

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFRONTATION IN SAUL BELLOW'S DANGLING MAN**R.MANIKANDARAJA**

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Introduction:

Psychology is half science, as dealing with actual worlds. Literature is dealing with possible worlds. Psychology teaches us how to discover relationship between certain qualities of a particular work of literature and the attitudes and states of mind of the author of that work. Literature is being a source of psychological data and theory psychology acts as a guide to the better understanding of literature. The psychological novel moves from consciousness of one character to another, from present to past from internal to external. Dryden illustrated in definition of drama as "just and lively image of human nature." Through the behavior of characters we discover universal human psychology" (55). Literature is written about human experiences, and depicts the private and public lives of individuals and groups.

This paper studies, an attempt to examine and understand the Saul Bellow's *Dangling Man* (1944), as a psychological confrontation. Saul Bellow is an author of thirteen novels, a play, and a number of book reviews, a collection of short stories as well as several critical essays on literature. Bellow has portrayed the different psychological states of his protagonist. In each of his novels plot or theme revolves to a greater or lesser around the confrontation of the protagonist by someone who is, in some way, his double, who will act as teacher or savior for him. Bellow tried a variety of approaches stemming from Freud and Reich." I 've had all the psychiatry I can use," Moses Herzog tells Dr.Emmerich-Strict and literal truthfulness was a trivial game and might even be a disagreeable neurotic affliction" (187). Bellow realized that if literature is to be a current and constant force, it should intimately be connected with life the life of a common man. In *Dangling Man*, Joseph dangles isolation and alienation, awaiting induction into army and that induction is delayed rendering him jobless.

Dangling Man poses the problem of an ordinary man caught in a world that for him has lost its locus. In limbo between freedom and commitment, Joseph suffers in his self-imposed isolation. He is isolated from his friends. He is victim of mental depression. He rarely leaves his room and is often alone all day." I was reclassified, but induction, it

seems, is the only channel for aliens. There is nothing to do but wait, or dangle, and grow more and more dispirited. It is perfectly clear to me that I am deteriorating, storing bitterness and spite which eat like acids at my endowment of generosity and good will”(12).

Joseph remains indifferent to his wife Iva. He finds the world to be out of order. The world is in the grip of war and the loss of job makes him dependent on his wife. He does not like it. Joseph is attracted towards another woman Kitty. He turns to Kitty for love. Kitty advises him to seek divorce from Iva but he does not do it. Kitty's doors are closed for him and another lover has replaced him.

“I would be denying my inmost feelings if I said I wanted to be by-passed and spared from knowing what the rest of my generation is undergoing. I don't want to be humped protectively over my life. I am neither so corrupt nor so hard-boiled that I can savor my life only. When it is in danger of extinction. But, on the other hand, its value here in this room is decreasing day by day. Soon it may become distasteful to me. There, you see it yourself.” (166).

“The second parallel confrontation occurs with Frink the bank manager, questions his identity. How do I know you're this person” (174). Joseph is moved to an angry outburst. He knows that his friends and relatives will not give him the kind of sympathy he needs. His brother cannot understand of his attitudes. And his best friend, Myron Adler provokes him. He is admitting that the feeling of boredom caused by his isolation is becoming too oppressive for him. He turns inward in his quest for identity. He writes a journal as a substitute for establishing relationships with people. The journal takes place over a period of four months, from winter solstice, the death of the year, to spring, which signals rebirth. The confessional in journal form suits Joseph's inward journey.

Dangling Man is the record of Joseph's self-education by reflection on his experiences and an agonizing dialogue between conflicting aspects of his character. His trip to his boyhood home is also a farewell to childhood and adolescence, the completion of a phase of his initiation into manhood. His decision to leave immediately for the army implies an acceptance of impermanence, decay and death. Death is the central educational experience in the novel--- the death of the self as symbolized by the many deaths in the novel. One of his interviews Bellow says that “Oh, yes. Death was something very familiar from an early age. During the great flu epidemic, my brother Sam and I used to sit in the front window, watching the procession of funerals” (288).

In Dangling Man, Bellow takes us more continuously through the thoughts, feelings and impressions of the main characters. As Joseph shops, or talks, dresses or eats, we are

inside in his mind, seeing his as he sees himself, sharing his memories, and knowing the people he knows or has known through his own eyes. Shobha Bajpai quoted that Bellow himself a product of the thirties, dangles like his hero between the two worlds- a world of his own creative powers and the outer world of established power” (20). The feeling of loss of identity implicit in this splitting of Joseph grows to a point where he can no longer understand the motives for his actions.

The confrontation occurs in a restaurant, he is guilty of an “unusual explosion of temper”. Joseph believes that the final end of everyone is the desire for pure freedom. This fuels Joseph’s gets anger and he makes a public scene demanding recognition.

“Don’t you know me? It seems to me that I know

You very well. Answer me; don’t you know who I am?

“Yes, I know you,” Burns said in low voice.

That what I wanted to hear, I said. I just wanted to be sure” (25).

Joseph does not understand what has motivated his outburst, “I did not and still do not, know where this outbreak came from. I suspect that it originated in sheer disillusionment of mind” (25).

The motivation for Joseph’s anger is summarized aptly by Opdahl, “Joseph ranges over the philosophic and the trivial, the past and future, his guilt and his dreams, his walks and boarding house neighbors’.... between the old Joseph and the new, his mind and his will, his mildness and his nasty temper, his enslavement by history and his struggle for freedom - all conflicts which might define his failure raise the suspicion that he is defeated as much as Bellow’s investiveness as by his disillusionment”(49).

That he is not aware of the motivation for his action can be seen in his confrontation with Jimmy Burns, a former comrade from Joseph’s days as a communist party member. In *The Landscape of Nightmare*, Jonathan Baunbach draws a comparison between the two Joseph; “Joseph isolated, world only a peripheral one, limited by Joseph’s abortive contacts outside himself”. If Joseph’s education is not complete, the reader at least has had an introductory lesson in Bellow’s philosophical concerns and methods of presentation.

The reader has the benefit not only of Joseph’s developing vision but of Bellow’s correctives to that vision, which he by drawing on the ideal reader’s moral norms in judging Joseph and the other character. Finally, Joseph surrenders the shreds of his self hood to the institution of the army.

“This is my last civilian day. Iva has packed my things. It is pain that she would like to see me show a little more grief at leaving. For the sake, I would like to. And I am sorry

to leave her, but I am not at all sorry to part with the rest of it. I am no longer to be held accountable for myself; I am grateful for that. I am in other hands, relived of self-determination, freedom canceled" (191).

Dangling Man describes the internal landscape of its hero, in which social relationships fade, so that the important relationship is between Joseph and his alter-ego within this relationship, the protagonist's struggle to comprehend the world in which he must exist is contained. A constant confrontation between the desire to die and the desire to love and be loved, is the central theme of Dangling Man.

Bellow's writing shows that the mental process of an individual and his environment is determining factors of man's fate or his character. Joseph's personal problems Bellow has portrayed and solved the contemporary socio-cultural problems. Thus, there are good reasons to give closer critical attention to possible relationship between psychology and literature.

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