

Title of the Minor Research Project:

“Bernard Malamud: The Representation of Moral Values in his Fictive World”

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### Executive Summary

Bernard Malamud (1914-1986) is one of the most exuberant and prolific fiction writers of Jewish American origin. Concentrating chiefly on the Jewish immigrant life, Malamud makes parables out of the unending confrontation the hyphenated Americans had to undergo in the post-War society. Born of a Russian Jew, Malamud confronts the genesis of multicultural modernity. Believed to have more versed at short fiction, his genius, nonetheless, is visible in the novels that form the epicenter of his profundity. His novels are the interpretation of historical epoch that percolates down to the contemporary society of multiethnic America.

Malamud is a genius proliferating a good sense and the philosophy of moral existence. His protagonists embody the philosophy of life Malamud lived by. Indeed it attests his own notion of art that remains indistinguishable from morality.

The representation of moral values of Malamudian personages within the periphery of mentioned novels is examined, interpreted, and construed accordingly. The emphasis has placed upon the protagonist's quest for moral upsurge as redeeming force that has become insatiable owing to their disconsolateness and meagre socio-economic existence.

Malamud has significant ideas with regard to moral values. His mainly Jewish personages seldom walk on the trodden paths the worldly wise men are often acquainted with. They have their own sense and sensibilities. They wander in their own peripheries and emit the rays of their original cultural hue signifying oceanic emotions. These protagonists are not always intellectualized, and many times, they are uneducated, disconsolate and rootless. In Yiddish folklore they are schlemiels or moral bunglers; a kind of nebbish known to have identified for their timidity and ineffectuality. But, they are highly inquisitive and often aspire to the American Dream through moral fidelity. Their quotidian existence is literally volatile and replete with mutual fusion of entities.

Malamud forms a trio with his contemporaries Saul Bellow (1915-2005) and Philip Roth (1933- ). As far as ethnic paradigm of Jewish Americanism is concerned, Bellow, Malamud, and Roth have their unique authenticity, not only as writers but also as genuine pronouncers of vision, wit and wisdom. Malamud craves for heightened morality in the world of degraded individuals and society around them. In fact, it appears a desperate yearning but it remains an inducing spirit throughout the creative life of the immensely acknowledged portrayer. Bellow, on the other side, remains disaffected by the people he was engrossed with and never saw the ruin of his spirit. Though less prolific than Bellow and to some extent Roth, Malamud represents the Jewish American world of creative writing which fathoms the changing nuances of immigrant Jews especially after the Holocaust in the post-War era.

Malamud anchors his personages in the Jewish ambit exhibiting the drastic dearth of moral values that encircle the modern, multicultural ethos. To recreate the better self through moral living, his characters become itinerant, displaced loners for their incessant quest. Though Jewishness is vital aspect of his protagonists, Malamud concerns more with their ethicality rather than religiosity. Jewishness for them percolates an essence of moral trance soaring to spiritual ascension amidst tumultuous happenstances.

Encapsulated within moral values as integral ingredient of their self, his protagonists reinforce self-transcendence as a sense of growth, a sense of escape from the lowest levels of selfishness into a kind of generosity of spirit that makes one aware of the needs and the interests of other human beings. Moreover, these figures tend to acquire wholeness, humanness, and the true depth and vision of life through moral principles. And as they explore the possibilities of their wholeness, often their “anomie estrangement” impedes the path of growth yet they resume persistently with a meticulous strife to achieve a better lot. However, lackadaisical in human values they appear to be volatile nonentities. Thus, it is with the nourishing energy of moral wisdom, Malamud’s protagonists inexorably move towards their spiritual growth, knowledge, and redemption. For them, morality means a mighty measure and one of the fortitudes of life’s new vision.