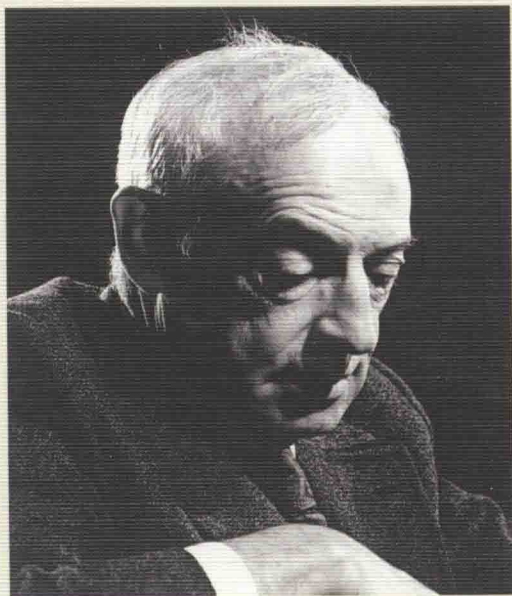


Imagination and
Salvation in Cities

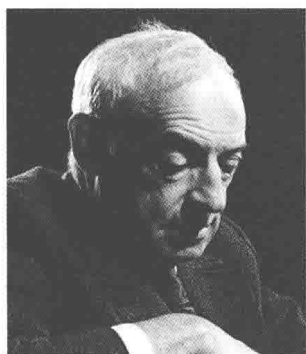


城市想象和人性救赎：

索尔·贝娄小说研究

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前 言

索尔·贝娄（Saul Bellow，1915—2005）是第一位荣获诺贝尔文学奖（1976）的当代美国犹太作家，被认为是美国当代文坛继福克纳和海明威之后最主要的小说家。他的作品包含了丰富的社会内容和深邃的哲理思辨，是一个具有现实主义倾向的现代派作家。他曾三次荣获美国全国图书奖，一次普利策奖；一九七六年他以“对当代文化富于人性的理解和精妙的分析”获得诺贝尔文学奖。

从一九四一年发表第一篇短篇小说《两个早晨的独白》开始，贝娄共出版了长篇小说10部：《晃来晃去的人》（1944）、《受害者》（1947）、《奥吉·马奇历险记》（1953）、《雨王汉德森》（1959）、《赫索格》（1964）、《赛姆勒先生的星球》（1970）、《洪堡的礼物》（1975）、《院长的十二月》（1982）、《更多的人死于心碎》（1987）和他的最后一部长篇小说《拉维尔斯坦》（2000）。此外，贝娄还出版过中短篇小说集《只争朝夕》（1956）、《莫斯比的回忆》（1968）、《口没遮拦的人》（1984）、中篇小说《偷窃》（1989）、《贝拉罗莎暗道》（1989）、《真情》（1997），散文随笔集《集腋成裘集》（1994），散文游记集《耶路撒冷去来》（1976）以及剧本集《最后的分析》（1965）等。

瑞典皇家学院在给贝娄颁发诺贝尔文学奖时所发表的“声明”中，将贝娄的文学创作过程分为两个时期。第一时期以其第一部长篇小说《晃来晃去的人》为始点，第四部长篇小说《只争朝夕》为终点；第二时期则以第三部长篇小说《奥吉·马奇历险记》为始点。“声明”认为，随着贝娄的第一部长篇小说《晃来晃去的人》的问世，美国的叙事艺术开始摆脱了僵硬、雄浑的气息，预示着某种与众不同的创作风格的到来。《奥吉·马奇历险记》的创作，开创了贝娄叙事艺术的新天地。瑞典皇家

学院的授奖词中对此的评价是：“贝娄以他独特的风格，把丰富多彩的流浪汉小说与当代文化的精妙分析结合在一起，融合了引人入胜的冒险故事与接连出现的激烈行动和悲剧性的情节，其间还穿插着与读者之间富于哲理的、同样十分有趣的交谈。”这种风格在他以后的主要作品中都得到反复的体现。这些作品的结构显然是松散的，但正是因为这一点，使作者得以有足够的机会来刻画不同的社会阶层。

在表现手法上，贝娄善于博采众长，他既继承了西方古典文学遗产，又融合了希伯来文化的传统；既吸收了现实主义的某些长处，又运用了现代主义的某些手法，特别是意识流手法，从而使他得以摆脱时间、空间、逻辑规律乃至伦理习俗的束缚，自由地从各个不同角度窥视人物的内心世界，充分揭示人物的性格和心理，巧妙地表现出他们的种种观念和意识活动。而且，他还善于把内心活动和外在世界、把现实描绘和历史回忆巧妙地交织在一起，使我们得以同时看到主人公的内心世界和他置身的现实世界。

贝娄被认为是20世纪美国文坛人道主义理想的代言人。他坚信个人的尊严，坚信人有能力创造一个有意义的生存模式，以及人超越现实的特质。他避免重蹈现代主义作家为艺术表现而写作或把艺术和道德价值分割开的强烈倾向，他反对当代社会中流行的荒原观，他拒绝加入任何由愤世嫉俗或荒原人生观产生的文学运动或政治运动。本书探讨贝娄努力为主人公，即当代社会的人们，寻找一个合适的出路，让他走出现代城市荒原，立足于“令人信服的踏实的地面。”

贝娄意识到生活的混乱、无意义和它的短暂性，但贝娄运用他的犹太世界观来阐释他对当代世界的认识。贝娄作品中反映的道德准则也是犹太人宗教观点不可分割的一部分，贝娄相信人具有神性，尽管人在心理和情感上很脆弱，他或她是依着上帝的形象创造的，因此是宏伟的。贝娄关注“人是什么？”这个人生命题，他对这一人生命题的回答显示了一个积极、肯定和乐观的人生态度。他的观点源自犹太教信条，这也成了他小说的主题。他拒绝异化和虚无主义观点，肯定人本身固有的价值。他给予个人极高的价值肯定，认为他或她可以通过奉献他人而实现自我价值，通过丰富广阔的经历来获得人生智慧，通过精神上的自我更新作为手段服务社会，通过获得内心的秩序而实现外部世界的秩序。

贝娄坚信人的高贵品质，无法接受对人的贬低和摧毁。但贝娄也意识到自我隔离的危险。为了权衡这两点，贝娄努力在保持自我和协调他人中保持平衡。最终，他往往会回到人群中，认识到“善在真空中无法实现”。决心成为一个好人，他选择回到同胞中，因为手足情谊才使人具有人性。

本书第一章阐述了贝娄主人公的生存状况。在贝娄的小说中，城市代表着现代人的现实本身。城市是贝娄主人公们的栖息地，他们都在城市长大，适应了城市生活；他们必须认真对待城市，以坚持其自我价值，并在混乱中创造秩序。贝娄认为：“城市作为使人异化和心绪烦乱的力量，既压抑又乏味。作为围困人类的环境，城市是让人无法摆脱的混乱扭曲的目标和价值观的丛林。”他把最后的责任归咎于人类自身：正是人类创造并腐蚀了城市。因此，邪恶并非城市固有，而是源于人之本性。

贝娄的主人公们往往被城市所压抑，受困于噩梦般的城市生活，他们偶尔会突发田园式的梦想，渴望走出城市来到乡村。然而，他们从未把乡村生活当作自己的最终理想，因为他们从未在乡村找到真正的庇护，也没有得到彻底的重生。他们只能待在城市，只有通过城市中的人际交往他们才能找到秩序，保持理智，最终达成心灵的平衡。

第二章探讨了贝娄的生存意识。作为一个犹太作家，贝娄的道德观与犹太宗教观一脉相承，不可分割。他对生命持有积极肯定的态度，在小说中也阐发了同样的世界观。贝娄的小说集中展示了生命个体如何处理困境、如何做出选择的问题。他虽然会抱怨、悲叹、焦急，但他从未对未来丧失过信心。

犹太民族流亡、离散的历史深深烙印在犹太民族的记忆中，经常出现在他们的意识中。这种犹太影响赋予犹太作家（包括贝娄）强烈的生存意识。在他的小说中，读者往往会遇到这样一位主人公：他正面临着生活中的某种痛苦境遇——暂时逃避了社会、经济、离婚或者幻灭思想的困扰。然而，他却超越了有限的物质条件，在现代社会找到了立足点。

贝娄认为，现代作家必须面对并且战胜社会的黑暗。无论人世的遭遇多么痛苦，他始终觉得人生就是个奇迹。尽管贝娄也跟许多现代作家一样，塑造了一些遭受异化、饱受困扰的人物，但他也赋予了他们一种克服外部限制和压力、获得内心尊严的能力。正是通过塑造这样的主人公，贝

娄显示了他对人类的强烈信心，认为他可以在现代城市的环境下立足。

第三章分析了贝娄在小说中所展示的生存策略。贝娄的文学创作生涯始于20世纪30年代末。海明威的硬汉小说在当时风靡一时。海明威主人公是行动主义者，他可以凭强力制胜，但不懂得反省，因此无法应付隐形的对手。他对生活也很厌倦，总是想着死亡，对世界表现出异化的态度。贝娄认为这种人生态度是十分有害的，因为这种态度最终会导致自杀或灭亡。

贝娄作品中的主人公往往是历史学家、教授、传记作者或诗人，他们是思考型人物，具有一定的精神追求，而且还十分关注人的内心世界。此外，这些主人公往往积极投身于社会，肩负起自己的社会责任，从而保证他们能在社会中立足。贝娄希望在小说中恢复对思想的阐述，并能对这些思想进行戏剧化的表现。贝娄履行了他作为艺术家对社会的职责，塑造了追求内在价值以挽救人类的主人公。

在他的第三部小说《奥吉·马奇历险记》中，贝娄一改最初两部小说拘谨、局限的态度，采用了一种更加开阔、包罗万象的写作风格，在小说中勾勒了一幅20世纪30年代到二战后的美国社会全貌。主人公奥吉在各种各样的经历中对自己有了更好的认识，通过形形色色的经历巩固了自己的社会地位。

贝娄始终明白低俗现实和高尚原则之间的差距，这是他身为作家必须面对和解决的问题，这个差距也使他的小说在绝望与希望之间获得了持续的张力。然而对这一点的意识并未使他彻底绝望，反倒使他更加接受了这个世界的本来模样。贝娄打算用文学创作中的高尚原则来抵御低俗现实，从而证明作家在社会中的位置。

第四章探讨了贝娄在小说创作中获得的生存启示。贝娄的主人公只有先投入社会、屈从现实，才能超越城市的丑陋、暴力、缺乏诗性和文化等弊端。人类必须超越物质束缚，听从内心世界的召唤，并且赋予内心世界一个崭新的意义。贝娄在小说中也阐述了犹太人生存的基础是紧密的家庭联系这一普遍认同的观点。此外，贝娄表明人对归属感的需求有多么强烈，当他感到自己不是所处社会的一部分时，他就会产生十分巨大的失落感。贝娄十分关注城市中建立起来的那种群体感，人们在这种群体中相互依赖获得生存。

贝娄在小说中表达了一种肯定生命的世界观，这个观点基于人性本善以及生存具有意义的基础之上，因此贝娄的主人公往往以一种犹太人的乐观视角来对待生活，最终在现实中获得了生命的精彩，而不只是发现了种种丑陋。贝娄认为作家的作用就是呈现人类的爱心，就是表达对人类通过创造力而获得生命精彩的赞赏。

本书的结尾部分是结论：贝娄是一个道德家，他认为所有的作家都应该如此。他关注人类的生存状况，对现代人持有积极肯定的态度。作为一个犹太作家，由于犹太人历史上长期的流亡离散经历，贝娄本人也具有很强的生存意识。通过小说的主人公，他探讨了现代城市中人类的生存策略。他积极履行社会责任，放弃海明威小说中主人公的悲观态度；他关注内心世界，寻求人类的真正救赎；他采取包容一切的态度，努力与现代社会达成妥协，以适应社会。贝娄向读者展示了人类生存的出路——只有通过从事和想象力有关的工作才能超越现实，就像《晃来晃去的人》中的约翰·珀尔那样战胜了现代城市。城市中人类生存的基础是紧密的家庭联系和社区的建立。只有对人类的坚定信念才是保证人类生存的根本。

Abbreviations of Bellow's

<i>Dangling Man</i>	<i>DM</i>
<i>The Victim</i>	<i>V</i>
<i>The Adventures of Augie March</i>	<i>AAM</i>
<i>Henderson the Rain King</i>	<i>HRK</i>
<i>Mr. Sammler's Planet</i>	<i>MSP</i>
<i>Seize the Day</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Herzog</i>	<i>H</i>
<i>Humboldt's Gift</i>	<i>HG</i>
<i>The Dean's December</i>	<i>DD</i>

Introduction

Bellow won his Nobel Prize "for the human understanding and subtle analysis of contemporary culture that are combined in his works". His acceptance speech further illustrates what he has been constantly experimenting on: "broader, more flexible, fuller, more coherent, more comprehensive, account of what we human beings are, who we are, and what this life is for" (Bellow, Nobel Lecture). It is just based on his deep concerns about human destiny that Bellow has been experimenting in his fictional world on the approaches towards the final accommodation of human being in the modern reality. The present dissertation tries to analyze Bellow's attempt to find a proper way for his protagonist to find a foothold in this tottering world on the basis of close reading of Bellow's fiction.

In 1924 the Bellow family moved to Chicago, a mid-west city, which provided Bellow a much more expansive life. Bellow received his education in Chicago schools. So Bellow has strong feelings towards this big city, which is taken as the setting for almost all his novels, just as he said, "I grew up there and consider myself a Chicagoan out and out" (Hyland 31). During his more than fifty-year writing career, Bellow has developed a rich and complex body of work of extensive intellectual scope.

Varied as they are in the narrative techniques employed, in the human experience explored, and in the central characters portrayed, all Bellow's novels, from *Dangling Man* (1944) to *The Dean's December* (1982), have one feature in common: each centers upon a character. These central characters share so many common preoccupations that they have become a recognizable character type, the Bellow hero. All Bellow's heroes are concerned with the following questions: What does it mean to be a man, a good man, in the modern city, which is characterized by chaos, clutter, craziness, commercialism, and cultural nihilism? How can one keep intact one's individuality in an anomic, massive, de humanized, contemporary society? By what means can one remain one's sovereign self in the technological, totalitarian, and topsy-turvy modern world?

The struggle for survival is a salient theme that runs through Saul Bellow's fiction. All Bellow's novels focus on a character who struggles for order, love, equilibrium, and the meaning of human existence to maintain his survival in the modern urban world. As a Jewish writer, growing up in a Jewish household, Bellow has a strong awareness of survival due to the long Jewish history of suffer-

ing, Bellow's rejection of wasteland view of modernism, and his responsibility as a writer. This dissertation explores the theme of survival in Bellow's major fiction to show how Bellow undertakes his mission to maintain human dignity in the wasteland of modern society.

Bellow is undoubtedly deeply concerned with the fate of Jews and affairs of the Jewish mind from the beginning of his literary life. In each of his novels, he focuses on the life of one man, who is experiencing a kind of suffering-temporary alienation from society, financial problems, divorce, and disillusionment. Nevertheless, he never gives up his faith in life, obtains the true meaning of life in suffering and finally achieves the moral sublimation. This protagonist just reflects the Jewish people who think that they are the chosen people by God. However, those chosen people suffered from all kinds of extremely misfortunes: the long history of exile and Diaspora, the expulsions in Spain in the late 1400s, the brutal pogroms by the Russian Czar in the 1880s and the German Nazi Holocaust. Jewish people endure all of these and live stubbornly in many places of the world, keeping their religion and customs. Suffering is a permanent part in Jewish people's life. As God's chosen people, and established the contract with God, Jewish people believe they are suffering for human sin. The earthly suffering is a special test of the Jewish people, is a necessary experience to obtain the true meaning of life to achieve the moral sublimation. It is viewed as a method of correcting wrongs and evils; a punishment sent by God to his chosen people to strengthen and purify them and it is also a test and a sign of greatness and strength for survival. Indebted to these Jewish experiences and belief in suffering, Bellow depicts in his novels the protagonist, who obtains the strength and illuminations for survival during his personal suffering.

Bellow has dissociated himself from the company of those writers who accept the belief that modern society is frightful, brutal, and hostile to whatever is pure in the human spirit, a wasteland and a horror. Bellow wishes to take a stand in opposition to the cultural nihilism of the twentieth century-in opposition to the tendency in Dada and in writers of the Wasteland, to denigrate human life in modern society. Bellow rejects the tradition of alienation in modern literature, and his fiction emphasizes the value of brotherhood. In "The Writer as Moralist" Bellow argues, "Either we want life to continue or we do not. . . . If we do want it to continue. . . in what form shall life be justified?" (59) To answer this question is the writer's moral function. Certainly it is the function Bellow takes on in his fiction. Bellow has taken the role of "divine literatus," and he affirms the possibilities of meaningful individual life and takes cognizance of its difficulties and costs.

If Bellow, like most modern writers, writes of burdened, alienated, impotent people, he believes that a man ". . . should have at least sufficient power to overcome ignominy and to complete his own life. His suffering, feebleness, servitude then have a meaning" (Bellow, "Distractions of a Fiction

Writer" 14). Bellow does not avoid conditions of alienation and despair; but he insists that through them, the power of the imagination "should reveal the greatness of man" (14). He insists that we are "... not gods, not beasts, but savages of a somewhat damaged but not extinguished nobility"^①. It is this firm belief in not extinguished nobility of human being that encourages Bellow to depict a protagonist who finally survives in modern wasteland. So it is quite clear that survival is the important theme in Saul Bellow's fiction. The present dissertation conducts a systematical analysis of the theme of survival in Saul Bellow's fiction, which will be helpful in deeper understanding of Bellow's literary oeuvre.

Saul Bellow is one of the most important figures in the study of western literature. Bellow and his heroes are analyzed from different perspectives, such as Jewishness, feminism, transcendentalism, existentialism, humanism and so on. Books have been written on his nihilism, his comic vision, his debt to Jewish tradition, his treatment of history, his position in relation to modernism. Since the 1950s, scholars have produced over 50 criticism monographs and over 3,000 scholarly essays^②, which attest to his importance. In addition to the annual meetings, The International Saul Bellow society started *Saul Bellow Journal* in 1981 and the official website in 1988, regularly issuing the related research information. According to the statistics of Saul Bellow Society, over 90 doctorate dissertations in the world took Saul Bellow and his works as the subject of their study. Gloria Cronin and Blaine Hall's *Saul Bellow: An Annotated Bibliography (Second Edition)* involved 46 criticism monographs, and 1,200 criticism papers among which 32 on *Dangling Man*, 32 on *The Victim*, 74 on *The Adventures of Augie March*, 90 on *Henderson the Rain King*, 151 on *Herzog*, 64 on *Humboldt's Gift*, 90 on *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, 73 on *The Dean's December*, 20 on *To Jerusalem and Back*, 46 on short stories, and 18 on plays.

Bellow is usually considered as a traditional writer and Mohammad Quayum regards Bellow first of all is a new transcendentalist. In *Saul Bellow and American Transcendentalism*, he focuses on Bellow's four works to reveal the similarity between Bellow and Emerson and Whitman, for all of them advocate an integration and fusion of the opposite laws governing individualism and society, and advocate of the human soul and yet they maintained faith in the union of body and soul. John Clayton's *Saul Bellow: In Defense of Man* discusses the paradox of Bellow's personal despair and romantic idealism, his Jewish humanism and Jewish guilt and self-hatred. Clayton concludes that Bellow, like his heroes, is life-affirming, love-affirming, and individual-affirming. Bellow persistently refuses to

① Probably by Bellow, although unsigned, in "Arias," *The Noble Savage*, IV, (Chicago: Meridian, 1960). p. 5. Keith Botsford was second editor.

② Statistics comes from Liu Wensong. *Saul Bellow's Fiction: Power Relations and Female Representation*. Xiamen: Xiamen University Press, 2004.

devalue the self even in the midst of the pressure of a vast public life. Furthermore, from Dostoevsky to Sartre and Camus, nearly all representatives of Existentialism in different periods have corresponded to Saul Bellow's different novels. Bellow's heroes are absurd and alienated characters, who also alienated themselves. They are " 'chosen people' -chosen, yet suffering; highest, yet lowest" (Clayton 36). David Galloway analyzes the absurd hero of Bellow's novels in his *The Absurd Hero in American Fiction: Updike, Styron, Bellow, and Salinger (Revised Edition)*, in which he recognizes three stages of development in an absurd hero, and the final stage is the one in which joy accompanies the absurd hero's struggle to achieve a value system, in which his experiences become a comic sequel to his tragic situation, in which victory may be questionable but defeat is not final. Additionally, Judie Newman interprets Saul Bellow from the perspective of history. In *Saul Bellow and History*, she discusses the historical elements in Bellow's five major novels, which are history, nature and freedom, such as *The Victim* is the reflection of Anti-Semitism of that age, and *Herzog* is a history of mental disorder.

In China, there are three main schools in Bellow research: Jewishness, Humanism, and Existentialism, but the research on Bellow is not as productive as that abroad. From 1979 till 2009, there appeared about 181 papers on Bellow-83 academic journal essays, 92 master's theses, 6 doctoral dissertations. Among them, there are 24 theses and 3 journal articles from the angle of Existentialism. *Herzog*, as the best-known masterpiece of Bellow, enjoys an amount of critics and researchers' appreciation. However, the attention to some of his other novels is scarce.

Zhu Ping is one of the Chinese scholars doing research on Saul Bellow, with seven journal essays and one doctoral dissertation, analyzing, combing and summing up the criticism on Bellow. His papers are mainly about the morals of Saul Bellow's works. Zhu Ping claims due to Bellow's complicated themes and methods, criticism on Bellow is pluralistic during the past half century. As to categorizing Bellow into existentialist school, some scholars state it in their papers, such as Deng Hongyi's "Brief Analysis of the Source of Saul Bellow's Existentialist Thoughts in His Works". All these essays have pointed out the relationship between existentialism and Bellow.

Qiao Guoqiang, the professor of Shanghai International Studies University, published his monograph *Jewish American Literature* in 2008. His critical papers give a systematical and authoritative analysis on Saul Bellow's novels. They are "The Shift of Saul Bellow's Jewishness in *Ravelstein*", "A Tale of Two Cities: Saul Bellow's *The Dean's December*", "On Saul Bellow's *Bellarosa Connection*", "Saul Bellow, Trotsky and Jewishness" published in *Foreign Literature Review* in 2012, "Two Basic Types of Characters in American Jewish Novels", "On the Subject of History in Saul Bellow's Fiction", and "American Saul Bellow Studies in the New Century", in which he gives an complete introduction to Bellow studies in America in new century. According to him, it seems that the

enthusiasm for Saul Bellow in America in the new century has abated, which finds expression in fewer essays and works produced and the narrowing of scope in Bellow studies. During this period, the selection and publication of the source materials dominate the field, such as *Saul Bellow Letters* edited by Benjamin Taylor. James Atlas published *Bellow: A Biography* in 2000, and Gerhard Bach and Gloria L. Cronin edited *Small Planets: Saul Bellow and the Art of Short Fiction* in 2000, giving critical analysis on Bellow's short fiction. Additionally, Gloria L. Cronin's *A Room of His Own: in Search of the Feminine in the Novels of Saul Bellow* (2001) is the first monograph to give a systematical study on the female characters in Saul Bellow's novels.

Based on the researches scholars have conducted both in China and abroad on Saul Bellow's fiction, this dissertation aims to establish the argument that the struggle for survival is an important theme that runs through Saul Bellow's fiction. Saul Bellow is a spokesman for human right, and he is trying to find a proper way for his protagonist, that is, whole human being, to go out of wilderness of modern wasteland and get the foothold to survive in this tottering world in his literary works. The present dissertation will comb the survival theme on the basis of closing reading of Saul Bellow's fiction.

Bellow's writings epitomize the moral vision that is an integral part of the Jewish outlook. He believes in the divinity of the individual, that although a person may be psychologically and emotionally fragile, he/she is created in the image of God and is, therefore, majestic. This colossal creature has the ability to overcome obstacles that challenge or impede human endeavor and to determine its own destiny. Bellow believes in the worthiness of life which is also God-given, and that one should partake and enjoy the kaleidoscopic experiences one encounters. It is a positive approach to existence and is reflected in his novels that are generally optimistic and affirmative. Such beliefs have served as armor against the despair resulting from the blows inflicted on the Jewish community throughout history. Maurice Samuel uses the Yiddish word *bitochon*, meaning certainty, assurance, trust; he writes that *bitochon*, an "... instinctive faith in every form of life was part of the equipment of survival" (43). "What was it," Samuel asks, that made them predominantly cheerful in the midst of such discouragements as no other people has ever faced for half so long a period of time? What gave them *bitochon*? "Chiefly, it was their boundless love of life" (36).

Daniel Fuchs has noted that Bellow has been going against the grain of Modernism ever since he published his first novel in 1944. Although in his youth he was strongly influenced by such Modernist as Joyce, Lawrence, Eliot, Yeats, and Hemingway, as early as the 1940s Bellow began to question the validity of the Modernists' estimates of man and society. Underlying Bellow's rejection of Modernism is his strong disagreement with the Modernists' attack on the self. Bellow does not believe in the extinction or bankruptcy or disintegra-

tion of the self in the modern world, even though he realizes the lurking danger of the self. Bellow celebrates the Emersonian sovereign self, especially its virtues of independence, self-reliance, freedom, and sanctity. Like Emerson, he is convinced that each individual contains within himself the means to truth; for his high school class oration, Herzog quotes Emerson: "The main enterprise of the world, for splendor . . . is the upbuilding of a man. The private life of one man shall be a more illustrious monarchy . . . than any kingdom in history. . . . Everyman should be open to ecstasy or a divine illumination" (H 198—199).

All Bellow's heroes live in the modern urban environment. Bellow critics, from Alfred Kazin to Daniel Fuchs, have singled out the importance of the city in Bellow's fiction. Almost all of them agree that Bellow is one of the greatest city novelists of this century. Chester Eisinger points out that Bellow's characters "struggle in the iron-bound landscape of urban America" (Eisinger, Chester 341). Although he sees "the city as oppressive and stultifying, as a force of alienation and distraction, and as a setting in which man is caught up in a confusing jungle of distorted aims and values" (Dutton 191—92), Bellow hero has to come to grips with the city, in order to assert his selfhood and to create order out of chaos. Bellow does not complain about the city per se as he knows that it is created by and made up of by people. Weighed down by an oppressive urban environment and haunted by a nightmarish city life, the Bellow hero occasionally entertains idyllic dreams or has pastoral impulses. Despite his ambivalence toward the city, the Bellow hero never seriously considers the country an ideal place to live in, because he never finds genuine refuge or gain complete recuperation in the countryside. To him, escape from the city into a rural environment is never a viable alternative. In general, the Bellow hero either remains in the city or eventually returns to the city after brief excursion out of the city.

From the beginning of his writing career, Bellow is concerned with the internal world of his protagonist. Instead of expressing heroism through the displays of physical courage just like Hemingway hero, Bellow's hero struggles to "salvage something of the self under the crushing pressures of urban life, of modern materialism and self-indulgence" (Hyland 18). Like Bellow, his protagonists are all involved in a struggle to assert themselves as individuals, and to know their own identity in a hostile world that does not value the "colony of the spirit" and will deprive modern man of all significant inner life.

Bellow turns away, for the most part, from ponderous introspection, Flaubertian standards, and oppressive environments which characterized his two earlier novels, in his third and fourth full-length novel *The Adventures of Augie March* and *Henderson the Rain King*. With *Augie March* Bellow introduces a new dimension into his fiction with its multifarious adventures, characters and settings, revealing Bellow's adoption of all-inclusive attitude towards reality. By attempting to achieve expansiveness and inclusiveness reflected in the novels with an abundance of characters, scenes, and details, Bellow and his protagonist reject darkness, closure and limitation and embrace cosmic optimism in-

stead.

The Bellow hero is acutely conscious of the integrity of his self in the massive, dehumanized modern world, and realizes that he is "a child of this mass and a brother to all the rest" (*H* 248). Mysteriously, he feels that he is "always, and so powerfully, so persuasively, drawn back to human conditions" (*SP* 118). That is to say, even though his selfhood is endangered by the city en masse, the Bellow hero is at the same time greatly concerned with moral responsibility and the brotherhood of humankind, because he believes that only in society, despite its faults, can he become truly human, and he takes society for granted as the ground of his humanity. He zealously guards his own individuality lest it be engulfed by the mass, and also dismisses the vogue of alienation and isolation, which, to his mind, are almost tantamount to selfishness and irresponsibility. On the one hand, the Bellow hero fears the oppression of modern society (as symbolized by the modern city); on the other, he embraces humanity as a whole because they are "his brothers and sisters" (*SD* 92).

All Bellow heroes, like their author, try to explore what it means to be human. In increasingly baffling circumstances, they try to grapple with the key questions of human existence with a view to discovering liberating and ennobling truths. Bellow persistently uses his imagination to create artistic works which are the best proof against the fragmentation, depersonalization, and pollution of the city. As an artist living in the city, Bellow always looks at the facts of the city without recoil and tries to redeem the ugliness and chaos of the city with his art. Despite the degradation, clutter, dismalness, and annoyances he sees in the modern city, Bellow knows that only by the transcending power of poetry, art, or imagination, can man save himself, the city, and the whole civilization from decay or destruction. In *Dangling Man*, John Pearl, Joseph's artist friend, contends that "the real world is the world of art and of thought. There is only one worthwhile sort of work, that of the imagination" (*DM* 90—91). Like Citrine in *Humboldt's Gift*, Bellow admits that he is "sentimental about urban ugliness" (*HG* 72), but he, like Citrine, decides to ransom "the commonplace, all this junk and wretchedness, through art and poetry, by the superior power of the soul" (*HG* 72).

Although he may be, consciously or unconsciously, telling a story about the Bellow hero in the modern city all his life, Bellow the ever-conscious artist tries hard to surpass himself each time. Accordingly, he has created better novels which adopt different perspective and portray myriad faces of humanity. Despite their common concern with human existence in modern society, Bellow's urban protagonist differs in their various efforts to explore modern society and achieve human dignity by transcending the reality.

The present dissertation tends to see how Bellow portrays his characters in their relations to the modern reality and map out the transformations, modulations, and variances in his eight novels *Dangling Man*, *The Victim*, *The Adventures of Augie March*, *Henderson the Rain King*, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, *Herzog*,

Humboldt's Gift, and *The Dean's December*, and indicate the way Bellow tries to outdo himself by changing the character – type from one novel to another therein to show their struggle for survival in his fictional world.