

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework and Related Studies

A. Literary Approach: Theory of Character

Generally speaking, when people read a literary work, their attention usually falls into the characters and how the author composes their characterisation. The problem then becomes more complicated as the author doesn't create a certain character without a certain role. There is always something behind the creation. This, surely, deals with the other matters that build the story entirely, such as plot, setting, atmosphere and so forth.

In this thesis, the writer would like to focus on the main character, Artur Sammler. Such focus is strictly unavoidable as the old-world observer arises curiosities even questions, and evokes the writer's sympathies. Furthermore, Sammler is the most essential one who brings the entire comprehension of the novel. His moral vision is shown along the progress of the story.

Sammler, as proposed by Harvey—one of major literary critics—is the protagonist character, the one whose motivation and history are fully established, who conflicts and changes as the story progresses, who engages the reader's response more fully and steadily, in a way more complex though not necessarily more vivid than other character (Stevick 234).

E. M. Foster, as recalled by Philip Stevick in his book *The Theory of the Novel*, proposes two kinds of character: flat and round character. In his opinion, the matter deals with the complex role brought by the character. In flat character,

there is only one single idea or quality; when there is more than one factor in them, there the beginning of the curve towards the round character. (225)

It may be pointless to differ between character in the novel, no matter what role that they play, and character in the real life. One clear point, novel and its characters are made by an author, whereas people are God's creation. However, in this fictional world, there is something that cannot be found in the reality. Harvey sees that the novel can establish a greater range and variety of perspective than that people can find in reality, the actual life (232). Through the character of an old blind-in-one-eye man, Artur Sammler, the Jewish Bellow, and other writers ,indeed, finds freedom in expressing his concerns on humanistic problems.

B. Michel Foucault's Theories on Power

It is the writer's decision to apply Michel Foucault's theory on power as the character being analysed is in positioned among many factors that suppress him. The writer would like to see how he copes with the burdening power in its many forms and how he contemplates in order to find the way out of the problems confronted..

Michel Foucault is known as one of major critics whose thoughts have permanently altered the modern society 's understanding on many institution of western society, including also on many thoughts of the previous thinkers. It will be too broad if we talk about Foucault's thoughts in details. Therefore, the writer would like to focus on the main issues, there are Power, Resistance and Freedom.

1. Individual and Power

It is no doubt, that the relation between individual and power is indeed obvious. Although, the persons pointed may not realise about the existence of power that stands. In living the life, there is always a personal contact between one person and another, either physically or emotionally. In fact, in each relation, there is always also the practice of putting one's influence or intention toward the other.

Concerning this, Foucault states "that brings us back to the problem of what I mean by power. I hardly ever use the word 'power' and if I do sometimes, it is always a short cut to the expression I always use: the relationship of power...I mean that in human relations, whatever they are... power is always present: I mean the relationship in which one wishes to direct the behaviour of another" . However, Foucault is never fully regards this reduction of human striving to the will of power (McGowan 131).

On the individual, Foucault writes that the individual is not *vis a vis* power; it is as he believes, one of its prime effects. The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which is that effects, it is the element of articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle. The individual does not stand apart from power or prior to it as a traditional dualistic model would suggest, that is, a model that views the individual as submitting or to opposing the dictates of a power that stands over or above her. The individual never posses power to act out her own autonomous

desires or goals. The individual exercises power at certain times and in certain places as a functionary of power's intentions, not her own (127).

Foucault believes that there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject. He sees the rationality of power, which is characterized by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them and few who can be said to have formulated them (127). Something to remember that power is not an 'evil' (130).

2. Power, Resistance and Freedom

Foucault proposes that resistance exists all the more by being in the same place as power; hence, like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies. "aside from torture and execution, which preclude any resistance, no matter how terrifying a certain system may be, there always remain a possibilities of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional grouping (130).

power is co-extensive with the social body; there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network. There are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the points where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor it is inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power. (130)

All power in Foucault is equal, just as all resistance is approved. The self is justified in any and all efforts to reverse, resist, and otherwise disrupt the power relations in which it is embedded, and those very activities of disruption are portrayed as its experience of freedom (132).

Foucault seems to believe that resistance is possible— the subjects can act oppositionally, can adopt various strategies and practice that counter the positions into which power tries to maneuver them. This idea leads the critics to believe that there is a notion of freedom into any fields of society that produced by power.

Unfortunately, this notion of freedom is rather questionable, since it does not suggest a capacity of purposive action, that is, for the achievement of particular purposes. There is usually something more at stake in social conflict than simply the possibility to act, and people measure power (in part) by the capacity to gain one's objectives. Surely freedom is not only the ability to strive but also the ability to achieve(130).

Foucault's association of transgression with freedom leads to the images of disengagement and of autonomous-self against the institutional forms in the society. This revised view of power relations posits a recalcitrant will that stands in relation with power but does not appear as a product of it (141).

” The relationship between power and freedom's refusal to submit cannot be therefore be separated....At the very heart of power relationship , and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom.(141)

Talking about the notion of freedom, it can be grasped that French philosopher defines such freedom that remain 'undefined', and still it involves 'the possibility of no longer being', just to be 'what we are' (124). To be in a situation where there is no 'string attached', is the most recommended to be a free man.

C. Phenomenological Approach

Husserl's phenomenology is applied as the writer sees the necessity to linkage what the old observer does with all the phenomena and how he projects his understanding on what he undergoes. Husserl's philosophy grows out of his deep conviction that Western culture has lost its true direction and purpose. He believes that the natural sciences have over the years developed a faulty attitude in Western man regarding what the world is like and how best to know it (Stumpf 486).

Once Husserl says that "phenomenology must honor Descartes as its genuine patriarch" (488). Of course, there are other influences, such as John Locke, David Hume, Emmanuel Kant and William James. However, best of all, it was Descartes' ideas that shapes his views and understanding upon the subjective world.

The term "phenomenology" comes out as Husserl refuses to go beyond only the evidence or data available, namely the data available to consciousness and the data derived from appearances—from phenomena. He sees no virtually no distinction, at least in the preliminary description, between consciousness and the phenomenon. Indeed, Husserl's unique point is that phenomena, or whatever is,

are ultimately contained in the very subjective act whereby what is present to consciousness. This is his novel "attitude", so contrary to the naturalistic attitude, which assumes an objective physical world independently existing out there (489).

Phenomenology step its feet by moving beyond listing objects given in experience; it enlarges the act of "description" of experience to include the real object, our actual perception of it, the object as we mean it, and the act of intentionality which constitutes the object for us. In short, we understand the elements of our experience , phenomena, best by discovering the active role of consciousness in intending and creating phenomena (489).

Husserl argues that the clearest fact about human experience is consciousness of something, that is its essence in pointing toward, or intending some object. Our perception of things and experiences consist of our projection toward the intended objects. The essence of consciousness, in short, is intentionality.

The usage of the term *Epoche* —a Greek word for “bracketing”— is meant to describe his method of “detachment from any point of view regarding the objective world”. It is much different with Descartes’ method that begins by doubting everything, including all phenomena, in short the world, except his thinking self. Husserl, in the contrary “brackets” all phenomena, all the elements of experience, by refusing to assert whether the world does or not exist. He abstains form entertaining any belief about experience (490).

Bracketing all these phenomena means only to look upon them without judging whether they are realities or appearances and to abstain from rendering opinions, judgments about the world. This standing back from the phenomena of experience, enabled Husserl to discover the ego, the life of consciousness, in which and through the objective world in its entirety exist (490).

D. Philosophical Approach

The writer considers it important to apply Jean-Paul Sartre's views on existentialism as Sammler undergoes a very important change in his life as he turns to believe in God, although his perception on the Almighty is still 'questioned'. Jean-Paul Sartre, a French philosopher, is known for his ideas on Existentialism. Existence precedes essence is the main idea proposed by the philosopher. In other words, subjectivity of the individual is the point of departure. There can be no other truth to start from than this: *I think, therefore, I exist.* (Stumpf 733).

The word subjectivism itself has two meanings. First, it means that an individual chooses and makes himself; second, it means that it is impossible for man to transcend human subjectivity. The second of these is the essential meaning of existentialism, that in making this choice he also chooses all men (726).

Sartre argues, there are two different modes of being, which he calls being-in-itself (*l'en-soi*) and being-for-itself (*le pour soi*). Applying this distinction to man, one can say that man shares both of these two modes of being, the *en-soi* indicating that he is (the way a stone is) and the *pour-soi* indicating that he is a

conscious subject(which therefore differentiates him from a stone). To be a conscious subject is to stand constantly before a future (504).

So last but not least, Sartre's atheistic existentialism states that if God does not exist, there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept, and that this being is man, or as Heidegger says, human reality. A man is nothing else but what he makes himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism. Rather it declares that even if God did exist, that would change nothing. Not that we believe God exist, but we think that the problem of His existence is not the issue (739).

E. Related Studies

The writer finds very few studies on the Jewish author Saul Bellow's work *Mr. Sammler's Planet*. However, Frederick Glaysher catches a general idea that can be detected on many of Bellow's works including also the mentioned one, that is the soul and its salvation (online). The complexity of human problems has directed human in general not to care no more about the essence of life. The loss of faith seems to be the best representation of it.

There are two names that Saul Bellow highly respected in his work, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, namely Herbert George Wells (H. G. Wells) and Meister Eckhart. Therefore, in order to know and understand more about the two persons, the writer would like to mention some sufficient data although not in details.

1. Herbert George Wells (H.G. Wells)

Artur Sammler, as it is mentioned in the novel, spent his early life in London in a close acquaintance with Wells. This is rather confusing, as Wells is a real person, but he is reported to have had a close relation with a fictional character. Anyway, it doesn't bring any matter to the understanding of the literary work. Later on, the discussion on the future of the moon, which is widely covers the novel, is based on Wells' thoughts, to be exact his imaginary future life. Although, there are some points of thoughts of the futurist scientist that opposed with Sammler's thoughts.

Wells is deeply respected for his futuristic thoughts on human condition, concerning with the rapid development of science and technology. Many of his fictions have been filmed many times. *The Time Machine (1895)*—known as his debut, the story tells about a parody of English class division and a satirical warning that human progress is not inevitable—, *The Invisible Man (1897)* —a Faustian story of a scientist who has tampered with nature in pursuit of superhuman powers. *The First Men on The Moon (1901)* was prophetic description of the methodology of space flight.

The future of the moon, a theory proposed by Dr. Lal as it is depicted in the novel, is somehow, related with the works of Wells. Sammler's daughter, Shula-Slawa, is madly impressed by Wells that she wishes that her father will compose a memoir of him. She steals Dr. Lal's manuscripts as she believes the theory is worth for Sammler.

2. Meister Eckhart

In his elder age, Sammler starts reading the bible and Meister Eckhart. Essentially, Eckart is a 'renegade'. He is known for his different thoughts which attack anything that has been given by the authority of the church. The great need of man, in his view, is that his soul be united with God; for this a knowledge of God and his relation to the world, a knowledge of the soul and the way which it must go, are necessary. Eckhart does not doubt that such knowledge is given in the traditional faith of the Church, but it is not sufficient for one who is longing for salvation. He must attain to it with his own understanding.

On relation between the soul and the God, Eckhart comments that the unqualified Deity, the Trinity (birth of the Son or of the Eternal Word), and the creation of the world are to him three immediate moments, which follow each other in conceptual, not temporal sequence. All creatures have part in the divine essence; but this is true of the soul in a higher degree. In the irrational creature there is something of God; but in the soul God is divine. Though God speaks his word in all creatures, only rational creatures can preserve it.

In other words, in the soul, where he has his resting-place, God is subjective, while in the rest of creation he is merely objective. The soul is an image of God, in so far as its chief powers, memory, reason, and will, answer to the divine persons. This accords with the view of Augustine, the greatest Emperor of Rome.

Just as there is the absolute Deity, which is superior to the persons of the Godhead, so in the soul there is something that is superior to its own powers. This

is the innermost background of the soul, which Eckhart frequently calls a "spark," or "little spark." In its real nature this basis of the soul is one with the Deity. When Eckhart sometimes speaks of it as uncreated, and then again as created, this does not involve a contradiction. While, on the one hand, it rests eternally in the Deity, on the other it entered into the temporal existence of the soul, i.e. was made or created through grace.

But it is not in this original unity with God that the soul finds its perfection and bliss. As it has a subjective being, it must turn to God, in order that the essential principle implanted in it may be truly realized. It is not enough that it was made by God; God must come and be in it. But this has taken place without hindrance only in the human soul of Christ. For all other souls sin is an obstacle.

<<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/eckhart.htm>>

or "little spark." In its real nature this basis of the soul is one with the Deity. When Eckhart sometimes speaks of it as uncreated, and then again as created, this does not involve a contradiction. While, on the one hand, it rests eternally in the Deity, on the other it entered into the temporal existence of the soul, i.e. was made or created through grace.

But it is not in this original unity with God that the soul finds its perfection and bliss. As it has a subjective being, it must turn to God, in order that the essential principle implanted in it may be truly realized. It is not enough that it was made by God; God must come and be in it. But this has taken place without hindrance only in the human soul of Christ. For all other souls sin is an obstacle.

<<http://www.utm.edu./research/iep/eckhart.htm>>

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS