none” (p.139). Hearing this Fidelman tries to understand himself more and more with the help of the inner resources in him. And he realizes that he has no real talent as an artist. Hence he leaves behind his pretensions of being an artist.

Gradually Beppo’s health declines due to overwork at night and this adds to Margherita’s worries. One day Fidelman accidentally meets Margherita. She narrates to Fidelman her difficulties pathetically and requests him to leave Beppo. Fidelman agrees to her wishes out of compassion for her. This acts as a moment of victory for Fidelman, who has by now learnt the meaning of suffering and compassion. After this crucial event, Fidelman works alone, night after night and finally blows in a glass “a capacious heavy red bowl, iron become ice------. The bowl was severe and graceful and sat solid, upright. It held the clear light and even seemed to listen” (p.140). Thus Fidelman wins over life and attains freedom under the guidance of Beppo and Margherita, who direct Fidelman to his inner
capacities.

In *Dubin's Lives*, even though the protagonist William Dubin gets anxious due to his personal incapability, he improves himself morally, by understanding life and its responsibilities. Malamud believes that because man has tremendous hidden potentials, he changes as he struggles and in the process understands himself and the society better. In this novel, Malamud seems to emphasize the point that there is a means of getting away the human limitations, which deceive man. Coming out of his egoistic shell, man should develop his own identity, in relation with others, affirming the inner spiritual potentials. Commenting on the novel, Malamud himself has told that "the texture of it, the depth of it, the quality of human experience in it, is greater than in my previous books". The protagonist, William Dubin, through continuous struggling and sufferings, overcomes his selfish motives. As a result, he realizes and carries out his obligations towards others, thereby progressing to the level of a Malamudian hero.

William Dubin, the honourable biographer, tries to find out himself by means of his writing work. But towards the end he understands, "Language is not life. I've given up life to write lives" (p.316). Hence he returns to his wife Kitty, recognizing his commitments towards her. By doing so, he comes to terms with his past life and thus acquires profound knowledge of his own self. In this way, by relying upon his inner, spiritual potentials, he transcends his past and his relations.

Dubin, the characteristic Malamud hero, redeems himself by
upholding human attributes. He abandons young Fanny as he feels great respect for her individual freedom. At one point in the novel, Dubin goes through the ‘Confessions of St. Augustine’ and notices the saint’s interpretation of love: “Love means what I want you to be” (p.282). Dubin now wants everybody ‘to be’ and loves everybody’s lives. He liberates them by means of unselfish love and in the process gets liberated. Thus Dubin, in the course of the novel, slowly moves from an ignorant fellow to a morally developed man. Depending upon his inner capabilities, he gains knowledge of the self and of the world.

In short, a Malamud protagonist comes forth as a potential hero, by his inner capacity to grow, through the sufferings of everyday life. For example: - Though the protagonists Frank Alpine, Yakov Bok, S. Levin and William Dubin cannot change their surroundings for the better, they gain a sure moral victory by totally depending on the inborn resources in man. Granville Hicks says,

"Perhaps it is worth noting that Malamud’s heroes have been thrust alone into a world they could not conceive of making------. Malmud is looking for a path (for the redemption of the individual) and convinces us, by the power of his imagination, that paths can be found."
Notes and References


2. Sandy Cohen, Bernard Malamud and The Trial by Love. RODOPI, N.V. Amsterdam, 1974; p. 10; here after cited as 'BMTL' in this chapter.


9. Herbert Gold, "The Mystery of Personality in the Novel" (1957) in
American Novel, p. 106.


25. Bernard Malamud 'A New Life', London: Eyre and Spottiswoods, 1963, p. 196; All further references in this chapter are to this edition, indicated by page numbers parenthetical in the text.


30. Ruth R. Wisse, The Schlemiel as Modern Hero (Chicago: University


36. Sidney Richman, BM, p.22.

37. Jeffrey Helterman, Understanding Bernard Malamud, p.73.


40. Allan Warren Friedman, “ The Hero as Schnock” in Field and Field eds., Bernard Malamud and The Critics; p.301.

41. William J. Handy, Modern Fiction: A formalist Approach
42. Ibid. p.150.


50. Bernard Malamud, ‘*Pictures of Fidelman: An Exhibition*’, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980; p.32. All further references in
this chapter are to this edition indicated by page numbers parenthetical in the text.


54. Bernard Malamud, ‘Dubin’s Lives’, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979.p.316; All further references in this chapter are to this edition, indicated by page numbers parenthetical in the text.