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RICE UNIVERSITY

THE MODERN NOVEL AS A FRAME OF ORIENTATION IN FRAGMENTED SOCIAL WORLDS

THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE POSTWAR URBAN AMERICA OF SAUL BELLOW

by

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Architecture

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ABSTRACT

The Modern Novel as a Frame of Orientation

in Fragmented Social Worlds:

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The modern novel as an urban investigation reflects the tensions evolving between the individual and the urban environment. As the American urban experience becomes increasingly fragmented, the more these texts can be looked at as providing a framework for understanding contemporary social structure. Changes to the physical environment as well as the socio-political construct of the city have repercussions on the life of the urban individual. The postwar city has become fragmented by its own diversity as well as by the increasingly alienating experience of man's search for identity within the urban environment. Responding to his own perceptions of societal dissolution, Saul Bellow incorporates popular culture and recent history into his exploration of urban alienation and the postwar diminution of Self. These narratives lend comprehension to the chaotic and evolving relationship between modern man, American cultural identity and urban landscape.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Historical and Social Perspective</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Postwar Urban America</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Novel as Urban Investigation</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellow's Postwar Urban America</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Sammler's Planet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humboldt's Gift</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dean's December</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronology of Bellow's Literary Career</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images of Postwar Decades</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preface

This thesis is an aggregation of many interests and ideas generated from many sources. In one respect, it is a new beginning in terms of the perspective it has given me of American society and culture, and the relationship I have long sought to make between physical form and socio-economic urban conditions. In other respects it is the culmination of a long and drawn-out academic endeavor.

In 1990 and 1991, I spent a year studying in Copenhagen, Denmark. This experience afforded me the opportunity to become immersed in a culture other than my own, the value of which was never so clear to me as upon my return to the United States. When abroad, I was, for the first time, made painfully aware of the fact that I was American, both by others referring to me as such, as well as from the many ways in which I differed from those around me. Being identified as "American," I found, had innumerable implications, positive as well as negative, and I was often grateful, once my knowledge of the language improved, to blend in with the Danes. America's various military and economic involvements have long aroused varied responses from other countries. Response to American involvement in the Persian Gulf in 1991 was no different, ranging from disgust and contempt to admiration and gratitude. However trite this may sound, I became aware of how each of us, as Americans, contributes to the understanding that others have of our country and culture, aside from what they see on CNN. Alternately, experiencing another culture allowed me to recognize and appreciate the many varied benefits, shortcomings and nuances of American culture.

In 1992, I began a graduate school program in what was referred to as a classical approach to architectural studies, and at that time, it still was. We were told to be sensitive and aware of the influences of a number of other disciplines and the
numerous ways these disciplines, the humanities as well as technologies, could correspond with architecture in a coactive and symbiotic manner, and produce valuable and more meaningful physical and social results. The program, we were told, would provide us with design direction and skill to grow and develop a "critical prowess in clarifying [our] values in architectural terms," and we were encouraged to learn from peers hailing from a number of other areas of study from History to Economics to Industrial Design.

At the encouragement of my advisor I enrolled in a course entitled "The City in Literature", which I believe then drew as many architecture students as students from the English department. The intent was to become more perceptive of urban conditions and experiences in a number of varying historical periods and cultural milieus, the influence of those periods and milieus on the city, and vice versa. The medium in which to do this was the novel. From T.S. Eliot to Italo Calvino to Malcolm X, we explored the formative role not only that we play in our cities, but that they play in the formation of our cultural, personal and political identities. "In a sense," writes Elizabeth Long, "novels detail the many levels between the subjective and objective world. They describe how individuals take the world in; how it subtly and unknowingly shapes them" (4).

Reaching my thesis semester, I was called upon to consider what would comprise the most meaningful contribution I could make to my studies, and would somehow be representational of what this degree has entailed. Having augmented my graduate studies with courses from other departments including English, History, Italian, Anthropology and Social Science, I sought a way to incorporate other various views into my mainstream course of study, to better understand the myriad ways in which we are, as Long states, subtly and unknowingly shaped by the world in the hopes
of better understanding the impact of the moves we make as architects and planners. The following is the result of a perhaps overly diverse assemblage of interests and influences.

One particular aspect of American history that has long interested me is the political and cultural revolution it underwent during the 1960’s. The post-Holocaust, post-atomic bomb decade looked to the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960 as providing a tide of change. In many ways Kennedy’s role as president was anomalous, but in no way as much as his determination to adopt a National Civil Rights Bill. “No President,” writes Theodore Sorensen in his biography of Kennedy, “had ever before so forcefully recognized the moral injustice of all racial discrimination, and no President could ever thereafter ignore his moral obligation to remove it” (557). His civil rights bill relied upon the personal commitment and the cooperation of the nation. “Now the time has come,” the President said in 1962, “to fulfill its promise... We face a moral crisis as a country and as a people. It cannot be met by repressive police action. It cannot be left to increased demonstrations in the streets. It cannot be quieted by token moves or talk. It is a time to act... Those who do nothing are inviting shame as well as violence. Those who act boldly are recognizing right as well as reality.” (Sorensen [557])

That tide calling for personal responsibility and compassion in order to achieve national growth and prosperity, however, was to turn dramatically as the decade progressed. The often violent events, both personal and political, and their aftereffects, have, in numerous ways been permanently incorporated into our present society, our political expectations and sense of personal responsibility. Fascination with this time period in our history has brought about the desire to better understand the fragile and bewildered state reached by the end of that decade. The far-reaching implications of
racial unrest and political discontent were felt on college campuses and in cities throughout the country, as individuals rebelled against the demand to conform, both physically and psychologically, and exercised the right to speak out and rise up.

There are many factors that both contributed to and resulted from this period that cannot possibly all be discussed with the attention that they deserve, but worth noting is that whatever the issue: civil unrest; racial strife; economic disparity; urban crisis; political dissent; or social revolt, all are intrinsically related to conflict arising from discrepancies, on the part of those involved, between the perception and the reality of the American experience. This affects not only the urban centers themselves, in which much of this conflict arises, but also the way in which we perceive of those environments and identify with them. Ronald Segal, in his social critique of American society writes,

For when creed and reality conflict, when sufficient members of a society find expectation generally contradicted by experience and their language of values unable to reconcile the present and the past, then the collective mind can no longer cope with events. Life itself seems paralyzingly incoherent, and the society is likely to suffer a nervous breakdown, till reality is forced back into the mold of the creed, the creed is changed to accord with reality, or each is altered by the other to produce a new agreement. Segal, the americans: conflict of creed and reality, (251).

Historical accounts, while factually accurate, do not allow a full appreciation of the toll this era took on the mind and spirit of individual.

Speaking to this, in his book Novel Frames: Literature as a Guide to Race, Sex, and History in American Culture, Joseph Urgo writes that by the reversal of contextualism, a freeing of critical study from historian control through literary exploration can provide a literary context to enrich critical study as a legitimate perspective on history. (224) The work of Saul Bellow, contextually spans the twentieth century and provides both a historical as well as personal perspective, and deals expressly with an issue from the
fifties, sixties and seventies: the impact on the self of a changing society, or, in Bellow's words, "self versus world." In *City of Words, American Fiction from 1950-1970*, Tony Tanner asserts,

Many writers show that for a figure to be in a state of 'equilibrium' (or perfect adjustment to the prevailing ethos of the world) involves the loss of any distinct inner reality he might have had... For the self to hold out against the drift of the surrounding environment and society may thus become an act of life.... (147)

In order to assert his own autonomy within a society, the individual runs the risk of alienating himself completely, such a dilemma is exemplified by what Tanner has described: “too much autonomy results in loss of world while too little leads to loss of self.” In *The American Novel and Its Tradition*, Richard Chase writes, "The imagination that has produced much of the best and most characteristic American fiction has been shaped by the contradictions and not by the harmonies of our culture" (2). The ability of the writer to tap upon the energy of disunity and disillusion is perhaps the best defense against the propensity of the individual to lose a distinct inner reality to the prevailing ethos of the world.

The issue of cultural identity is prevalent in nearly all disciplines and plays an increasingly important role in many issues facing us today. Speaking in the Kennon Symposium held at Rice this year, Françoise Gaillard, Professor of Intellectual History at the Universite Denis Diderot in Paris, stated that, "It is true that our democratic and liberal societies, insecure about themselves and their objectives, seem to suffer from a great deficiency of meaning these days...the void in which we are carving our niche is one of the serious problems confronting democracy today." What is to be made of this void in self-awareness and lack of a definitive sense of self on both a personal as well as national level? Often the cultures which have experienced some threat to their sovereignty maintain the strongest sense of cultural autonomy, often taken to violent
extremes. Wars fought for the purpose of 'ethnic cleansing' are aimed, ostensibly, at preserving and protecting a culture from the influences of others, in a sort of zero sum situation. Yet, what associations do most Americans make when questioned with regard to their own culture? America's diversity has made it somewhat difficult to seize upon any one common American cultural identity. There are simply too many different cultures, races and religions to allow for a simple bifurcation along these lines.

Cities used to elicit a sense of Americanism, by the virtue of the activities within them and the forms they took. Technological innovation expressed both horizontally and vertically made the 19th and 20th century city the center of intellectual and cultural activity. Economic depression and suburbanization has subsequently recharacterized the once glorious inner city as the object of abandonment and neglect. Robert Brown, Emory professor of political science, also addressing the 1997 Kennon Symposium, has examined the city as a site of demographic reallocation. Brown links urban population growth and in and out migration of blacks and whites to infrastructural fiscal priorities of particular urban areas. His findings also reflect the overall low political and economic priority the inner city has become.

In 1970, writer Albert Murray wrote The OmniAmericans, in which he asserted that blacks are the most representative American group. Murray and others in the 70's were addressing the issue of racial identity, asking what it meant to black, at the same time that many were asking what it meant to be American. More recently, however, he has declined from referring to himself as a 'Black writer' insisting that he is "trying to be the American writer, trying to make all of the stuff in the United States together." Playwright Tom Jones in a recent radio commentary stated that he simply takes part in "the intrinsic ritual of being American," which, for him entails being black,
male and American; going through the motions of an exercise whose meaning has perhaps been so internalized as to no longer be readily accessible (NPR Broadcast, 4 April, 1997). These simultaneous and intrinsically related questions reflect a chaos that necessarily results from a lack of self knowledge, or, a lack of what one professor has referred to an “intact, identifiable image,” (A.Todd) that itself has resulted from much postwar turmoil and anxiety. 'What it means to be American' is not a new question and it is an issue that will obviously evolve as the nature of the country has and will continue to, and will continue its toll on the individual. Saul Bellow, reflecting this, has written:

If history repeats and repeats itself, how can one know the purpose of civilization? If one counts for nothing, what is the use of the individual? In the crowd, what is the use of the unique personality? If one can do nothing to alleviate the grief and suffering of one's fellow, what is the use of striving? What is the significant life? What is it to be human? In this present world, is there a cure for the sickness we have created ourselves? (Bellow in Miller [193])

This chaos is particularly reflected in the urban environments that were either permanently scarred by events such as the riots of '68, or were changed by political and economic land-use decisions and precedents set over the decades leading up to the seventies. "The self produced by its cultural environment," writes Urso, "will mirror the peculiars of that culture. A diverse, stratified, and embattled social order will produce a multiple, contradictory self known more by its anxieties than by its tranquilities."

It is to this landscape, then, the city experiencing and recovering from the physical and spiritual transformation of society that writers such as Saul Bellow, responding to his own very personal issues with regards to the above urban and cultural issues, has focused his attention, and I have chosen to explore. It has been the intention of this thesis to link the many economic, political and social elements
transpiring in this country to their physical and cultural manifestations within twentieth century cities. Chapter One is a overview of the many and varied forces shaping the formation of American cities, most notably those developing during and after the Great Depression and the Second World War. Chapter Two examines the relationship between literature not only about the city, which serves to document urban conditions and events, but about contemporary personal and social conditions as well.

The pessimistic and inwardly focused nature of the sixties and seventies, the era of sit-ins, protests, urban violence and discontent has been reflected in the literature, art, music as well as politics and economic and social policies generated from/by a society seeking not reconciliation with, but transcendence over the crises of the times. Some writers attempt to change the reader’s perception of a city, while other use the text to make sense of the chaotic environment. Chapter Three thus explores three postwar novels by Saul Bellow which are specifically concerned with the breakdown of societal conventions and the resultant effect of this upon the individual. Malcolm Bradbury has commented upon “[Bellow’s] extraordinary power to create in fiction, the historical mire in which we live. A sense of victimization, of alien distance, of bleak historical inheritance, of some deeply rooted disaster functioning within contemporary consciousness is the authentic Bellovian note.” (Bradbury 1982 [23])

Probing, questioning, explaining, observing, complaining, demanding answers and accountability and finding none, his texts are his response to the culture he himself experiences and struggles to come to terms with through his protagonists. The pressures of public life Bellow claims, through “vivid and formless turbulence, news, slogans, mysterious crises, and unreal configurations dissolves coherence in all but the most resistant of minds.” (Fuchs xi) Out of the postwar era has risen a perpetuating relationship, recognized as such by Bellow, of the decentralized urban condition and
cultural identity crisis and the resultant effect of this upon the individual. Intuitively linking the slum of the inner city to the slum of our innermost being, Bellow has acknowledged the city's influence on his fiction: "I don't know...how I could possible separate my knowledge of life such as it is, from the city. I could no more tell you how deeply it's gotten into my bones than the lady who paints radium dials in the clock factory can tell you." (Fuchs x) Correspondingly, it is his knowledge of life, influenced as such by the city, that is so deep within his texts.

Through Bellow's literature, issues of cultural and individual identity have been intrinsically linked to place, and have been irrevocably affected by its metamorphosis. His familiarity with the city enhances the texts and aids in the evaluation of the relationship between man and his environment. The importance of this relationship should not be underestimated, for it is our perceptions and attitudes toward the city which determine how we occupy it, experience it, flee it, or resolve to change it.
Introduction

The complex processes which have produced the unique form of the American city in this century can only be comprehended adequately if the insights of several disciplines are fused. The specific achievement in the fictional transformation of the city can only be grasped if the text is placed into its cultural and historical context: this understanding of the fragmented fictional city, however, must be preceded by insights into the basis of the fragmented American metropolis itself. Neither can urban idiosyncrasies be separated from the economic and political developments in U.S. society at large, nor can they be reduced to a determinantal reflection of its processes. Gerd Hurm

The modern city is a network of interrelating systems and conditions, at one and the same time signifying both the strengths and weaknesses of any society. Within the city exists a wide range of economic, political, sociological and behavioral conditions resulting in a highly diverse and fragmented environment. As a concentration of numerous extremes, the city serves as a "terrific lens" to put society into better focus. The economic, political and social aspects of this fragmentation were generated out of policies and opinions stemming from historical events in the earlier part of this century, and resulted, over time, in a decentralization, both physical and ideological, of American culture and landscape. This decentralization, while forcing groups with differing interests and priorities to compete for a diminishing amount of funds and influence, has also reoriented the perception each American has of himself and his environment.

Identifying elements of a changing America as well as a changing American identity, urban theorists and planners such as Georg Simmel, Louis Wirth, Robert Park, Jane Jacobs, Lewis Mumford, William Whyte, Richard Sennett, and others have documented and analyzed urban ideologies and physicalities, espousing urban values and romanticizing the city as a populist utopia. American cities, from the point of their industrialization, through the Great Depression, World War II, the dropping of the
atomic bomb, the Civil Rights movement, to the Vietnam War era, have been a unique environment in which to experience and observe the changing social and political conditions of the country. A concentration of diverse cultures and attitudes, it was, for the most part, during the postwar period that Americans seem to have inherited ideas and perceptions toward the city “which hid deeper inequalities and buffered social insecurities,” many of which are elucidated in literature of the period.

The discrepancies that exist between the actual and ideal urban environment have resulted in a diverse range of emotions and perceptions held with regards to it. Rem Koolhaas addresses what has become an international relationship of ambiguity with urban crisis when he says, "We still blame others for a situation for which both our incurable utopianism and our contempt are responsible." Kenneth Schneider writes that the image of Americans towards our own cities is contradictory; both utopian and industrial, “sentimental in thought and revolutionary in practice.” Contradictory American urban policies adopted over time, from the empowering network of machine politics to the crippling concept of urban renewal have contributed to this ambiguous and contradicting relationship. Resulting in a net loss of over 2.5 million housing units during the 1950's alone, the policy of urban renewal and many others served to further divide urban issues along race and class lines. Throughout the fifties and sixties, America experienced a redistribution in its residential and working populations. Aided by FHA guarantees, Veterans' Administration loan programs, home financing tax deductions, highway construction, mass-production of the automobile and single-family home, continued urban renewal policies, new town legislation, rising rates of urban crime and general urban blight, the wave of predominantly white migration out of major cities has continued since then, reaching its peak during the seventies. This demographic phenomenon
profoundly affected urban centers and those Americans that remained within them. Reflected within a socioliterary context, this emigratory activity politically, economically and socially alienated those 'left behind,' and left the city, as summarized by William Whyte in 1958, "a place of extremes -- a place for the very poor, the very rich, or the slightly odd."7

During the 1950 and 60's federally funded housing projects, often racially segregated and enormous structures, were constructed in an attempt to curb growing urban housing shortages. Carefully located on the peripheries of downtown business districts, little attention was paid to the effect that the consolidation and marginalisation of the urban poor and minorities would have on the city as a whole. Housing a dissatisfied and overlooked segment of the population, the climate within the housing projects degenerated, themselves becoming a modern version of the urban slum. Years later, these failed, gutted or abandoned structures remain as city limits expand beyond them, and serve as reminders of administrative misunderstanding of the relationship between inadequate living conditions and urban life. Similarly, federally funded highways constructed in urban areas were built either in place of many previously ethnic neighborhoods, or as boundaries between them and more affluent areas of the cities, such as the 1962 construction of the Dan Ryan Expressway, running parallel to at least twenty blocks of public housing on Chicago's west side.8

Highway construction and urban renewal transformed the quality of inner city life changing the fabric of once tight-knit neighborhoods, as urban areas now porously expand out and around affluent neighborhoods and gentrification within the city continues. Populations of minorities, elderly and the poor lack the resources to relocate are cut off from their previous points of connection within the city and become increasingly alienated. The fastest growing populations of cities their reliance
upon federal programs such as welfare, food stamps, the WIC program, Medicare, Medicaid, have only exacerbated an already divisive urban situation. Over the course of the twentieth century, American cities in particular have experienced the persistence and even worsening of segregationist practices in areas of housing, industry and public education, and have evolved into the chaotic and barren landscapes we see today.

In 1960, the administration of President John F. Kennedy shifted the focus of federal policies to issues actually located in urban areas after decades of administrations with suburban priorities. Building upon the commitment of New Deal and Fair Deal policies of the thirties and forties to progressive aid programs, Kennedy was aware of the problems facing metropolitan areas and their schools, transportation, housing, medical programs and physical infrastructure. Continuing the attack on urban problems, President Lyndon B. Johnson supported the passing of the Economic Opportunity Act, the creation of the Job Corps, Head Start program, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), and in 1966 the Model Cities Program, aimed at using federal funds to help urban areas improve their own housing, education, health and welfare programs. The Nixon Administration, from 1968 until his resignation in 1974, expanded some social programs, but sought to reduce, overall, the role of the federal government in the provision of urban housing, despite the fact that housing and community development legislation of the mid sixties and early seventies expressed the need for a national urban policy for both new and existing urban areas.

Though this legislation, the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970, expressed valid concerns over the deterioration of our urban centers, very little was done to actually address the problems, and the National Urban Policy, established in 1970, never got off the ground. Lack of priority to these issues and increased prioritization of middle-class suburban interests kept attention and resources away
from urban problems. Only recently has there been a renewed interest in urban issues, brought to national attention, as before, by the Council of Mayors, which has focused its concern on the link between the increasing plight of cities and the health of the nation overall, and by lone actors, such as Robert Rubin, who see reinvestment in urban areas as a necessary step in their revitalization. The response, at both state and federal levels, however, is to call for decentralization of governance and a rescinding of much state and federal aid to cities. Obviously only the cities with strong and forward-thinking leadership will be able to adapt accordingly, and remain stable, viable, and even flourishing environments.

America's own perception of its cities, indicated by its migratory trends toward or away from its urban centers, has been for the most part reactionary. Historically, those drawn to the city have sought education, employment (predominantly industrial or manufacturing,) freedom from class or racial oppression, or are simply lured by the excitement that 'city life' has signified. Those compelled to leave the city are often lured away by lower crime rates, better housing, better schools, better provision of services, lower taxes or a sense of racial and class autonomy offered by the suburb. Many businesses have been relocating beyond city limits in search of lower land costs and closer proximity to employees, a phenomenon discussed in Joel Garreau's Edge Cities. Facing the post-suburban phenomena, the book explores "our new civilization, built on the shoulders of these Edge Cities, [that] reflects once again our perpetually unfinished American business of reinventing ourselves, redefining ourselves, announcing that our centuries-old revolution -- our search for the future inside ourselves -- still beats strong."
It is in the city that man must confront the larger aspects of society: its economic, political and sociological aspects as well as its increased speed and scale. "The triad of size, density, and heterogeneity," writes Hurm, "rule the urban experience and produce the features of urbanism... [T]he size of the population...leads to differentiation and segregation, to anonymity and superficiality...disorganization and alienation are characteristic of the urban way of life." The processes that became institutions within the city, such as segregation, served to "establish moral distances which make the city a mosaic of little worlds," writes Robert Park, "which touch but do not interpenetrate." As the white middle and upper-middle class populations began filling the suburbs, the diversity within the inner cities was intensified. Many separate worlds developed around the diverse cultures found in cities, and were often juxtaposed against one another in a "modernist mosaic of refracted and contrary pieces" that can be "related to profound transformations which have generated both the fragmented metropolis and the modern novel."

Within such a setting, as historians, sociologists and writers agree, the physical and mental stimuli assaulted the individual, eventually numbing his senses to the relentless onslaught. While some urban literature had served to romanticize this struggle of the individual in the city, by the turn of the century novels such as *Sister Carrie* (1900) and *An American Tragedy* (1925) by Theodore Dreiser and *The Jungle* (1906) by Upton Sinclair instead emphasized the toll of the city on the individual. Issues that were emerging and becoming the focus of literature during the Chicago Renaissance, and, a few decades later, the Harlem Renaissance, included the now urban-set struggle of blacks within predominantly white cities, and the exploitation of the workingman at the hands of urban industrialists, capitalists and politicians. The city
had in many ways become a machine for production and a setting for cultural extremes unable to relate to and lacking empathy with one another.

Sinclair’s journalistic approach to literature in *The Jungle*, combined with the socialist political agenda behind his writing, resulted in vivid images of urban conditions such as the American public had never seen. His account of the meat packing industry in Chicago at the turn of the century was intended to wake the country to the inherent evils of capitalism.¹⁶ The scenarios within *The Jungle* are not exaggerations; they are, by most accounts, valid descriptions of living and working conditions in Chicago at that time.¹⁷ Theodore Roosevelt, despite his reference to reform journalists of the time as “muckrakers,” responded to the text by appointing a commission whose findings resulted in the first Pure Food and Drug Act.

Although fiction, Sinclair’s journalistic style served to document the political, economic, and social aspects of Chicago at the peak of the stockyard activity. The response to *The Jungle* was unprecedented if only for disallowing the general public to ignore the way in which this aspect of the city affected them. The previous view of the city had been one of material wealth and privilege, with the underclass being an anonymous ignorable aspect of civic life. Sinclair not only gave a face to that misery in the character of Lithuanian immigrant Jurgis Rudkis, but he linked these two disparate facets of urban life through the industry they both had in common. While calling attention to industry’s exploitation of the immigrant and working class, Sinclair and others addressed issues in such a way as to appeal to the upper classes; either through the mention of the food on their tables, or the threat to them of worker insurgency. Whether it made their millions for them, employed them, exploited them, fed them or just sickened them with its fumes, the meatpacking industry played a role in the life of nearly every urban Chicagoan and similar to the effects that numerous industries had
on cities across the country. Despite his convention in literary style, Sinclair's image of Chicago incorporated the idea of a politically, and therefore socially, liberated society, and in so doing served as a radical condemnation of the city as it actually existed.

Aware of literature's wide audience and the opportunity to affect public perception of the city, writers such as Sinclair, Stephen Crane and Theodore Dreiser used fiction as a tool to probe into the human aspects of poverty, crime and intolerance and broadcast the social consequences of these conditions. Reflecting the influence of urban sociologists, Nelson Algren, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, Norman Mailer, Saul Bellow, Albert Murray, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison and other writers throughout this century addressed contemporary issues including those of class, race, gender and religion, and sought to frame these issues within urban contexts. In some cases reflecting actual interviews that the earlier of these writers conducted while employed by the Federal Writers' Projects, these texts are the voices of the urban underclass, working class, intellectuals, academics, outcasts and minorities of which each of these writers was some part. Living the lives about which these authors wrote lent their modern literature a realism that evolved out of yet differed from the journalistic literature of their pre-Depression reformist predecessors. Placing the tensions of man versus metropolis within the framework of the novel, the physical, political, economic and sociological conditions of the city undergo a literary transformation. This aestheticization of reality, as the urban experience itself becomes increasingly fragmented provides a frame of orientation in relation to disjointed urban conditions.

This is not to say that novels provide perfect representations of the external world or are themselves unfettered examples of cultural evidence, contends Elizabeth
Long. "In a sense," she explains, "novels detail the many levels between the subjective and objective world. They describe how individuals take the world in; how it subtly and unknowingly shapes them." 21 Urban novels, I contend here, do allow a particular interpretation of the city and its institutions, both social and political, that tends to reflect an insightful set of, at the time, 'new' attitudes and opinions of the city based upon the frame of reference of the author or even simply upon a specific period of history. "It would be odd," wrote Bellow in 1963, "if ...historical events had made no impression on American writers, even if they are not on the whole given to taking the historical or theoretical view. They characteristically depend on their own observations and appear obstinately empirical." 22 The ability of the reader to acknowledge a bias on the part of the writer, then, is paramount to any comprehension of the events from this alternate frame of reference. And, as stated in the Preface, Ungo holds that the reversal of contextualism, the provision of a literary context of a particular period, in lieu of a strictly historical context, allows for a more enriching historical perspective overall. 23

The election of John F. Kennedy in 1960, should be considered a progressive change for the country for more than just the political programs he supported. In his book The Modern American Novel, Malcolm Bradbury attributes John F. Kennedy's cultural sympathies for drawing the attention of intellectuals, such as Bellow and his contemporaries, to public life, and it was Kennedy who encouraged a younger generation of Americans to become politically aware and active. Kennedy as well provided a new "American" identity that many were desperately in search of. Many were interested in Kennedy's concept of a 'New Frontier,' 24 the realization of which depended upon the vision and societal involvement of America's youth. Intellectuals
were drawn to him and encouraged by his interest in cultural ideas and sense of historical purpose. In contrast to the largescale diminution of self experienced during the depression, as well as the war, Kennedy's philosophy, expressed in the quote "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country," redirected the focus to the individual power of man to affect the world around him. Exemplifying this principle was Kennedy's own pursuit, in the face of much opposition, of a controversial and unprecedented standard of racial equality, a National Civil Rights Act.

As the sixties progressed, this feeling of personal responsibility and empowerment was rapidly diminished. In 1967, President Johnson appointed a commission to study the degenerative nature of race relations in American cities. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders reported in 1968 that the nation was tending toward "two societies, one black, one white -- separate and unequal...What white Americans have never fully understood -- but what the Negro can never forget -- is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it." Not one proposal made by the commission was acted upon by any branch of government, nor were officials swayed by the commission's apocalyptic predictions that time has proven accurate. Not even man's setting foot on the moon, however, could reverse the downward spiral that the American psyche began with the assassination of President John Kennedy in 1963. By 1970, the American public was reeling from the fear and confusion brought on by the assassinations of Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, the war in Vietnam, anti-war protests, violence, race riots, a growing mistrust of government and a lack of communication between the races, sexes, classes and generations.
In the face of societal upheaval, the individual’s sense of purpose and power was left badly shaken. Not only could government not control the rising violence, but the foundation of government infallibility was losing its strength with revelations around Watergate activity. As a means of trying to understand the rapidly changing role of the individual in society, many writers of the Sixties and Seventies worked through their own confusions, with regards to these issues, in their literature, by expressing contemporary concerns within the framework of fiction. Reflecting upon this tendency, Tony Tanner proposes that examination of the literature of a time period “can help us to arrive at a clearer perception of some of the plights and privileges of our own inescapable modernity.”

Saul Bellow is an American author who began writing in the early 1950’s, whose works often involve a reflection -- both his own and his characters’-- of the postwar era during which American identity was in its formative years. For a detailed chronology of Bellow’s literary career and accomplishments, see Appendix A. Within Bellow’s works is a chronology of growing urban crime and racial tensions, increasing political discontent and resistance to authority, and the socio-economic dissolution of societal structure and values. Aside from the obvious physical changes to the urban landscape in the fifties, sixties and seventies, there was also an ongoing reassessment of many American cultural traditions. Social critics of the fifties warned of the insidious pressure to conform that was inherent within the concepts of success and affluence, as well as the ill-effect of this attitude upon the greater “national purpose,” which was itself beginning to be questioned at this time.

Reflecting this, in a scene from the Bellow novel, *Humboldt's Gift*, set in the fifties, one character, Von Humboldt Fleisher, inquires of another, “Why don’t you have any indignation, Charlie --Ah! You’re not a real American. You’re
grateful...You’re also a child of the Depression. You never thought you’d have a job, with an office, and a desk, and private drawers all for yourself. It’s still so hilarious to you that you can’t stop laughing” (124). The character of Humboldt reflects wariness of material success and the conformity it suggests, and seeks an authentic alternative, yet is aware that this position is marginal to mainstream society. In another passage within Humboldt’s Gift, the poet Humboldt exclaims, “If Stevenson is in, literature is in - - we’re in, Charlie. Stevenson reads my poems...[he] carries my ballads with him on the campaign trail. Intellectuals are coming up in this country. Democracy is finally about to begin creating a civilization in the USA” (26).

Bellow writes about American culture during a period in which he lived, and his medium is the novel which, though fictionalized, is complex and particular. The point of view expressed, if not accepted as an accurate historical representation, should be appreciated as the musings of a politically conscious urban novelist, who incorporates both biography and autobiography into his work. Concepts of affluence, success and personal and national purpose shifted significantly over the postwar decades, with the idealism of the early postwar years steadily disintegrating into “a period of cultural confusion and volatility.” Bellow experienced this period and attributed much of this confusion and volatility to the radical changes to the physical and psychological landscape of the city. These experiences and emotions find their way to the pages of Bellow’s novels through the trials and tribulations of his characters. Both internal and external, social and political conflicts such as military involvements and racial unrest led to a cultural revolution affecting almost every facet of urban life in America, and leading to fundamental reassessment of these urban centers. The way in which Bellow has chosen to deal with the modern phenomena has been to place events within an historic continuum of the entire century, and relate each to an effect it has had upon man’s
concept of Self. The search for and explanation of these phenomena comprise his
narratives.

While the view of the American public regarding urban issues has been
perceived as divergent, Hurm contends that in actuality, the urban thought inherited
by Americans was less “an unequivocal tradition of hostility toward the city as [much
as] ready images and environmental ideologies which hid deeper inequalities and
buffered social insecurity in times of disruption.” However buffered or hidden these
inequalities and insecurities, they are often revealed in the literary texts that record the
“times of disruption” briefly outlined above. Bellow, himself experiencing the turmoil
of the period and trying to get his bearings, attempts to develop a frame of orientation
through his writing. His desire to provide comprehension in this way is
“complemented by an equally strong impulse to transcend, to synthesize, to impose
order, meaning and value, to move from fragmentation toward wholeness.”

Bellow uses the lines of text within the novel as a forum for working through
his own confusions and disillusionment with regards to American society. That the
personality of Bellow is recognizable in his work, to those familiar with the details of
his life, indicates his own attempts at resolving compelling issues on both a large and
small scale. This is expressed by biographer Ruth Miller:

In 1960, in 1961, in 1962 and 1963, Bellow was thinking as much about
the disintegration of society as he was lamenting the collapse of
marriage... [He] needed to understand how it could happen that
Eichmann could be caught, taken to Israel to be tried and found guilty
and be hanged, and his friends could sit around arguing the banality of
evil. He needed to understand how it could be that Robert Kennedy
wanted integration of the races and Malcolm X wanted separation of
the races and the John Birch Society would agree with Malcolm X.
He needed to understand how it could be that black activists would
sit down to order coffee and doughnuts at a lunch counter and be
served that coffee in jail; how 100,000 people could stand at the
reflecting pool near the White House and listen raptly to Martin
Luther King, Jr. say “I have a dream” and then all their fellow citizens
could watch on their television screens the orderly progress of 3,000 soldiers escorting James Meredith into his classroom.\textsuperscript{33}

Bellow's texts serve as a medium through which the author, his characters, and the reader, are able to contemplate their experiences within the changing postwar American city.

His novels are compelling for the manner in which they address relevant aspects of the modern environment and popular culture while containing his own evolving attitudes and perceptions of society. Bellow's horror at the realities of the Holocaust reflects the nation's; his confusion over the resistance of his own country to embrace a policy of racial equality admonishes the reader to be aware of the newness of our current policies; and his pain at the escalating violence of the nation's disillusioned and the dissatisfied foreshadows an ominous change in the collective attitude and sense of responsibility of an entire generation.

Specifically focusing upon the postwar urban literature of Saul Bellow, this thesis hopes to evaluate his critical observations of the chaotic and fragmented postwar American culture, as it effects and is affected by the urban environment. \textit{Mr. Sammler's Planet} (1970), \textit{Humboldt's Gift} (1975), and \textit{The Dean's December} (1982), represent a different societal outlook than do two of Bellow's earlier and more optimistic works, prize-winning \textit{The Adventures of Augie March} (1953) and \textit{Herzog} (1964). The nature of the Bellow's works from 1970 and after are decidedly less hopeful in their view of man's relationship to his own environment,\textsuperscript{34} indicative of the increasing dissatisfaction with the social and political status quo. In these later works, the character's strong sense of idealism, reflective of Bellow's own, has been replaced with a protagonist's self-doubt and disillusion with society.

Bellow's perception of the nature, the substance and the pressure of the historical world has moved increasingly toward a definition of a
new, post-cultural America, most clearly manifest in his own home city of Chicago, that 'cultureless city pervaded nonetheless by Mind' as its life has changed, accumulated and massed; as its old localities and ways of life fall under the hands of the new developers, as crime and terror haunt its inner city and the inner city of its inhabitants, ...it becomes a central image of what the mind and the novel alike must come to terms with.\textsuperscript{35}

Depicting Bellow's own opinions and explanations, each novel revolves around the thoughts and perceptions of the disoriented protagonist struggling to cope with contemporary erosion of societal codes and values and an elusive sense of self. The novels elicit a deep sense of...life as a competitive struggle chaotically releasing and suppressing energy. As a novelist he encounters an urban, mechanical, massed world -- in which the self may be ironized, displaced or sapped by dominant processes and the laws of social placing, where victimization is real, and the assertion of self and the distillation of an act of will or a humanistic value is a lasting problem... [T]hat sense of human bonding which allows him to struggle toward a latter-day humanism and a new civility... accommodating the experience of persecution and the path of survival, that made Bellow seem so central a figure in the post-war world, a world of post-holocaust and post-atomic bomb, urban and material, where progressive naturalism and innocent liberalism no longer spoke recognizably to experience.\textsuperscript{36}

As a man, first, Bellow "encounters an urban, mechanical, massed world," but as a writer, he is able to express that the increasing and intensifying crises faced every day are not only shared by all, but that they are a necessary rite of passage for survival in the changing world around us. In short, these Bellow's works reflect personal and societal issues and conflicts arising over several particularly chaotic decades in American history, and simultaneously embody and question many of the evolving characteristics that have defined us as American.
Introduction Notes

2 Tony Tanner, *City of Words*.
5 Experts estimate that as a result of slum clearance and urban renewal programs, the United States lost a net of 200,000 housing units a year between 1950 and 1956, and 475,000 a year between 1957 and 1959. Howard P. Chudacoff, *The Evolution of American Urban Society*, 1981, p.258. Though many areas of cities were, in fact, beautified through the implementation of this program, one has to ask whose needs, for the most part, were best served by these policies?
9 Chudacoff p.259.
10 Chudacoff p.260.
12 Joel Garreau, *Edge Cities*, 1991. Garreau’s book looks at the alarming growth of ‘edge cities’: “tied together not by locomotives and subways, but by freeways, jetways, and jogging paths.” These new urban reflect the relocation of our lives: first our homes, then our malls, now our businesses.
15 Hurm p.16.
16 Unfortunately, by Sinclair’s own account, the response to his anticapitalist exposé was more aesthetically based than political: “I aimed at the heart of America, but I hit it in the stomach.”
17 Sinclair writes, “I mean it to be true, not merely in substance, but in detail, and in the smallest detail. It is as true as it should be if it were not a work of fiction at all, but a study by a sociologist.” cited in Hurm p.184f.
18 Industries in many cities had had similar effects upon urban populations, dubiously notable are the iron and steel industries and the dangerous and unhealthy conditions that prevailed under their control. Steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, while leaving monuments and libraries in his name cannot escape the fact that his industries negatively affected the lives of millions, the result of working conditions, land destroyed by strip-mining, and industrial waste and pollution.
19 Hurm pp.166-191.
26 As many as 2/3 of Americans — 66% of the entire nation — acknowledged feeling remorse so great that it bordered upon physical pain in response to the assassination of President Kennedy. Sixth Floor Museum, Dallas, Texas.
28 Long p.2.
29 Long p.3.
31 Hurm, p.79.
32 Freidrich p. 194.

Bradbury 1982, p.33.

Chapter I

The cities - their needs, their future, their financing - these are the great unspoken, overlooked, underplayed problems of our times.

- John F. Kennedy, President of the United States of America, 1962

Our society will never be great until our cities are great. In the next forty years we must rebuild the entire United States... There is the decay of the centers and the despoiling of the suburbs. There is not enough housing for our people or transportation for our traffic. Open land is vanishing and old landmarks are violated... A few years ago we were concerned about the ugly American. Today we must act to prevent an ugly America.

- Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States of America, 1964

Magnified within the urban setting, both cultural and individual diversity comprise contradictions in origin as well as consequence. Understanding some of the social and philosophical issues regarding man's relationship to the city might shed light upon the morass of urban statistics which make little sense in the absence of social and historical context. Of this Pike writes, "perhaps the central fascination of the city, both real and fictional, is that it embodies man's contradictory feelings -- pride, love, anxiety, and hatred -- toward the civilization he has created and the culture to which he belongs." An examination of the historical and economic characteristics of American urban growth and development aids in the formation of a social perspective on the evolving urban environment. This background will help in understanding the specific attitudes and perceptions transpiring in the decades following the Second World War, which impacts the urban literature of the period. It is the city, after all, observes Pike, which seems to express "our culture's restless dream about its inner conflicts and its inability to resolve them."

Experience is the single largest factor for an individual's development of meaning associated with an environment. The urban environment, then, must be
recognized as more than an architectural or physical space, for it is through the situations and events it fosters that it becomes endowed with significance. American cities have both affected and been affected by the actions occurring within them and have developed their significance accordingly. It is the urban conditions themselves and the nature of the activity therein that manipulate perceptions. The farther apart these aspects are allowed to grow, the more difficult any sort of reconciliation will be. "[T]he most important step for the project of modernity," writes Jurgen Habermas, "is to reintegrate the separated spheres of life: the economic and cultural, the aesthetic and social, the rational and emotional, the mental and manual have to be recombined in a comprehensive democratic process."4

In the years following the First World War, the first modern school of urbanists in the United States established themselves at the University of Chicago. Taught by Georg Simmel, these men studied the relationship between the city and the mental life of its inhabitants. A mutually beneficial relationship evolved between this group, the Chicago Sociologists, and the writers of contemporary urban literature. Both groups were, within the parameters of their disciplines, seeking ways to translate into concrete facts the various aspects of mental life. In this respect, their philosophies mirrored that of the nineteenth century poet Charles Baudelaire: that the culture of the city "was a matter of experiencing differences-- differences of class, age, race, and taste outside the familiar territory of oneself, in a street."5

In his book, The Image of the City (1960), Kevin Lynch studies the relationship between design and the legibility of cities and compares the mental perceptions of the city to the actual urban experience. With special interest in the urban dweller's attempt to elicit meaning and order from the physical environment of the city, Lynch considers the mental organization of fragmented stimuli which allows for orientation
within the urban fabric. Comprehension in the form of orientation is possible only in the detached view or from a view above the city i.e. the city viewed in plan. The city, a veritable labyrinth, allows only for fragmented and truncated views and disparate experiences at the human scale. However, once the plan is transformed into the three-dimensional space of the city, the views are often truncated and the experiences disparate. This concept is examined further in Albert Pope's Ladders, in which he discusses the fragmentation and detachment that plague the city as a result of the transformation of spatial fields from open to closed, useful to inutile.

It has been the lack of attention to the impact of the physical environment on the formation of urban individuality by architects, planners, theoreticians, economists and politicians that has resulted an inability to identify with modern decentralized urban America. To recall Hurm "segregation... anonymity, superficiality, disorganization, and alienation are characteristic of the urban way of life." It is important to understand that this urban condition is the result of many years of economic and political decision making. Certain political philosophies of the sixties, inherently local, but extending to both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, understood the strength inherent in a country which embraced its diversity instead of fostering strife and alienation through non-acceptance. Knowledge of the historical development of urban areas is important and necessary in order to appreciate the current state of American cities and certain anomalous decisions, made in the post-depression 1930's and 1940's, which have profoundly affected aspects of public life. These decisions set the precedent for the federal government to provide relief to cities overburdened with the unemployed and destitute. Meant perhaps as only a short-term solution, the result was to render cities dependent upon federal funds in order to function, a condition that has persisted and profoundly affected the perception of these cities.
In his endorsement of a comprehensive view of urbanization, Howard P. Chudacoff, the author of *The Evolution of American Urban Society*, admits the historical relevance of city growth, but points out that "urbanization is an economic and social process that occurs in a society as a whole, not just in its cities." Economic interests have indeed been a primary force behind the ongoing process of American urbanization and the imbalance among towns, cities, and regions that has occurred as a result. From 1790 to 1870, as a result of successful commercial and manufacturing activity, the population of American cities alone grew from 200,000 to over 6 million.

The growth of specialized labor forces and increases in industrial production lead to technological and capitalist expansion. Karl Marx, writing at this time, expressed the view that the relationship between capitalists and laborers is inherently problematic, taking the form of labor disputes and exploitation, and resulting in decreased competition and decreased market efficiency. Indeed, widespread exploitative labor practices resulted in often violent labor strikes in industries such as steel, rubber, rail lines and meat packing. Industrialization most benefitted cities with strong commercial bases, such as port cities with established trade routes, steady financial networks and extensive supply and delivery systems. Cities with the ability to diversify either production or service provision proved to be less susceptible to economic shifts and trends. American politics, pursuing a Jacksonian laissez-faire capitalism, allowed fledgeling industries and corporations the freedom to develop, prosper and grow. Determined to protect personal liberty and individual economic pursuit, this ideology led, as well, to a concentration of ownership and influence in the hands of large corporations, trusts and monopolies, resulting in an imbalance of political influence and land-use control and a maldistribution of resources and capital.
During the first half of the twentieth century a corresponding relationship developed between industrial development and urban growth as metropolitan areas became the major centers of production. This led to exponential urban growth as cities attracted both rural and foreign laborers. Between 1850 and 1930, 35 million immigrants came to America in search of work. This migratory activity profoundly effected the sociological make-up of the country and set the course for all future economic, physical and sociological development of the nation's cities. In 1860, the destination of many of those immigrants, New York City, was the largest American city, with a population of 813,600.\(^\text{11}\) The result of sudden growth, density and overcrowding in cities at the time of industrialization led to housing shortages and grossly inadequate living conditions. By 1890 seven in ten New Yorkers lived in tenement type structures, often shoddily built and poorly maintained.\(^\text{12}\) Sam Bass Warner comments on the turn-of-the-century American city:

Everywhere in the city, production was the focus of attention. Every day men were killed and maimed by machinery; every trade injured its help without compunction. The pace was too fast, the hours were too long, and in this era it was not the cellar sweatshops or upstairs factory but the mighty enterprise that stood in the front ranks of the callous.\(^\text{13}\)

By 1910, the population of New York City had grown to 4,766,900: a fivefold increase in fifty years. Simultaneously, the population of Chicago increased more than twenty times its 1860 level, from 100,000 to 2,185,300 by 1910.\(^\text{14}\) The population of the nation's cities had increased ninefold by 1920, to 54.3 million, to the point where city dwellers for the first time outnumbered those living in rural areas.\(^\text{15}\)

The fast growth of of both New York and Chicago had much to do with their both being diversified industrial centers with active ports, transportation connections and stable, complex systems of finance, service and delivery. It was in the cities that
electricity was first utilized for largescale home, store and school illumination, streetcars, electric trolleys, elevated trains, subways, and elevators.\textsuperscript{16} It was in Chicago that architectural form first reflected the technical innovations of iron and steel in the place of masonry building construction. The "Chicago method" of cladding steel structures with brick or stone masonry changed the face of cities across the country. The skyscraper allowed for a much greater downtown density of businesses and people. New York City soon eclipsed Chicago's glory by transforming ever more dynamically from horizontal to vertical city, symbolizing for many, "the growth of large cities as testimony to the potential of American progress."\textsuperscript{17}

New problems of organization and control began arising at such a rate and to such a degree, as a result of increasing populations, that cities were unprepared to deal with them, in terms of either governance or infrastructure. By the 1920's, changes in industry and technology had begun to effect the urban centers associated with manufacturing and labor, though it was not until after the Depression that the first study of federal urban policy was conducted and the federal administration began addressing some of the social and economic crises facing cities.\textsuperscript{18} A combination of factors, including improved mechanization, new factory building and innovations of communication and transportation led to the decentralization of industry and production.\textsuperscript{19} A fear of rising crime and violence plagued cities as labor strikes and public protests often erupted into bloody riots.\textsuperscript{20} While many who were able to fled the cities, others sought to alleviate the growing tensions of culture and class and solve the compounding fiscal and service crises.

Machine politics, since the early nineteenth century, responded to demands created by a fast-growing and complex urban environment whose needs were not being met by the existing form of established government.\textsuperscript{21} These machines, less
bureaucratic than government, were better suited to serve public demands because they possessed more efficient methods of decision making and addressed areas traditional government had avoided. What allowed such organizations to become as powerful as they were, were the continual waves of immigrants, providing the "manipulable mass base" from which the machines drew their influence and manpower. These foreign-born workers were exploited for cheap and unsafe labor, and their unfamiliarity with, and therefore fear of, a new way of life. Political machines championed the otherwise unaddressed concerns of thousands of foreign immigrants, making their adjustment to American society safer and more comprehensible, demanding both actual and ideological loyalty in return.

The existence of these political entities indicates that early on established forms of government had difficulty addressing the needs of their integrated constituencies, a problem that grew and diversified as did the constituencies themselves. City government had been acknowledged to be a political failure since before the turn of the century for its corruption and inefficiency. The fragmentation of constituencies and coalitions increased as greater numbers of diversified urbanites became involved in the political arena. Mob politics also marks the first formal involvement of immigrants in any form of government, and served as their indoctrination into future traditional government activity. An example of this is New York City mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia, an Italian American who ran in 1933 on a successful platform promising public housing, playgrounds, and most importantly, relief, education and health care for the poor. Familiar with the real problems faced by city dwellers, La Guardia made them his primary concern, both as mayor of New York City and as President of the Conference of Mayors, helping to make cities and the welfare of those within them a national priority. The new coalitions of urban political
players that came to power in the 1930's faced problems of a different nature; rising out of the depression and related to specific urban developments, power shifts and fragmentation within cities at that point in time.

The stock market crash of 1929 and the ensuing depression forced the country to address its urban economic and social concerns on a national level, and adopt a wide range of programs and policies it never before would have imagined necessary, but that have now been incorporated into our expectations of government where the city is concerned. It took at least a decade for the full effect of the crash to ripple across the nation and the gravity of the event to be fully comprehended. Still another decade and war effort were needed before the country was on its way to true recovery. In January of 1931, the unemployment rate in Chicago was forty percent, and more than 85,000 New Yorkers were dependent upon breadlines for their daily subsistence. In 1933, some one thousand families a day were losing their homes to foreclosure by failing banks. In the same year the United States Conference of Mayors was organized and rallied fiercely for federal response to the escalating urban economic crisis. By 1936, when President Roosevelt stated that an entire third of the nation was "ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished," Congress was creating programs aimed at alleviating these worsening conditions in cities. People poured into cities in search of work and/or relief aid.

Responding to the millions of unemployed, brought to their attention by the mayors of the overflowing cities, Congress created the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). No city made better use of these programs than did New York City under the administration of Mayor La Guardia, which, by 1940 had completed ninety-four percent of its PWA projects, expending construction funds of over $250,000,000. The innovation and collectivity
of these programs set a precedent, that the welfare of American people in a situation of national crisis, was the responsibility of the federal government. An excerpt from a report of the Urbanism Committee to the National Resources Committee in 1937 states:

In the time of national stress the task of relief and recovery falls not merely upon a single community or segment of the Nation, but upon the Nation as a whole...It is not the business of the United States Government to assume responsibility for the solution of purely local problems any more than it is the business of local governments to assume primary responsibility for the settlement of national problems...Yet...[t]he sanitation, the education, the housing, the working and living conditions, the economic security -- in brief, the general welfare of all its citizens -- are American concerns, insofar as they are within the range of Federal power and responsibility under the Constitution.31

The reports compiled, the Senate hearings conducted, and the programs enacted during this time clearly delineate the acuteness of the urban situation. The depression of the 1930's acquainted the cities with the fact that the condition of their success and autonomy was wholly dependent upon the health of the national economy.

The national urban policy emerging during the thirties and forties was very much the result of innovative New Deal relief programs.32 The comprehensive nature of the crisis facing the country required an equally comprehensive approach for recovery. Created at the same time as the WPA and PWA were the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Authority (FHA), to address the issue of foreclosures and housing shortages among the middle-class. The Housing Act of 1937, expanded in the Housing Acts of 1949, 1954, 1961, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1987 and 1990, was the first attempt of many at addressing the unique and ever-changing problem of housing, one with which we have yet to come to terms. Housing issues varied considerably from financing, construction and shortages of single-family homes after the war to the issue of acute shortages of low-cost urban
housing. Hundreds of thousands of housing units, both public and private, were constructed from 1937 on, though these satisfied only a fraction of the actual demand of a steadily growing nation. An additional issue of economic concern, besides the welfare of the millions of already impoverished, was to keep those in the middle and lower-middle classes from adding to the ranks of the poor.

This pre-World War II history establishes the condition to which American cities had evolved in the years immediately following the depression. The repercussions were felt not only economically and politically, but socially as well, resulting in many ways in the form and nature of our present urban condition. An intricate economic and social network had to be reconstructed, a task which would prove impossible due to the sweeping economic and social changes the nation was experiencing at a rate faster than it could possible react. The U.S. involvement in the war effort boosted both the economy and the sagging spirit of nationalism by putting the nation to work for a common cause. Increased war-time industrial production led to post-war industrial domestic innovations in housing and furniture design and construction. Also during these years, as a means of encouraging investment, spending and family values associated with home-purchase, FHA loan insurance, Veteran's Administration programs, government-set low interest rates, amortized payment plans and decreasing down payments all contributed to changing the nature of the housing market. In the same vein as the WPA and PWA, Congress continued to create federal programs for new roads, highways, community development projects, and housing construction: the majority of which, however, were aimed at assisting a white middle-class population, while virtually ignoring millions of others in far worse conditions.
As urban industries, economies and governments grew and matured, metropolitan areas began to ring the older inner cities, providing the much-needed space for both new less dense neighborhoods and business districts. Herein lay the beginnings of a "centrifugal" expansion of the city grid and of all other aspects of life into expanding residential areas and business districts radiating outwardly from downtown along transportation routes. More often than not, however, the metropolitan areas now function more successfully than the inner cities around which they grew, and which now have been vacated by business for cheaper land and lower taxes. These early metropolitan areas contained growing urban systems such as industries, corporations, infrastructure, transportation networks and as well housed the expanding labor force required by each system. Such development has as well resulted in inefficient land-use and infrastructural development, what Pope refers to as "implode\d spaces" and their "residuum." Expanding metropolitan areas often benefitted from their identification with a major city, through the existing infrastructure and pool of workers therein, though the inner cities themselves seldom benefitted from the drain these areas placed on city tax bases and small businesses as great numbers followed work and the lure of single-family homes.

The metropolitan area of New York grew in population from 11.5 million just before the country entered the Second World War to over 19 million by 1970 while the greater Chicago area, during the same period grew from 4,569,600 to 6,981,300. After 1950, however, the New York area experienced a loss of more than half its factory jobs, resulting in a sharp decline in median family income and a loss of about 870,000 residents over the course of the seventies and the first major census loss (11%) since 1790. In 1973 alone, 100,000 units of housing were abandoned in the city. In 1984, 600,000 people commuted into New York each day, with most new job
gain occurring in Manhattan. 37 Currently 92% of the people in the New York Metropolitan area do not live in Manhattan. 38 Care must be taken, however, when dealing with statistics. Most urban growth that has been reported over the last thirty years reflects not the numbers of people living within city limits necessarily, but the increasing urbanisation of outlying or “fringe” areas that comprise the cities greater metropolitan region.

The reconfiguration of urban populations across these metropolitan regions has muddied the once dichotomous relationship between cities and their suburbs, and has led to inefficiencies in land use and resources. Industry first began leaving city limits in the early 1920’s responding to new industrial technology such as assembly lines requiring more space and access to improved transportation routes. This trend of relocation, often federally encouraged, continued for reasons ranging from cheaper land to, in the fifties, the proximity of suburban labor pools. Office parks currently compete with central business districts. That fact, in addition to the annexation of residentially developed areas for tax revenues completely redefine the term “city limits,” Houston and Los Angeles being two of the most extreme examples.

Private industry has had a strong effect over planning and land use, and has been a forceful presence in much post-war legislation. 39 In 1945, as urban populations swelled to absorb returning veterans, debate was brewing over the issue of whether the federal government should become involved in the housing industry. This involvement was strongly and actively protested specifically by the National Association of Home Builders and the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, who objected to federally-backed competition in their respective markets. 40 Documentation reflects the active role both private industry as well as government policy had upon the shape of cities. Records of water, electric, war, and space investments in the Los Angeles
region indicate that federal policy "can be used to influence the jobs, personal income, private investment, and physical growth of our urban regions."41 Programs such as slum clearance, urban renewal and, later, highway construction, while beneficial to the urban environment were soon recognized as contributing to the predicament of the urban poor. Throughout the fifties hundreds of thousands of housing units were destroyed in urban areas. The targeting of low-income and slum neighborhoods for destruction and "renewal" or as sites of highway construction, it was soon realized, only exacerbated the shortage of low-cost housing. Not only were these sections of the city ideal for removal because they were unsightly, unhealthy and overcrowded, but the tenants of such areas were far less likely to have the means, the ability, or the courage to dispute such governmentally sponsored actions. Further, this group, it was felt by public interest groups, such as the United States Conference of Mayors, the Urban League and the NAACP among others, would not be able to afford even the lowest-cost privately produced housing. The answer, they felt was in federal aid and technical assistance in establishing programs for applying displaced war-workers to the construction of low-cost housing, thus producing both jobs and new, affordable housing; however, such a program was never seriously undertaken.

Overriding the protestations of business groups, the Truman-endorsed Housing Act of 1949 called for the construction of 810,000 units of public housing per year. By the end of Truman's term in 1952, however, only 60,000 units had been built, total. It took, in fact, twenty years to reach the one-year goal set in 1949.42 In 1954 the city of St. Louis opened the 2,600 unit complex Pruitt-Igoe, a segregated public housing project on the fringes of the downtown business district. Within twenty years it was gone. Houston's Allen Parkway Village and the East Falls project in Philadelphia have, more recently, met a similar fate. Mechanical failure, vandalism, lack of security or
reliable maintenance made and continue to make life in the "projects" one of misery and degradation. Riddled with crime, drug-use and violence, the projects were unable to withstand the strain of an already socially and economically repressed and abandoned population forced to live under such conditions.

By 1987 the city of Chicago had nineteen public housing developments housing an estimated 200,000 residents, 60,000 of which are extended family members not listed on the leases, and who would most likely otherwise be homeless.\textsuperscript{43} 60,000 more are on the waiting list of the Chicago Housing Authority, whose infamous facilities include the thirty-four acre Henry Horner Homes, housing 6,000 in sixteen high-rises, the infamously violent Cabrini Green project, and the Robert Taylor Homes, home to some 15,000.\textsuperscript{44} In his book, \textit{There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing up in the Other America}, journalist Alex Kotlowitz describes the horrific conditions in the Henry Horner Homes, including clogged trash chutes, non-functional elevators and boiler systems, insufficient interior and exterior lighting, inadequate plumbing facilities and shortage of maintenance. His account began as a series of articles, including one for \textit{The Wall Street Journal}, on the toll inner-city violence takes on the children living there. Kotlowitz profiles the lives of two young brothers' heartbreaking existence and struggle to survive and thrive in their poverty-stricken and violent Chicago neighborhood. When Kotlowitz first approached the boys' mother, a single mother of eight on welfare, to ask her permission, she was skeptical. "But you know," she responded, "there are no children here. They've seen too much to be children."\textsuperscript{45}

In his novel \textit{The Dean's December}, Saul Bellow describes many of the same maintenance problems at the Robert Taylor Homes, where vandalism runs to more than a million dollars a year:
We had ninety commodes in the warehouse last month, now we are down to two... being afraid to go at night to the incinerator drop on each floor [the tenants] flush their garbage down the toilet. The large bones stick in the pipes; your plumber tries to snake them out and there goes your bowl, cracked... The elevators... are not built for such hard use or abuse. It's not just that people urinate in them... They commit assault, robbery, rape in them. We have had young men getting on the top of the elevator cabs, opening the hatch and threatening to pour in gas, to douse people with gasoline and set them afire. *The Dean's December* (160)

Constructed in 1960 on the site of a previous slum area, it was the largest public housing project in the world. The project has no east-west streets for many blocks, creating long, narrow straightaways between its twenty-eight sixteen story brick high rises.46 The Dan Ryan Expressway bounds the project along its fifteen block west side, effectively isolating it, yet another infrastructural priority.

Public housing in this country, both real and that captured in literature, has come to represent the inequality and segregationist policies of federal, state and local agencies toward urban housing, regarding issues of race, location, densities, amenities, upkeep and security. "Spatial concentration," observed Lewis Mumford in 1938, "has an essential part to play in psychological focus... Central city cores, even chaotic ones, remain the magnets for those things which give meaning to civilization."47 What kind of meaning do these conditions impart? Thirty years before Mumford, Berlin sociologist Georg Simmel observed, "The metropolis is both the product of the money economy and the autonomous producer of its own conditions."48 The public policies of the federal government toward urban areas and those living in them have been inordinately biased, in practice, if not in theory, against the urban poor and minorities. Statistics reveal that many areas earmarked for destruction in the fifties and sixties under the programs of slum clearance and highway construction were predominantly black neighborhoods and that it was for *that reason* that they had been selected.49
The result of this policy practice, since World War II, was to create an entire segment of the population disassociated from the rest of society. Understanding this to some degree, and attempting to neutralize the growing discontent between and among diverse social groups, the administration of President John F. Kennedy shifted the focus of federal policies from issues of urban physical conditions to issues of urban sociological conditions. Building upon the progressive aid policies of the thirties and forties, Kennedy was aware of the problems facing metropolitan areas and their schools, transportation systems, housing, medical programs and physical infrastructure. So too, was he aware of the effect of these conditions upon the populations that endured them.

President Johnson, despite poor decisions regarding the escalation of America's involvement in Vietnam, acknowledged urban problems and supported the creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Job Corps, Head Start program, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), and in 1966 the Model Cities Program, aimed at using federal funds to help urban areas improve their own housing, education, health and welfare programs. A 1969 report of the National Commission on Urban Problems, cited that,

The people in the slums are the symptoms of the urban problems, not the cause...virtually imprisoned in the slums by the white suburban noose around the inner city... [constructed of] discriminatory subdivision regulations, discriminatory fiscal and planning practices... adding up to a refusal of many localities to accept their share of housing for poor people.

Despite his predominantly anti-New Deal position, President Nixon should be credited with implementing CETA, and for the expansion of certain programs like food stamps, school lunches, and the Women and Infants (WIC) nutrition program which ultimately served to raise the nutrition level in many more food products through the
incentive of program participation. Even so, in the area of public housing, the Nixon Administration, sought to reduce the role of the federal government in urban housing, despite the fact that housing and community development legislation of the mid sixties and early seventies and reports of urban commissions continued to express the need for a national urban policy for addressing the escalating problems of both new and existing urban areas.

During the 1950's, nationwide net in-migration to metropolitan areas had been over 8,000,000 while the net out-migration from incorporated city areas was around 5,500,000. Out migration from cities has continued, however, as numbers of businesses, manufacturing jobs, and family income levels in cities began declining in the 1950's. The city of Chicago reached its peak population in 1950 and subsequently lost twenty percent of its city residents to the suburbs over the next thirty-five years. By 1970, the population of California was 91 per cent urban, New Jersey 88.9 per cent and New York 85.5 per cent urban. In a paper presented during the 1997 Kennon Symposium held at Rice University, “The Political Irony of the American City,” political scientist Robert Brown of Emory University described the contradictory relationship between urban population growth and diversity and the effect of corresponding fiscal priorities on urban infrastructure. As suburbs grew, providing a suitable alternative environment to cities, the country assumed a physical division to match the ideological division it had long been nurturing. Brown's figures indicate that inner cities with higher percentages of Blacks necessarily have lower percentages of whites and higher rates of poverty. This, he contends, has resulted from extensive urban highway construction destroying areas of downtowns and encouraging both suburbanization and urban disinvestment.
Despite the earlier efforts of both Kennedy and Johnson in reducing racial strife and promoting equal civil rights, the demographic distribution within the country's urban and suburban areas has become increasingly aligned along class and racial lines. In 1958, those migrating into New York City were, according to William Whyte, in "The Exploding Metropolis," predominantly minorities. Many of the poor and minorities that were flooding the cities were looking for work following post-war conversion. As 30,000 Puerto Ricans and 10,000 blacks came into the city, 50,000 whites were leaving. Whyte also reported that in 1958, 35,000 blacks were entering the city of Chicago as 15,000 whites were leaving. Over the course of the seventies, both Chicago and Los Angeles lost 500,000 and 300,000 white residents respectively, and the white population in Hartford, Connecticut decreased from 165,000 to 56,000 in the forty years after 1950. This figure reflects the number of middle-class whites and Veterans leaving the cities in response to the FHA home finance legislation from the Housing Act of 1949, which made it easier, more affordable and socially cultivating to own your own home. As large numbers of middle and upper-middle class whites left the cities, they took with them their tax dollars, their commercial and retail business and their political influence, leaving the urban cores a veritable vacuum of economic and political priority. The effect of these migratory trends and demographic redistribution has had a drastic effect on both real and perceived characteristics of diversity within urban areas.

In 1910, the city of Chicago had a relatively small, and geographically confined black population of 44,000. Over the next twenty years this number was to grow to 250,000, and expand beyond the area previously referred to as Chicago's "Black Belt." Between 1900 and 1960, the percentage of blacks living in cities rose from 23% to 73%. By 1960 the density at which blacks had to live in Harlem, the entire population
of the United States could have been accommodated within New York's five
boroughs.\textsuperscript{62} From 1950 to 1966, 70\% of the increase in the nation's white population
occurred in the suburbs, while 86\% of the increase in the black population took place in
central cities. By 1970, only five percent of blacks lived in suburbia.\textsuperscript{63} In accordance
with a report from the Commission on Urban Problems, the shortcomings of public
housing and virulent class and racial antipathy prevent any substantial increase in the
access of the inner-city poor to vacant suburban land.\textsuperscript{64} Racial segregation was more
firmly entrenched by new infrastructure, as demographic distribution was determined
by newly constructed federally funded highways. The city, as previously mentioned, no
longer attracted the interest and attention of many who had left and the burdens of the
urban poor, those least able to alleviate the problems, were only increasing.

The rising geographical concentration of the indigent in cities has been
accompanied by a simultaneous weakening of municipal tax bases, from the middle-
class exodus and rising municipal demands has resulted in crises of endemic
proportions on municipal facilities such as hospitals, schools and social services which
faces increases in demand and decreases in funds, of often drastic proportions. Hurm
claims that his examination of the American urban experience has revealed patterns of
recurring tensions and contradictions which have resulted in a "partiality of responses
in the twentieth century city. [Thus,] as the study has indicated, economic priorities
and related class interests have dictated the content, form, and pace of changes in the
modern American metropolis. The city's expanse, verticality, dissociation or
heterogeneity have been related to specific process and conditions."\textsuperscript{65}

It was Bobby Kennedy, who, following the pursuits and ideas of his slain
brother, said, "Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of
the others... he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a
million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance." Both men strongly believed in the strength of a nation as being dependent upon the strength of its individuals. Only three decades after these leaders had implored the nation to be more politically active and personally responsible, the nation had instead regressed, leaning toward a "perversion of the ideals of American democracy." This reversal has resulted in increasing economic and social divergences within and among urban neighborhoods: what Michael Macdonald terms a "pervasive redistribution" of resources from the poor to the rich, worsened by an unprecedented growth of citizen apathy. American involvement in politics and government has fallen dramatically over the last generation, and millions are no longer involved in the affairs of their own communities. Robert Putnam, the director of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, writes in his essay, "Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital," that while many negative trends may have resulted directly from the political tragedy and turmoil since the sixties, there are other causes and implications evident in the decline of civic engagement. Putnam cites declines in the memberships of labor unions, The National Federation of Women's Clubs, The League of Women Voters, the Boy Scouts, The Lions Club, the Elks, the Jaycees, and even bowling leagues. Lack of citizen participation keeps individuals out of touch with one another and threatens a thriving democracy, as defined by De Tocqueville, as dependent upon the willingness and the ability of individuals to collectively improve the social order.

Gerd Hurm, a German and the author of Fragmented Urban Images: The American City in Modern Fiction From Stephen Crane to Thomas Pynchon, attributes the imbalance of both priorities and demographics to "the fatal preference of viewing the possession of land as a superior civil liberty and not as a social resource [which] runs
as basic weakness through all stages of the segregated American city." This preference has determined, ideologically and physically, the fragmented forms our pluralistic cities have taken. Cities, from the perspective of the affluent, assume characteristics of thriving centers of business and culture. From the perspective of the altruistic, cities, though depressed, are still viable areas worth our attention and resources. When disowned by these groups, however, cities are all too often left to decay. The growth pattern of the city has been uneven; pockets of ancillary behavior and contrasting conditions of wealth and poverty are foregrounded by a larger urban backdrop.

Many processes and conditions were occurring and developing within these ancillary areas, serving as a constant shower of societal stimulus, threatening to desensitize the urban dweller. The concept of the urban environment as place of mental and physical overstimulation has been discussed by sociologists, novelists and urban theorists. The impact of both the First and Second World Wars, with their corpses numbering in the millions gave, what Bellow called, "an aspect of the horrible to the romantic over-valuation of the Self." Images of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Dachau permanently scarred the minds of Americans. In all cases it was the scale of destruction which was as hard to grasp as the particularities themselves. Bellow touched upon the disbelief and fundamental confusion incurred by the Holocaust when he wrote,

Just what the reduction of millions of human beings into heaps of bone and mounds of rag and hair or clouds of smoke betokened, there is no one who can plainly tell us, but it is at least plain that something was being done to put in question the meaning of survival, the meaning of pity, the meaning of justice and of the importance of being oneself, the individual's consciousness of his own existence."
The bombing of Japan brought the realization of the absolute destruction of which man was capable through the progress of science and technology. The scale of death and the means by which it was accomplished were perhaps the most difficult aspects of World War II to comprehend.

The depression succeeded in shaking the basic tenets that Americans had held with regards to their country and its infallibility and ability to support the will of its people. The country as a great machine had proven to be more than could be managed in the best interest of its citizens and disaster could only be allowed to run its course. Not only had the strength of the nation been truly tested when disaster had struck, but the sheer duration of the recovery further eroded confidence in the economic and political systems. The redirection of focus that the Kennedy and Johnson administrations undertook in terms of social philosophy is striking for a number of reasons. Urban life has always involved a tenuous relationship between classes and races. As outlined in this chapter, in the era preceding the depression of the 1930's, great social programs to which we are now accustomed simply did not exist. Federal aid had heretofore been for farmers, not urban dwellers. Under Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy and Johnson came the unprecedented acceptance and subsequent demand that the federal government bear responsibility in certain matters of unemployment, shelter or food shortages and regulatory labor restrictions.

Though the war did boost the economy, nationalism and a sense of personal responsibility, this was soon eroded by new economic and social problems, accompanied by an undeniable sense of disillusionment. A frightening world was emerging in the eyes of the nation, still trying to avert its eyes from the outside world until the violence erupted within its own boundaries. The tranquility of the fifties was short-lived. Within a decade, two Kennedys and many others had been assassinated
and violence within the Civil Rights Movement was escalating. The policies of JFK, his interest in and attention to cities, had raised man’s perception of his individual identity as it related to the rest of society, and attempted to heal the political, social and economic troubles that had been growing for decades. His philosophies and policies have greatly impacted American society and its own impression of itself. This influence and moreso, the impact of the turbulent events of the later sixties and early seventies have been incorporated into our identities and methods of development.

Certain culturally relevant events and opinions, when viewed within the continuum of history and cultural evolution themselves comprise symbolic shifts within the history of the American city. Urban industrialization, the First World War, the stock market crash of 1929, the Second World War and the Jewish Holocaust, the dropping of the atomic bomb, activities leading up to and evolving out of the Civil Rights Movement, the assassinations of public figures and leaders, the drug craze, the sexual revolution, the Equal Rights Amendment, bitter opposition to the war in Vietnam, the near impeachment of a president, the AIDS epidemic, and rising rates of unemployment, illiteracy, urban crime and homelessness exemplify such events and conditions which have contributed to changing the course of history in this country and have had particular influence on urban ways of life. General perceptions of the urban condition have evolved over the twentieth century and have often been driven by the historical cross sections of this era provided within the canon of American urban literature. This relationship revolved around what Malcolm Bradbury refers to as American “counter-culture” which became closely affiliated with the evolving form of the modern American novel. This counter culture dominated the late sixties, he asserts, and was
stimulated by rising protests about civil rights, free speech, and the Vietnam war... the new avant-garde, a new surrealist consciousness, expressing an age in which outward violence could be countered by an inward spirit. Post-humanistic, messianic, mystic, shamanistic, provisional, it was rooted in youth, drawing on psychic and psychedelic experiment, expressing the post-culture of the new global village, in which a glut of new styles appeared to be available simultaneously, and without rational design or order. This new psycho-political awareness deeply affected Sixties fiction.\footnote{72}

The political and cultural revolution of the sixties brought about a heightened awareness and participation level of a younger generation in the issues facing the nation. Many different movements inspired various forms of action, from silent to violent protest, disruption and sabotage. The Beat and Yippie movements countered mainstream viewpoint, "challenged the legitimacy of all authority... [and sought] the explication of societal constraints."\footnote{73} Their aim was to disrupt the workings of conventional institutional America, through anarchy, solely as an expression of their influence and autonomy. Such movements, with no rational agenda, pitted generations and classes as well as political interests against one another. Many experiencing this period of time sought some sort of escape from or transcendence over it, or an existential assertion of their own autonomy in the face of a faster, bigger, more populus, diverse, mechanized, technological, 'progressive' and no-better-for-it world.
Chapter I Notes

3 DJ Walmsley, Urban Living, 1988, p.51.
4 Jurgen Habermas quoted in Hurm p.327.
5 Bennett p.126.
6 Hurm p.50.
8 Hurm p.23.
10 Hurm p. 25
14 Chudacoff attributes the huge growth of the Chicago area during this fifty-year period to the combination of its manufacturing and extensive railway systems. Hurm p.24.
15 Hurm p.25.
16 Still pp. 243-249.
17 Still pp.249-252.
18 The United States Conference of Mayors brought their concerns before Congress in 1937. Hurm p.26
19 Chudacoff p.188.
20 Sam Bass Warner describes Civil War Draft riots in New York (1863) and race riots in Chicago (1919). He attributes the upper class flight from cities to its fear of class war between worker and capitalist and he contends these riots were instilled on the minds of the wealthy as late as World War II. Warner, The Urban Wilderness, 1972, p.81.
21 Chudacoff p.128.
22 Chudacoff p. 128.
25 "Urban liberals, the new urban coalition of reformers and of an immigrant-stock working class... [faced] problems that had mushroomed beyond the control of individual municipal councils as urban issues had acquired a pronounced national dimension. Vital decisions had long before passed into the hands of trusts and corporations which operated on national and international level. The regulation of corporation by municipal governments was invalidated as the leading companies by mid-century had themselves reached the size of major 19th century cities. In addition, groups opposing government intervention had gained in numbers within cities as the nation prospered. While the dominance in the world market enabled more Americans to rise to the middle class, the peculiar effect of metropolitan growth in which the service sector increases disproportionately with the size of the metropolis, led to the development of numerous petty-bourgeois clientele beside the traditional faction of working-class households. In addition, the administration of cities had become a mosaic of segregated areas with conflicting interests and fragmented governmental structures." (Hurm p.40; Warner pp.125,132). By 1970, Chicago alone embraced 1,172 administrative units of which 1,100 could levy taxes (Estall p.418).
26 Chudacoff pp.125-146. The section describes the ascent of immigrants within the machine structure, the influence of the system, and the larger purposes behind machine politics: "Bosses and their organizations tried, and often succeeded, to bring order to decentralized urban administration by superimposing a personalized, hierarchical structure on loosely constructed city governments...fully recognizing that businessmen and politicians together could manipulate government for their mutual benefit...The services were costly to the public. But they also built streets and streetcar systems, sewers and gas lines, parks and schools. Perhaps more importantly, machines reconciled urban newcomers to their environment. Boss politics provided a means for immigrants to secure their best interests and opened a path upward when lack of education or vocational skills closed other avenues of social mobility. The jobs, handouts, and personal relationships humanized politics for deprived classes. The system depended on an ethic of loyalty, cultivated in the blocks and neighborhoods...[Bosses] knew
the needs of the slum dwellers, and they tried to fill these needs when few others seemed to care. Charities and government agencies also tried to help, but they were obsessed with determining the worthiness of welfare recipients. "Bosses asked no questions." (Chudacoff pp. 142-43).

28 Chudacoff p.219.
29 Still p.425. See also "Federal Aid for Public Works and Utilities," The American City, Vol. 1 (January, 1937), 5. The mayors insisted that the responsibility for "direct relief" lay with the localities and the states. Still p. 533.
31 Our Cities: Their Role in the National Economy (June 1937), report of the Urbanism Committee to the National Resources Committee (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1937), v-vii, ix-x. At the time of its delivery, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes called this report "the first major national study of cities in the United States." Still p.427. By 1966 there were more than 70 federal-aid programs directly supporting urban development. United States, Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Metropolitan America: Challenge to Federalism (Washington: Governmental Printing Office, 1966), 8.
32 Chudacoff p.230.
33 Chudacoff pp.188,189.
34 Ibid p. 185
35 In a city that has been in fiscal and service crisis since the mid 1970's, New York City's success becomes increasingly concentrated in Manhattan, where office and construction growth has been booming since the eighties. Meanwhile heavily populated areas such as Brooklyn and the Bronx are experiencing housing blight and the loss of middle-class residents. A continuation of this trend will lead to gentrification of areas of the city as the urban population becomes increasingly wealthier and poorer; accordingly. Macdonald p.18, 333.
36 Hurm p. 41.
37 Macdonald p.364.
38 Garreau p.6.
39 The automobile industry as well, through economic influence and strong lobbying, played a major role in the dismantling of public transportation networks, pushing the Highway Act through Congress in 1956.
40 Still p.431-433.
41 Warner p.246.
43 Alex Kotlowitz, There Are No Children Here, pp. 25,79.
44 Kotlowitz pp. 20-25.
45 Kotlowitz p.8.
46 Pacyna p.353.
48 Hurm p.49.
50 Chudacoff p.259.
51 Chudacoff p.260; Still p.435,438.
54 1963 United States Department of Commerce census; quoted in Gruen, p.22.
56 Still p.352.

Macdonald p.17.


The pre 1930's outline of Chicago's "Black Belt" was defined as 31st to 55th Streets along Federal and State, but new areas of black settlement were already beginning to emerge at that time. Dominic Pacyga and Ellen Skerret. *Chicago: City of Neighborhoods, Histories and Tours*, 1986, p.348.

Chudacoff p.273,274,276; Hurm p.41.


Chudacoff p.273,274,276; Hurm p.41.


Hurm p.327.

Hurm p.43.

In 1982, 19% of American adults were illiterate and 18% of babies born were illegitimate. Macdonald p.12. Current statistics reveal that the nationwide unemployment rate of blacks is twice that of whites, and the federal government has recently voted to reduce national welfare benefits while it simultaneously privatizes some city housing authorities, thereby raising the rents of the lowest income bracket. Such a move will certainly result in increases in the numbers of urban homeless.

Everett Carll Ladd, Executive Director of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut, in "It's as strong as ever, data say," the printed response to the article "What happened to civic life?" written by Robert D. Putnam. Director of the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, in *The Hartford Courant*, Sunday, July 7, 1996, C1,C4. Putnam's article was excerpted from his essay "Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital" in the January 1995 issue of Journal of Democracy.

Hurm p.43.


Ibid.


Joseph Urso writes "The Yippies Overthrow: What Everybody Knows in America," the last chapter of his book, *Novel Frames: Literature as Guide to Race, Sex, and History in American Culture*, that a Yippie is "a hippie that is going to Chicago," and is the expression of 'the ever-recurring self-aware revolutionary moment of rejection of straight society as a whole,' aligning itself "against corporate encroachments on individual autonomy and on critical thought..."(191,189-190). The group was created in 1967 by Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Dana Beal, Paul Krassner and others. Setting themselves up as "a counterforce to mainstream culture" and represented what they termed "the politicized hippie" of the era. The movement evolved into one obsessed with conspiracy theories, government cover-ups and other paranoid conceptions. Most importantly, however, the Yippies contend that the action of Chicago police in 1968 served to shatter the world in which "young people represented the future, and the streets belonged to the public," as televised accounts showed the violent come-uppance for those youth protesting the "perceived madness of their elders." pp.189-221.
Chapter II

...a fruitful insight into modern urban experience can be won precisely at the intersection of these two cultural phenomena, that is, at the point where the city and the novel, the social and the aesthetic, the material and the imaginative, the concrete and abstract converge and shape one another. Gerd Hurm

Seen in the contexts of intellectual, urban, social, and biographical history, textual images of cities reveal recurrent, if divergent, patterns. Sidney Bremer

Late twentieth century urban literature, when considered within the context of postwar culture, both describes conditions of the cities it depicts, and offers insights into the problems and advantages of our modern existence. Literature is an aesthetic transformation of reality, and the way in which each author depicts the urban environment can profoundly affect the reader's perception of both the real and the literary city. Novels give insight into the authors' own frames of reference and attitudes toward the city, and poignantly illustrate the alienation of the urban individual, revealing aspects of the psychological and personal experience the city imparts.

In Urban Intersections: Meetings of Life and Literature in United States Cities, Bremer writes, "The intersections of urban life and literature...occur in our reading and response to literary texts and to the urban contexts they illuminate...[I]ntersections of literature with both intellectual and social history...delineate biases that qualify our standard literature of urban alienation." The texts of urban alienation present an individual perspective of the city, as experienced under particular historic and socio-economic conditions of particular eras. Just as history relies upon the comprehension of social and cultural trends as well as economic and political, literature, once isolated from its social context loses its capacity to be fully understood and appreciated. With this in mind, the modern novel, then, can be understood, using the words of Hurm in Fragmented Urban Images, as "a frame of orientation in
fragmented social worlds" for the way in which it addresses period specific urban conditions and social structures as a means of discerning contradictory assessments of the fragmented city. In his study, Hurm examines the way in which modern novel and modern city, fictional perception and urban theory, have interacted in mid to late 20th Century literature, and he attempts to establish the relationship between the economic, political, and cultural basis and its spatial manifestations within the city. I will use Hurm's theories as a model for interpreting the way in which urban literature represents the relationship between the individual and the city, and specifically examine three post-war novels by Saul Bellow, which are particularly compelling for their contribution to the understanding of this relationship.

Despite the lack of regard America seems to have for her cities of late, there remains a curious infatuation with the city that has kept it among our closest associations of what it means to be American. Important within this discussion is a comprehension of the associative role literature of the American city has played in depicting the physical nature, historical significance and cultural aspects of the urban environment. A 1969 report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, for instance, states that "recurring themes of violence in American literature and folklore bear witness to the continuing violence of American life... [and] have great significance, therefore, for all those who are interested in the violent realities of our society." Urban literature, then, when appropriately interpreted and not extrapolated out of its literary contexts, aids in our understanding of the social structure of the specific periods described.

Any evaluation of urban literature must begin by acknowledging its vernacular origins, the cities themselves, out of which literary movements, such as the Chicago and Harlem renaissance movements, are generated. Notable is the way in which the
city served as both source and subject within the music, art, poetry and novels of these diverse late nineteenth and early twentieth century movements. From that point on, literature became increasingly diversified and expressive of social, racial, economic and political urban concerns. The theme of Richard Wright’s first book, Uncle Tom’s Children (1938), is his encounter with the city following a rural Mississippi upbringing. This existential theme, repeated in works by Dreiser, James T. Farrell, Ralph Ellison and others juxtaposes the rural town and the modern city, large external forces and the quest for self. Still other writers followed in the tradition established by Sinclair, Crane, Dreiser, Hamlin Garland, Clarence Darrow, Carl Sandburg, and Jane Addams, of sociologically influenced literary themes, theories and methods. The accounts of novelists and social critics alike, writes Elizabeth Long, “evince increasing concern with areas of life beyond the public world of work, increasing pessimism, increasing fascination with inner experience, and increasing desire for some moral ordering principle that can provide coherence for a world they perceive as being in disarray.”

Writers of urban literature have often used it to probe, document and broadcast aspects and conditions of cities during specific periods of history. Many writers, artists, journalists and social reformers have affiliated themselves with either Chicago or New York, though contributors to the modern literary tradition have not necessarily been limited in scope to these cities nor even to America, and have been influenced by literary movements abroad.

Saul Bellow has written, in his introduction to The Closing of the American Mind, by Allan Bloom, that poets and novelists "give new eyes to human beings, inducing them to view the world differently, converting them from fixed modes of experience." Through these new eyes, the novel frames often disjointed urban experiences, and allows them to be ordered according to contemporary issues and concerns. This
transformation allows for a new interpretation of the city "precisely at the intersection... where the city and the novel, the social and aesthetic, the material and imaginative, the concrete and abstract converge and shape one another." Much of this literature has dealt with historical aspects of urbanism and the individual within that landscape and with new forms of aesthetically representing that relationship in the modern tradition. A.N. Kaul observes that "whereas European fiction of the mid-nineteenth century works out its themes predominantly in social terms, the contemporary American imagination concerns itself directly with the world of man's personal and metaphysical relations."

Often social issues themselves generate highly personal responses from the writers affected by or relating to these issues. Within the genre of the modern tradition, narratives including Richard Wright's Native Son (1940), Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man (1947), Nelson Algren's Never Come Morning (1942); and Chicago, City on the Make (1951), Heart of a Woman (1960) by Maya Angelou, Nobody Knows My Name (1961) by James Baldwin, and The OmniAmericans (1970) by Albert Murray, explored the concept of racial identity within the framework of American culture and society. Catch 22 (1961) by Joseph Heller, and V. (1963) by Thomas Pynchon question the power of a government or military authority which threatens individual autonomy. Fear of Flying (1974) by Erica Jong and Looking for Mr. Goodbar (1975) by Judith Rossner both address the city from a female perspective during a time in which all social mores, including issues of sexual freedom, were in a state of upheaval. Bernard Malamud's works The Assistant (1957), The Fixer (1967), like Bellow's The Victim (1947) and Mr. Sammler's Planet (1970), address issues of Jewish identity, incorporating opinions and beliefs generated by the fact that a Jewish Holocaust had occurred less than two decades ago. Alan Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, both of the Beat movement, contributed to this
fiction of defiance, "drawing on associations with the spontaneous beat of jazz and the beatific joys of oriental mysticism... voicing the spirit of a new young generation in revolt against the conformity and respectability of Lonely Crowd America." Both Ginsberg's 'Howl' (1955) and Kerouac's On the Road (1957) glorified the celebratory experience of drug culture and the "inner journey towards a new emotional and physical freedom" from "the technological city," and, as stated repeatedly, traditional societal constraints. John Updike completed the circle with his Rabbit (1960-90) series about the experiences and self-realizations of a small-town white American male facing middle-age, and is successful in "showing the adaptability of persistent realism to contemporary themes and issues." Exemplifying the "literary transformation of reality," Updike's Rabbit series "encodes social history" from the Eisenhower years through the sixties "featuring as subsidiary characters a hippie and a black artist" to the Reagan years with a Toyota selling protagonist and finally, the last book of the series; "a terminal vision of maintenance culture." Playing upon the themes of alienation, that is, every aspect in which we differ from one another, many modern writers have been concerned with the tensions between and among races, sexes, classes, and cultures, and the effect of this upon the individual.

In her book, The American Dream and the Popular Novel, Long has grouped bestselling novels into categories according to the era in which they were popular, as a means to better understand the social concerns within particular eras. Those popularized from 1956-68 she refers to as "varieties of self-fulfillment -- the goal achieved" with the social world "portrayed as more heterogeneous, conflictual, even alienating" than it had been previously. In order to achieve reconciliation with an increasingly impersonal and alienating society, the protagonist within the modern American novel must undergo internal reflection as he seeks personal transcendence.
over the alienating, contradicting and disordered conditions of contemporary American life.\(^{18}\) Historically, many authors have "lent" themselves and their experiences to the texts they created, allowing these city fictions, as Liz Heron writes, to become "narratives of self-discovery."\(^{19}\) Ihab Hassan similarly notes the introspective nature of the contemporary novel which "redefines the identity of its central character and redirects his energies toward the virtues of love or self-discovery, virtues that are a good deal more personal than social."\(^{20}\) Long describes the novels of 1956-68 as inwardly focussed in search of meaning in order to alleviate confusion brought on by the disappearance of "the naive certainty in the triumph of expansive American individualism."\(^{21}\) Within Bellow's works, this inward journey of self-examination is subjected to constant assault by societal pressures and influences. Few modern novels sought complete reconciliation with society, but instead sought to use the text as a vehicle to reflect a sense of disillusionment which was permeating twentieth century American culture. Writes Long, "From the questioning of received opinions follows expression of desire for a social order that permits freedom, joy, and spontaneity... In their descriptions of a complex, bureaucratized, alienating social world, however, the novels point to some of the social constraints on personal fulfillment and to the ways in which the social world not only frustrates 'fulfillment' but also trivializes it."\(^{22}\)

The post-World War II period in America was a time of change and reassessment of the priorities and attitudes of the nation. Malcolm Bradbury comments, "The positive if critical myths of the great American moderns ...apparently no longer offered confident guidance to authors who belonged to the age after Auschwitz and Hiroshima, the age of the modern lonely crowd, the disorienting city, of new material dreams and psychic needs."\(^{23}\) The political movements and events mentioned above changed the environment in cities and on campuses, and also
triggered responses on a much smaller scale, through their effect on the individuals comprising that "modern lonely crowd." Many were unable to relate to the daily occurrences they experienced. According to writer Joseph Bellamy:

This was...the point...at which American experience itself began to seem surreal. The apocalyptic ambience of the sixties was gearing up. What followed -- Vietnam, assassinations, the new drug culture, continuing national fragmentation and embarrassment, increasing sense of loss of a shared reality, real people becoming more and more businesslike and ritualized and compartmentalized -- only accelerated the process.24

Increasingly the singular replaced the communal. The question of the power of the individual to face societal forces and endure contemporary issues was paralleled by the struggle of fiction writers themselves to discover modes and methods equal to their "emotional and imaginative perception of this strangeness," writes Bellamy.25 Similarly. Philip Roth wrote of this era that life itself was so bizarre and fantastic that it had become an "embarrassment to one's own meager imagination."26 It was a strange time, according to Bellamy, in which writers themselves were struggling just to keep up:

What was developing during the sixties was a growing awareness, among new journalists and fiction writers alike, that the old conventions based on the probabilities of the experiential world, which had supposedly guaranteed "objectivity," weren't adequate to new experience, on the one hand; and that, on the other, they were faulty - since even a modest understanding of the way language works led to the realization that selection, arrangement, and attitudinal investment affect every "realistic" account. The new fiction was thus the expression of radical new doubts about the nature of "reality" and the validity of the fiction-making process in relation to "reality."27

Built into the new emerging fictional form was a corrected vision. A new construction of reality was needed to replace the standard methods of interpretation which were being proved as inadequate, rendering meaningless both the very experience of "reality" itself, and the literature pertaining to it.
Within the literature of the postwar period, contemporary issues are integrally related to the chaotic environment of the literary city. The bestsellers from 1969-75, according to Long, were particularly indicative of "a world-view in crisis," a culture of confusion in which "sexual license becomes extreme and often fades into interpersonal brutality."28 This "apocalyptic" period in literature embodies a condition of self-consciousness, creative despair, and terminal isolation of the single self.29 Hurm attributes the vastness, fragmentation and flux of the metropolis as being "a crucial catalyst for a wide variety of experiences and for the diverse modes of modernist expression and fictional form."30

Literary treatment of the city from the Fifties to the Seventies references contemporary urban conditions and mentalities, foremost among them the quest of the individual for self-rule arising from the fear that our actions adhere to conventions or patterns of a greater societal whole.31 Urban fiction of the postwar period, reflecting this fear, had become much more concerned with popular culture and the role of the individual in contemporary society, bringing social issues into greater focus. "American fiction at the beginning of the Sixties," concurs Malcolm Bradbury, "was enlarging its themes and looking historically outward; it was also reappraising the forces loose in the world, and the question of the individual's power to face them."32

Anselm Strauss has written:

Characterization of the city, and of the life lived in it, is indispensable for organizing the inevitably ambiguous mass of impressions and experiences to which every inhabitant is exposed, and which he must collate and assess, not only for peace of mind, but to carry on daily affairs. When the city has been symbolized in some way, personal action in the urban milieu becomes organized and relatively routinized.33

Richard Wright, for example, specifically acknowledged how exposure to the influence of the Chicago sociologists enabled him to render meaningful his experiences within an
often hostile environment and apply them to his writing. Correspondingly, his writing reflects the characters' primary need to assess urban experiences for their significance. In *Jazz*, Toni Morrison depicts New York City as the ideal setting for a black woman; one of physical and ideological empowerment and opportunity, in which she can make the most of the upheaval of the previously [even more] oppressive social structure. Acknowledging the impact of urban forms, scale and density upon the experiences of the urban dweller, literary images of the city serve to collate and assess, or frame and orient, the interactions between and among the city and its inhabitants. The "single common denominator among this variety of experiences and images," according to Strauss in *Images of the American City,*" is their partiality and fragmentation." 

Frank McConnell, writing on Bellow, Mailer, Barthe and Pynchon, refers to these particular writers as being "acutely concerned with the nature and origins of contemporary neurosis and depression...the besetting disease of contemporary man: his conviction of inauthenticity -- his sense that he has no real self, no real identity, no real creative life amid the conflicting tensions with which urban life surrounds him." This is a recurring condition among many Bellow protagonists, and it is within this context that he is most successful at inserting his own sense of the modern condition of solitude and alienation. *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970) and *Humboldt's Gift* (1975) and *The Dean's December* (1982) document the relationship of man within urban society and his inability to reconcile himself with aspects of this postwar culture. These works fit well into Long's categorization of the "failure of success" novels of 1969-75, in which "survival is now at stake, and the hero is past his prime and very vulnerable to the disquieting currents of social change...the hero as fragile survivor."

As dramatizations of urban life, Bellow's works refer to the actual social, cultural, generational and political attitudes and activities of cities such as Chicago and
New York, specific to the time periods in which the works were set. "Most American city writers whose major work has been done since the Second World War," writes David Weimer in *The City as Metaphor*, "give the impression of an intimacy with the metropolis so complete as to deprive them of the capacity for saying anything much about it." In Bellow's case, however, his familiarity with the city enhances his capacity for urban commentary. Bellow says much about the city, not only through his intimate depiction of it, achieved by juxtaposing little known facts of history with intricate details of places and events, but through the tone he sets within the novel.

This tone, sometimes varying within a work and always evolving from one work to the next, serves as an indicator of how Bellow himself views the city. In the early sixties, responding to the increasingly diminutive stature of characters in modern novels Bellow said, "I do not believe that human capacity to feel or do can really have dwindled or that the quality of humanity has degenerated. I rather think that people appear smaller because society has become so immense." By the eighties, however, both society and Bellow's view of it had changed considerably, prompting him to comment in a novel, that, "It was not so much the inner city slum that threatened us as the slum of the innermost being, of which the inner city was perhaps a material representation." (*The Dean's December*) Though the hero is consistently passive in his urban experience, the narrative tone over the course of the postwar decades ranges from philosophic to ironic to disgusted, indicating the nature of Bellow's opinion of the city during each literary investigation.

Bellow's life in these cities, as well as his characters', span nearly the entire century, from the early 1920's to the 1990's, during which time the American metropolis has been in a constant state of flux and the urban fabric has changed considerably. The transient nature of urban America and the propensity of cities and
the people within them to rapidly and frequently change their identities has contributed to rising tensions between the individual and the environment. Resulting from these tensions was a greater resolve for acquiring genuine self-knowledge - almost as a defense against the increasing banality and meaninglessness of modern existence. The result, this fiction, McConnell writes, is "a political fact as well as an aesthetic one, an utterance that by its very nature not only relates to, but constitutes the civilized and civilizing society out of which it is generated." Bellow incorporates elements of popular culture, such as contemporary artists and thinkers, products, fashions, fads, politics, and current events.

Bellow was well aware of all that was happening in America and the world during the years he was writing Herzog [early Sixties]. The Berlin Wall rose between East and West Germany and Khrushchev was entertained lavishly in Hollywood. Alan Shepard rose 116.5 miles in space and whirled aloft for 15 minutes, then Gherman Titov whirled about for more than 24 hours, and Gagarin orbited the earth once and John Glenn orbited the earth 3 times and Gordon Cooper went 22 times around, and the Russians sent up Valentina Tershkova. Picard went 7 miles down into the sea. Belgium said let the Congo go; Britain said let Nyasaland go; France would not let Algeria go. Africa was fragmenting into more than 30 independent states; Europe was unifying into the Common Market; France would not let England enter in. Castro took Cuba; China took Tibet; Ethiopia took Eritrea; and India took Goa. U.S. troops arranged to keep the peace in Vietnam; a U.S.S.R. missile base arranged to keep the peace in Cuba. It was CORE and DNA and RNA and ICBM and strontium 90. Pete Seeger sang "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" Bob Dylan sang "Blowin' in the Wind." There were earthquakes, tidal waves, hurricanes, revolutions, guerilla warfare, and galaxies were discovered to be moving away from the earth.40

Within the twentieth century communism rose and fell, the atomic bomb was developed and used, many geographic boundaries were reestablished, man set foot on the moon, and tens of millions died in wars. Despite the fact that Tony Tanner quotes Bellow as saying that, "Fiction ought to be able to turn from current events without withering away,"41 Bellow's urban narratives are strongest in their ability to address the
contemporary issues with which both he and his characters must contend. Yet it is these very same issues which result in the "profound perplexity" addressed by Walter Benjamin in his 1969 *Illuminations*, and which perhaps lend us insight into Bellow the novelist: "The novelist has isolated himself. The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is himself uncounseled, and cannot counsel others...in the midst of life's fullness, and through the representation of this fullness, the novel gives evidence of the profound perplexity of the living."\(^{42}\)

While it is difficult to recognize the documentary aspect of literature of a time in which we are living, since the historical value can only be appreciated retrospectively, Bellow achieves a sense of nostalgia with regards to the American city through his comparison of images of the same city over time. By documenting the change, through the observations and reminiscences of an alienated protagonist, Bellow succeeds in depicting both objectively (historically) and subjectively (autobiographically) the urban milieu. What urban literature requires and Bellow provides, is an appreciation of urban myth, and according to William Sharpe, conventions of text that the reader possesses and utilizes. Through the process of "literary figuration" the images within words and thoughts "actively metamorphose the human figures passing on the street."\(^{43}\) His narratives reveal the love/hate relationship between the individual and the modern urban environment, including his own. The issues with which he deals, from increasing urban blight and disparity to the city dweller's inability to identify himself with his everchanging environs, are manifestations of urban policies and social attitudes arising after the Second World War.

Man's alienation and break from his contemporary society result from profound disillusionment, yet are accompanied by his awareness of a greater sense of
self-knowledge. These particular urban novels by Bellow, I believe, indicate the increasingly reciprocal relationship between the modern city and the modern novel reflected by the fiction of the sixties and seventies. Throughout his novels he gives the city a major role in the characters' physical and mental activity as their relationship to the city changes from one of awe or inspiration to one of disillusion and disaffection.

The emotional responses of his protagonists to their physical and psychological environment are grounded historically and culturally in aspects of the sixties and seventies, reflecting, in no uncertain terms, Bellow's own insight and experiences. Bellow constructs this relationship between the city and the protagonist and uses it as a framework to explore issues of American culture and human nature. To do so, his work embodies what Long refers to as the inner voyage of the hero, and Bellow, through his heroes, taken in order "to reevaluate their past experiences, their goals, or their relationships can be decried as a retreat into the self...to reconstitute a more meaningful life.""
Chapter II Notes

1 Sydney Bremer, Urban Intersections, 1992, p.2.
3 Hurm p.13, 85.
4 Hurm pp. 89, 2, 16.
6 Bradbury, 1983 p.103, 104.
10 Hurm p.3.
11 "And if Modernism is a particularly urban art," writes Malcolm Bradbury, "that is partly because the modern artist, like his fellow-men, has been caught up in the spirit of the modern city, which is itself the spirit of a modern technological society." Bradbury and McFarlane, Modernism: 1890-1930, 1976, p.97.
14 Ibid.
15 Tony Hilfer, American Fiction Since 1940, p.173.
16 Hilfer pp.174-75.
17 Long pp.91-117.
18 Rader p.8.
21 Long p.117.
22 Long p.117.
23 Bradbury and Ro p.x-xi.
24 Bellamy p.4.
25 Bellamy p.4.
26 Philip Roth in Bellamy p.4.
28 Long p.118.
29 McConnell p.xi.
30 Hurm p.326.
31 Tanner p.15.
33 A.L. Strauss p.17; Hurm p.73.
34 Cappetti p.1.
35 Hurm p.4.
36 McConnell p.xv.
37 Long pp.118, 131.
39 Hassan p.322.
40 Miller p.141.
41 Tanner p.298.
44 Long p.198.
Chapter III

[T]hat sense of human bonding which allows him to struggle toward a latter-day humanism and a new civility...accommodating the experience of persecution and the path of survival, that made Bellow seem so central a figure in the post-war world, a world of post-holocaust and post-atomic, urban and material, where progressive naturalism and innocent liberalism no longer spoke recognizably to experience. Bradbury 1982

Having constructed a profile of major occurrences of the American postwar era in Chapter One, and outlining notable aspects and entreaties within the canon of American urban literature in Chapter Two, three postwar novels by Saul Bellow will here be examined in light of these previous conclusions. The novels, their scenarios and most importantly their tone, trace the evolution of the author's state of mind with regard to the urban condition, and serve as an extension of Bellow himself. His scenarios explore associatively American cultural categories such as race, sex and religion in an attempt to come to terms with changing societal circumstances. Of his approach to writing, Tanner asserts, "Bellow wishes to steer between two kinds of American novel: the novel of information, with its exclusive interest in externals, things, process and documentation, and the novel of sensibility in which 'the intent of the writer is to pull us all into an all-sufficient consciousness which he, the writer, governs absolutely.'"1 Aided on both accounts by the rich period in history in which his novels are placed and the life experiences upon which they draw, Bellow's works evoke a copious social atmosphere, conveying its cultural density, yet penetrating it; the narrative structure uniting "the philosophic and worldly purports of the hero's passion."2 In the three novels to be discussed, the city functions initially as the frame around which the individual constructs his own identity, as well as an aspect of both cultural and personal identity and a generator of his thoughts and emotions.
The urban narration in these works reads as social commentary and necessarily reflects the author's ideological bias. In the works of Bellow, this is usually some combination of Jewish, white, upper-middle class, academic or intellectual, and male. His texts, then, serve as an examination of the city from a corresponding perspective, of the tensions that arise between races, sexes, economic classes, religions and generations within the urban settings of New York and Chicago. The employment of such a frame of reference should not be underestimated, for it determines the thematic perspective according to which the fictionalized cities, settings, characters and atmosphere are shaped and adapted.  

Experiences of the protagonist within the city reveal aspects of the urban condition, which alter his perception of the city and lead him to reevaluate his relationship to the decentralized city he inhabits. Negative societal pressures, such as crime and racism in *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, irrational and hypocritical social practice in *Humboldt's Gift*, and socioeconomic disparity and political neglect in *The Dean's December* buffet the urban individual and serve as a corrective to these often venerated cities. Within these works is a consistent pattern established of contemporary urban society as alienating and chaotic, resulting in the urban dweller's loss of cultural identity. The city, cultivated within the mind, personally, subjectively and nostalgically, comes to bear no relation to the actual external environment. Sudden awareness of the environment, for various reasons, alter the protagonists' perception of the city and result in a physical and psychological break with society, replacing their dependence to the urban condition with a new sense of themselves. The extent to which the disillusionment with the city affects the character and the ability of the character to prevail, both physically and psychologically, reveals aspects of the relationship of the individual to the American post-war urban environment.
Mr. Sammler’s Planet - “a refugee in Manhattan...”

Bellow’s 1970 work, Mr. Sammler’s Planet features Artur Sammler, an aging Holocaust survivor and self-proclaimed “refugee in Manhattan.” Having lost both his wife and the sight in his left eye to the Nazis in World War II, Sammler gropes his way along the streets of New York’s Upper West Side. Though interested in the radical movement of the younger generation, “All this confused sex-excrement-militancy, explosiveness, abusiveness, toothshowing, Barbary ape howling.” (43) it is difficult to determine what his emotions toward their interests and causes can be, having himself experienced how quickly one’s rights can truly be rendered meaningless. Struck by their passion to be “real,” he also acknowledges that real to this generation was a synonym for brutal (43). Observing, always observing, the world around him, Sammler exists dispassionately in the past: the civilized past spent as a correspondent in London during the twenties and thirties, and the past of the war: blindly digging his way out of a mass grave which held the body of his wife, and surviving for months in the forest. This is the perspective, from which this Bellow protagonist experiences the “urban malaise, petty crime, and changing sexual mores” of the late 1960’s Now Generation.4

The relationship of Artur Sammler to New York City is one of benign interest and alertness: a lone figure in the chaotic landscape.

He was studious, he was bookish, and had been trained by the best writers to divert himself with perceptions...If the majority walked about as if under a spell, sleepwalkers, circumscribed by, in the grip of, minor neurotic trifling aims, individuals like Sammler were only one stage forward, awakened not to purpose but to aesthetic consumption of the environment. Even if insulted, pained, somewhere bleeding, not broadly expressing any anger, not crying out with sadness, but translating heartache into delicate, even piercing observation (44).
The culture of which he is now a part can “tak[e] for granted that one will not be shot stepping into the street...nor hunted in an alley like a rat.” though Sammler, having experienced life devoid of such assumptions, “would never trust the restoration totally” (48). Despite his firm conviction to be surprised at nothing, people, events and conditions in New York continue to draw his attention as he navigates the city. “No matter where you picked it up, humankind, knotted and tangled, supplied more oddities than you could keep up with” (37).

Invited to address students at Columbia, yet not informed that the talk was to be on Sorel and Modern Violence, Artur speaks to them of the pre-WWII mental atmosphere in England, and is forced from the platform by an abusive young radical, hurling insults and obscenities at Sammler’s outdated and conservative litany. Though shocked and speechless at the time of the verbal assault, (“Who raised the diaper flag? Who made shit a sacrament?”) Sammler, upon reflection, “was not sorry to have met the facts, however saddening, regrettable the facts. But the effect was that Mr. Sammler did feel somewhat separated from the rest of his species, if not in some fashion severed – severed not so much by age as by preoccupations too different and remote” (43). The weight of his experiences heavy upon him, he thinks, “Sometimes I wonder whether I have any place here, among other people. I assume I am one of you. But also I am not” (230). The oddity of this self-perception relative to the rest of humanity affects him only slightly, and not altogether negatively: “Accept and grant,” Bellow writes in this self-reflective novel, “that happiness is to do what most other people do...But don’t contradict your time. Just don’t contradict it, that’s all. Unless you happened to be a Sammler and felt that the place of honor was outside” (73).
Mr. Sammler's views of the people, the streets, the activities of New York, through his good eye, are from the outside, reflecting objectivity and detachment. Through his parted curtains, removed from the scene below:

he looked out. Brownstones, balustrades, bay windows, wrought-iron. Like stamps in an album—the dun rose of buildings cancelled by the heavy human life was here, in forms of bourgeois solidity.... Such was Sammler's eastward view, a soft asphalt belly rising, in which lay steaming sewer navels. Spalled sidewalks with clusters of ash cans. Brownstones. The yellow brick of elevator buildings like his own. Little copses of television antennas. Whiplike, graceful thrilling metal dendrites drawing images from the air, bringing brotherhood, communion to immured apartment people (9).

Sammler's detachment from society affords him an insight that those around him lack. Television, he notes, viewing the field of antennas before him, links the millions of 'apartment people,' connected by little else. By referring to them as "immured" he reveals a perception of the city as resembling a mass grave like the one he escaped from in Poland during the war. Will he be able to crawl out this time? Will he even try?

Sammler reflects upon his own fight for survival years before, "scarcely worth so much effort, perhaps. There are times when to quit is more reasonable and decent and hanging on is a disgrace...Not to stretch the human material too far. The nobler choice"(140). This second burial for him, then, occurs within the buildings of New York: "he couldn't bear the building... made him feel that the twelfth-story room was like a china cabinet into which he was locked... We are crowded, packed in now...interred within the buildings of yellow brick and brownstone ...this earth was a grave...the planet was our mother and our burial ground. No wonder the human spirit wished to leave...leave this great tomb" (27,219,182). The highly pessimistic impression Bellow leaves on the reader is not unintentional and reflects his own issues with society in the sixties. "But wasn't everything being done," asks Sammler/Bellow,
"to make it intolerable to abide here, an unconscious collaboration of all souls spreading madness and poison? To flush us out? ...thought Sammler, as a scorched-earth strategy. Ravage all, ... then flee to the bliss of oblivion" (135). Such was the course Bellow saw the country set upon.

Riding the Riverside bus on one of the two days this novel covers, the tall Sammler witnesses a black pickpocket he has seen previously on the route. "Staring down. As if watching open-heart surgery," he watches, avidly, though warily, curious (5). Taken off guard by his own voyeuristic interest, the curious Sammler had begun riding the bus more often in hopes of repeat performances. For a man of such private nature, high-minded and disapproving, this reaction is, by his own admission, quite out of character. While Sammler reminds himself to avoid trouble and of his failure to "mind his own business as a man of seventy in New York should do," he is nonetheless fascinated by his discovery, and subsequently horrified at the realization that he has been observed by the thief. Later that same afternoon Sammler is confronted in the lobby of his building by the pickpocket who has followed him home. Malevolently, the man exposes himself in a silent gesture of intimidation and warning.

The scene, "ugly, odious, laughable, but nevertheless important," demonstrates to Sammler, the degradation and baseness of society (65). The exchange between the two men, though silent, is threatening: physical, sexual, animalistic, brutal: "a sexual madness was overwhelming the Western world" (66). Similarly, what catches Sammler off guard in the case of the heckler, is the man's intention to wound, to inflict with his words, "the will to offend" (43). In complete disregard for Sammler's age and intellect, the young man substitutes obscenities and sexual insults for meaningful dialogue. In both cases of confrontation, Sammler must make a mental adjustment to account for anomaly in decorum (lack thereof). Sammler, a European in New York
City, was experiencing what he regarded as "American phenomena" (67). In both scenes it is Sammler's seemingly antiquated, by comparison, sense of values that initially renders the exchange incomprehensible to him. Exaggerated by Bellow's heavy-handed use of irony, the events demand to be interpreted within the context of the 1960's, a time of "nightmare as inspiration," in order to symbolize the increasing cultural, racial and generational tensions pervading society at that time.\(^5\)

Mr. Sammler's detached views of New York are always views unafforded by those around him. He watches the street from his apartment window and from out the window of his nephew, Elya's, Rolls Royce as it cruises down Broadway. He watches people in the park from a partially hidden bench, and his height allows him to gaze over the heads of others and watch the various activity on the uptown bus. This detachment in viewing the city from an emotional as well as physical distance mutes the experience of and exchange between, man and city. In the following passage, he observes the city from a car window, en route to his nephew's deathbed. The rawness of description reflects the rawness Sammler senses society is approaching:

He entered the city at One hundred twenty-fifth Street, under the ultrahigh railroad bridge that crossed the meat wholesalers' area. Sammler had some affection for this intricate bridge and the structural shadows it threw. Reflected in the shine of the meat trucks. The sides of beef and pork, gauze-wrapped, blood-spotted...The laborors, too, in white smocks, broad and heavy, a thickset personnel, butcher's men. By the river the smell was equivocal. You were not sure whether the rawness came from the tidewater or the blood. And here Sammler once saw a rat he took for a dachshund. The breeze out of this electric-lighted corner had the fragrance of meat dust. That was sprayed from the band saws that went through frozen fat, through marbled red or icy porphyry, and whizzed through bone. Try to stroll here. The pavements were waxed with fat (279).

City life, he seems to infer, can "whiz" through one just as the band saw through frozen fat, flesh, or bone. Sammler observes the purely physical aspects of the city, and
arrives at conclusions regarding greater humanity as a whole. Humanity has lost its
*humanity* in the city, he infers, and the only security is what we fashion from our
personal responsibilities to one another. Sammler relates to his nephew’s son,
Wallace, a passage from *War and Peace*, in which a French general spares from the
firing squad a Russian whose eyes had met his own. Sammler interprets from Tolstoy
a deeper message of “human looks” and the meaning they impart, confessing, “I
sympathize with such a desire for such a belief...I sympathize sadly. When men of
genius think about humankind, they are almost forced to believe in this form of psychic
unity. I wish it were so.” Yet haunting him are his own Holocaust memories, refuting
“the belief that there is the same truth in the heart of every human being, or a splash of
God’s own spirit, and that this is the richest thing we share in common”(189).

His left eye blinded by a blow from a Nazi gun butt, Sammler crawled, naked,
out from under the weight of dead bodies and earth, escaping war-time death. Arising
from this intended grave, others consider his “survival” a reincarnation of sorts.

Elya [his nephew] must have believed that he [Sammler] had some
unusual power, magical, perhaps, to affirm the human bond. What
had he done to generate this belief? How had he induced it? By
coming back from the dead, probably....by coming back...the dying, the
mystery of dying, the state of death. Also by having been inside death.
By having been given the shovel and told to dig. By digging beside his
digging wife....by this digging, not speaking, he tried to convey
something to her and fortify her. But as it turned out, he had
prepared her for death without sharing it. She was killed, not he.
She had passed the course, and he had not...one who had been sent
back again to the end of the line. Waiting for something. Assigned to
figure out certain things, to condense, in short views, some essence of
experience...."

But his reaction to his “survival” is puzzling and painful. He, in fact, even questions this
survival: “It wasn’t surviving, it was only lasting. He had lasted...In contraction from
life, when naked, he already felt himself dead. But somehow he had failed, unlike the
others, to be connected. Comparing the event, as mentally he sometimes did, to a
telephone circuit: death had not picked up the receiver to answer his ring" (92.137-38).

Later, in the frozen Zamosht forest, he disarms a German soldier who begs for his life, telling Sammler he has children. Frozen, gaunt, pityless, God-less. "He [Sammel] was then not entirely human," Sammler takes the soldier's coat, tunic, sweater, gloves, boots, gun, shells and food (139). He, then, takes the soldier's life. So, he too, was looked in the eye and begged for mercy yet, unlike Tolstoy's general, did not spare the life of the man with whom he shared this look. Though this experience he shares with no one. Sammler recalls hiding for months in a Polish cemetary, waiting out the war from within the Mezvinski family mausoleum, fearing Germans and Polish partisans alike. Sammler has much time and solitude to reflect upon his action and its circumstances: "then he himself knew how it felt to take a life. Found it could be an ecstasy" (141). Of this realization Sammler is neither proud nor ashamed: simply aware.

Despite the feelings of disconnectedness that have plagued him since he "failed" to die in Poland, the experience, his suffering, guarantees his authenticity in the eyes of his family. His presence in New York City brings this authenticity and legitimacy to his family members, many of whom suffer from their own lack of identity, and seek a validity and verification of their own existence. These family members, his daughter, cousin, niece, nephew, his nephew's children, all insist upon inundating Sammler with every morbid detail of their lives, welcome or not. It is through interaction with the younger generation within his own family and society at large that Sammler witnesses the valuelessness of this generation. In response to this desperation he tries to instill some of the values he holds in such high regard, unwillingly assuming the identity of educator/mentor of the next generation.
Sammler's own sense of himself becomes a bit vague in the present day setting. Fighting conflicting identities, he is unable to comprehensively condense his present without utilizing the context of his past. These past experiences, however, in the vein of logical positivism, provide him with a methodology of interpreting the present. What is left for him to become, but a reminder of the past to the next generation? Daniel Fuchs writes that Sammler's sense of "otherness" results in a deep objectivity he has toward himself, to the point where he must occasionally note "that he still existed." This sense of anonymity has a dual interpretation. Firstly, by Fuch's argument, it allows Sammler "an almost anthropological detachment well suited to the exotic tribalisms of New York life." Secondly, that anonymity is both a symptom of the urban environment as well as a strategy for coping with the chaos and relentlessness of that environment. An element of the relentlessness is the sensation, in varying degrees, of impending doom.

The word sammlen in Yiddish, Irving Howe has discovered, means "to collect." Sammler then, represents a collection of experiences "beyond absorption," both his own and those of relatives. The product of these experiences, or endurances - both past and present - is the conclusions at which he arrives. Armed with these conclusions and only partial and cloudy vision, he encounters Broadway, Second Avenue, Riverside Drive, Columbus Circle, Stuyvesent Park, the pickpocket on the bus, the "winos, junkies, pushers, whores, grifters... stately refugees, stuffy reformers, literary intellectuals, eager Puerto Ricans," and "...all human types reproduced, the barbarian, redskin, or Fiji, the dandy, the buffalo hunter, the desperado, the queer, the sexual fantasies, the squaw; bluestocking, princess, poet, painter, prospector, troubadour, guerilla, Che Guevera, the new Thomas à Becket" (147). These are the people and places in Sammler's Upper West Side, and the significance of their
presence in his life is informed by his reflections of his past. Rarely does Sammler encounter in the city, other older Jews, like himself, with memories of sweatshops, camps and death. They, like him, keep low profiles and do their best to mind their own business. Left in the wake of fleeing suburbanites is, for Sammler, an almost surreal collection of misfits, depressingly indicative of the direction in which American "culture" was evolving, or devolving. Left, too, is Sammler: "Mr. Artur Sammler, confidant of New York eccentrics; curate of wild men and progenitor of a wild woman; registrar of madness" (118).

His views, often contradicting expectation of the New Age city, recognize both the European New York City of brownstones, wrought iron and bourgeois solidity, as well as the rubbish-filled streets, the redundant massing of oppressive yellow brick apartment buildings, and the everpresent threat of crime and disintegration of moral values: "The middle class, having failed to create a spiritual life of its own, investing everything in material expansion, faced disaster" (145). The denigration of the city and its inhabitants is noted by Sammler from his perch on a bench in Stuyvesant Park:

Sammler had learned to be careful on public paths in New York, invariably dog-fouled... the green lights of the grass were all but put out, burned by animal excrements...Watching his steps (the dogs), looking for a bench for ten minutes, to think or avoid thinking...He noted a female bum drunkenly sleeping like a dugong, a sea cow's belly rising, legs swollen purple; a short dress, a mini-rag. At a corner of the fence, a wino was sullenly pissing on newspapers and old leaves. Cops seldom bothered about these old-fashioned derelicts (106).

Sammler observes the residual elements of society, the pickpockets, the winos, the bums, all with whom the police and institutional society are little concerned. His "short views" of the urban environment are made with a detachment he has gained from his suffering and supposed acceptance of death. These disconnected observations
range from the banal mention of animal excrements to more abstract notions of bourgeois solidity. Walking in the gloomy West End, Sammler faced the phenomenon. No use being the sensitive observer, the tourist (was there any land stable enough to tour?), the philosophical rambler out on Broadway, inspecting the phenomenon. The phenomenon had in some way achieved a sense of its own interest and observability. It was aware of being a scene of perversity, it knew its own despair. And fear. The terror of it. Here you might see the soul of America at grips with historical problems, struggling with certain impossibilities, experiencing violently states inherently static (145,146).

In 1963, well before writing Mr. Sammler’s Planet, Bellow wrote that in American novels “the tone of complaint prevails” as the public realm, though steadily reducing the powers of the individual, cannot take away his power to despair. Inherent within Sammler’s commentary is Bellow’s despair. The surrounding urban environment is replete with indications of decline and our acceptance of it, or at least, our being conditioned to it. Sammler enters a phone booth on Riverside Drive, only to find that, “of course the phone was smashed. Most outdoor telephones were smashed, crippled. They were urinals, also. New York was getting worse than Naples or Salonika. It was like an Asian, an African town, from this standpoint. The opulent sections of the city were not immune” (7).

The cultured and experienced Sammler brings a heightened perspective to the baseness of New York City: “Through Fifteenth Street ran a warm spring current. Lilacs and sewage. There were as yet no lilacs, but an element of the savage gas was velvety and sweet, reminiscent of blooming lilac. All about was a softness of perhaps dissolved soot, or of air passed through many human breasts, or metabolized in multitudinous brains, or released from as many intestines” (117). With this horrific passage Bellow says that nothing in the city is as it seems, but is only as fair or foul as one chooses to make it. And in another area of the city, “Broadway... always
challenged [him]. He was never up to it...For something was stated here. By a convergence of all minds and all movements the conviction transmitted by this crowd seemed to be that reality was a terrible thing, and that the final truth about mankind was overwhelming and crushing... This poverty of the soul, its abstract state, you could see in faces on the street” (280). It is the poverty of the soul, moreso than the economic disparities of the city which trouble Sammler most: the "subculture of the underprivileged," and the discrepancy between all that America should be and what it is.

Writer and professor Richard Wolin attributes the understanding of cultural phenomena relative to their origins of determinate material conditions as the Marxist principle to which Benjamin adhered. In keeping with this, Wolin writes, with regard to Benjamin, that the "multifarious and sudden transformations in the traditional structure of experience around the time of World War I, transformations so swift and extensive that it would seem almost humanly impossible for one to adapt to them.”

Correspondingly, Bellow writes:

And the charm, the ebullient glamour, the almost unbearable agitation that came from being able to describe oneself as a twentieth-century American was available to all. To everyone who had eyes to read the papers or watch the television, to everyone who shared the collective ecstasies of news, crisis, power... Humankind watched and described itself in the very turns of its own destiny. Itself the subject, living or drowning in night, itself the object, seen surviving or succumbing, and feeling in itself the fits of strength and lapses of paralysis ---mankind's own passion simultaneously being mankind's great spectacle, a thing of deep and strange participation... This sort of experience, in Mr. Sammler’s judgment, might bring to some people fascinating opportunities for the mind and the soul, but a man would have to be unusually intelligent to begin with, and in addition unusually nimble and discerning... Because of the high rate of speed, decades, centuries, epochs condensing into months, weeks, days even sentences. So that to keep up, you had to run, sprint, waft, fly over shimmering waters, you had to be able to see what was dropping out of human life and what was staying in... You had to be strong not to be terrified by local effects of metamorphosis, to live with disintegration, with crazy streets, filthy nightmares, monstrosities come to life, addicts, drunkards, and perverts celebrating their
despair openly in midtown. You had to be able to bear the tangles of the soul, the sight of cruel dissolution. You had to be patient with the stupidities of power, with the fraudulence of business. Daily at five or six a.m. Mr. Sammler woke up in Manhattan and tried to get a handle on the situation. He didn't think he could (73-74).

Daily, he faces the metamorphosis of society, the "crazy streets" and "disintegration" and tries to come to terms with the "monstrosities come to life" and the "tangles of the soul." Bellow, most likely quoting Walter Benjamin, referred to this as "the fallen world of appearances." Benjamin, in 1969, wrote, "experience has fallen in value...Every glance at a newspaper demonstrates that it has reached a new low, that our picture, not only of the external world but of the moral world as well, overnight has undergone changes which were never thought possible." Yet, it is apparent to Mr. Sammler that he can not keep up, that his emotional and cultural distance is not enough to protect him from the city, the setting of America's downwardly spiralling culture. He is distressed, however, when he finds himself losing his carefully honed detachment:

Bliss from his surroundings! For a certain period Mr. Sammler had resisted such physical impressions--being wooed almost comically by momentary and fortuitous sweetness. For quite a long time he had felt that he was not necessarily human. Had no great use, during that time, for most creatures. Very little interest in himself. Cold even to the thought of recovery. What was there to recover? Little regard for earlier forms of himself. Disaffected. His judgment almost blank. But then, ten or twelve years after the war, he became aware that this too was changing. In the human setting, along with everyone else, among particulars of ordinary life he was human--and, in short, creatureliness crept in again...mysteriously enough, it happened, as Sammler observed, that one was always, and so powerfully, so persuasively, drawn back to human conditions (117).

The tone invoked in this passage is rare for its hopefulness. Sammler, though discouraged and disgusted by much of what he sees around him has not lost the sense of hope intrinsic to human nature, even if it serves to spawn greater disappointment.
The dilemma facing the twentieth century writer, according to Malcolm Bradbury, revolves around the attempt to understand or explain, "What kind of society [would] permit its cities to rot while it built new ones on the perimeter?" Bellow, through Sammler, is questioning fundamental aspects of just such a society, and "was aware that he had antagonized his friendliest well-wishers when he created Artur Sammler observing the decadence and violence and weakness and hypocrisy of America." This question is again asked, though more comically, in Humboldt's Gift, and is adapted to current societal crises in The Dean's December. If the city is indeed, according to Robert Park, a state of mind, then what has become of the mind? "Great cities are whores," thinks Sammler, "Doesn't everyone know? Babylon was a whore...Penicillin keeps New York looking cleaner. No faces gnawed by syphilis, with gaping noseholes as in ancient times" (163). Accompanying rampant physical dilapidation of the city is an increase in citizen apathy. Having reported the pickpocket to the New York Police, who are resolutely not interested in the call, Sammler smiles, "America! (he was speaking to himself). Advertised throughout the universe as the most desirable, most exemplary of all nations" (14).

Citizen apathy is very much a recurring theme with Bellow. In both Humboldt's Gift and The Dean's December, passages describe crowds witnessing crimes and doing nothing to protest or intercede. "Last time I took a ride on the Jackson Park El, two cats were slicing off a guys's pants pocket with razor blades while he pretended to be asleep. I was one of twenty people watching. Couldn't do a thing" (Humboldt's Gift, 447). Mr. Sammler, interceding in a fight asks the crowd imploringly. "Can't somebody do something?" No one does, as the eager bystanders prefer to do just that: stand by. A mode of consciousness emerging in 1968 by those in the 'Yippie' movement generated an expression of "fundamental social rupture...the ever-recurring self-aware
revolutionary moment of rejection of straight society as a whole." This bitter social commentary, found in varying degrees throughout *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, was highly criticized for its extreme negativity. Bellow, the critics complained, was "overreacting to the times." Perhaps this is true. Bellow writes,

The dreams of the nineteenth-century poets polluted the psychic atmospheres of the great boroughs and suburbs of New York. Add to this the dangerous lunging staggering crazy violence of fanatics, and the trouble was very deep. Like many people who had seen the world collapse once, Mr. Sammler entertained the possibility it might collapse twice. ...you could smell the decay. You could see the suicidal impulses of civilization pushing strongly (33).

Sammler and his niece discuss Hannah Arendt's theory of the banality of evil. The young woman, a German herself, agrees with Arendt that "there is no great spirit of evil..." in reference to the role of Germany in the Holocaust, "A mass society does not produce great criminals...Piecework did it...Modern civilization doesn't create great individual phenomena anymore" (16). This explanation doesn't satisfy Sammler, however, as it didn't Bellow. "Politically, philosophically, the Germans had an idea of genius," counters Sammler, "the banality was only camouflage... Banality is the adopted disguise of a very powerful will to abolish conscience... [Arendt's] enemy is modern civilization itself. She is only using the Germans to attack the twentieth century..." (18-19)

Bellow, through Sammler, has other means of attacking the twentieth century, or at least how it has manifested itself in New York City by the late sixties: "that twentieth century America, once a model, has become a mockery of Western culture, lapsed in romanticism, the higher standards and the great ideals abandoned." His bone of contention is with the "cult of infantile gratification" characteristic of the "Now Scene," of which, Alison Lurie writes, "this book and all his characters and events were perfect dramatic renderings." Their "flip rejection of any established values," flies in the face of the time-honored and tested sense of protocol to which Sammler valiantly
clings. "Enlightenment? Marvelous! But out of hand, wasn't it?" Sammler asks sardonically (34).

Unable to come to terms with the metamorphosizing present, Mr. Sammler's past and his memories of more civilized times in London are his chosen place of escape or mental refuge, as he awaits the second collapse of civilization within that "quivering, riotous, lurid New York" (143). Less and less able to come to terms with the world around him, Sammler "felt that the way he saw things could not be right. His experiences had been too peculiar, and he feared that he projected peculiarities onto life. Life was probably not blameless, but he often thought that life was not and could not be what he was seeing" (110). "Perhaps," Bellow writes, "it was the madness of things that affected Sammler most deeply. The persistence, the maniacal push of certain ideas, themselves originally stupid...This was the meaning of historical stupidity...[and] what drew the most curious reactions from him." The madness of society actually leads him to ruminate on the possibility of colonizing the moon, "a glorious planet" as earth becomes increasingly unfit for habitation (135). In response to the query of how long this earth will remain the only home of Man, the world-weary Mr. Sammler responds, "How long? Oh, Lord, you bet! Wasn't it time - the very hour to go?...Considering this earth...something to cast oneself from - to be divested of" (51).

What the novel has documented is a few days in the life of Artur Sammler as he copes with the impending death of his nephew, Elya Gruner. It was Elya who rescued Sammler and his daughter from a camp after the war and has provided for them over the last twenty years. Sammler has a deep sense of gratitude and obligation to Elya for this, and out of these emotions fashions a human contract, binding him to his nephew and, by association, to the rest of humanity. Only Elya seems to share
Sammler/Bellow's consternation with the younger generation which has so completely manifested societal decline. Referring to his own children, Angela and Wallace, as well as Sammler's daughter, Shula, Elya remarks, "It's a pity about Shula, poor woman. But she is only wacky. My daughter is a dirty cunt... [with] fucked-out eyes." To this Sammler replies, "A different generation, a different generation... I'm sorry." Elya continues:

And my son, a high-IQ moron.  
He may come around, Elya.  
You don't believe it for a minute, Uncle...I ask myself what I spent so many years of my life on. I must have believed what America was telling me. I paid for the best. I never suspected that I wasn't getting the best (177).

As the novel ends, Sammler stands over Elya's body who, in death, has been divested of this earth and all its disappointments. Devastated that he was unable to provide his nephew with some parting message, Sammler himself feels one step closer to death: half in life and half in death, half in the present and half in the past. He must overcome the despair of the present that he sees with his good eye: the world fallen in the hands of oversexed and undirected youth; a malevolent minority underclass; and political unconcern. With his inutile eye he ponders over his past, hoping to "discover some pattern, some design, some meaning that may enliven the spirit with energy to cope again..."21 Sammler believes he has been given a second chance in life, by not being killed in the war, yet to what end? In his present world of light and dark, sacred and profane, and with death more surely approaching, he has come no closer to understanding the human condition.
Humboldt’s Gift - "looking for salvation in female form..." or, "The atrophy of individual culture through the hypertrophy of objective culture."

The 1975 Bellow novel, Humboldt’s Gift, is described by Frank D. McConnell as "not only confession and elegy, but anecdote." In the words of protagonist Charlie Citrine, "I wasn’t doing so well myself recently when Humboldt acted from the grave, so to speak, and made a basic change in my life. In spite of our big fight and fifteen years of estrangement he left me something in his will. I came into a legacy" (56). Citrine, now a middle-aged Chicago playwright and narrator of Humboldt’s Gift, thus sets the stage for the novel. Citrine, "like the dead poet [Von Humboldt Fleisher] is a visionary, a man caught between the realities of the imagination and the more inescapable realities of the physical, urban world and trying to work out a modus vivendi between them." Long has written, "The inner voyage that heroes of bestsellers take to reevaluate their past experiences, their goals, or their relationships can be decried as a retreat into the self... to reconstitute a more meaningful life." Like Artur Sammler, Charles Citrine is a city figure living the present very much through the experiences of his past. Yet unlike Mr. Sammler’s Planet, Bellow’s use of irony within Humboldt’s Gift is cleansing, comedic; humorously humbling. The novel consists of Citrine’s trip down memory lane, or rather, a retrospective of his life since his college days in the thirties. As Charlie navigates the city, the urban figures and physicalities serve as reminders of past experiences. By reliving these adventures within the context of the present, Charlie gains a perspective on his own self-identity.

Citrine considers the urban Chicago environment, in which he was born and raised, as the framework around which he constructs his own sense of self. More than Mr. Sammler, Charlie internalizes the city in which he lives, taking each everyday
occurrence and situation to heart. Seeing himself as an extension of Chicago, "the city of my dead," much of his sense of identity is gleaned from the city itself. As an element of the protagonists' identity, the city is no longer simply a location or setting but has become internalized, inhabiting the character and exerting its influence upon his psyche. Charlie makes his way through Chicago, conjuring once again Robert Park's philosophy of the city as an expression of human nature and, in a sense, "a state of mind:"26

...on the Outer Drive...my mind was in one of its Chicago states. How should I describe this phenomenon? In a Chicago state I infinitely lack something, my heart swells, I feel a tearing eagerness. The sentient part of the soul wants to express itself. There are some of the symptoms of an overdose of caffeine, at the same time I have a sense of being the instrument of external powers...I drove. The huge pale lake washed forward (66).

Citrine's view of the city reflects increasing feelings of loss of individual control within that environment, his emotional state likened to the sensation of chemical excess; the overdose of stimulant. Powerlessness results from the sensation of being a small part of a much larger entity.

In The Metropolis and Modern Life, Simmel has written of the barrage of stimuli to which the urban dweller is subject, the "psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individuality consists in the intensification of nervous stimulation which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of inner and outer stimuli."27 The individual has a number of ways in which to protect himself against such an onslaught. Sammler uses the horror of his past to lessen the impact of the present, though he still experiences intensifying sensations of "nerve spaghetti," a symptom he attributes to his wartime head injury, made worse by societal pressures. While referring to himself as an "intense physical culturist," Citrine employs a comedic approach in order to lessen the blows of urban life (8). This incongruous approach enables him to avoid addressing salient aspects of his own life, such as his stagnant career and personal relationships.
He finds, however, one bright morning, like Mr. Sammler, that sooner or later, one's vulnerability is exposed, and the disaffection vanishes.

It was in Chicago...I found that my Mercedes-Benz had been attacked in the night...The attack on this car was hard on me also in a sociological sense, for I always said that I knew my Chicago and I was convinced that hoodlums, too, respected lovely automobiles....So on this morning I was wiped out as an urban psychologist...I realized that what you needed in a big American city was a deep no-affect belt, a critical mass of indifference (35).

Having existed for years indifferent to much of what went on around him, Citrine seems aware of this only as he is about to lose the shelter of his ignorance. The personal relationship of man and city, and the despair at finding the city in any way false or changed, is fundamentally related to man's continual assessment of his own identity, a concept established within Simmel's *The Metropolis and Mental Life.*

Bellow's construction of this relationship serves to orient many other aspects of the evolving urban condition as it relates to the individual. Mr. Sammler, as the conditions around him seem to deteriorate into urban malaise, attributes the decline to an overall decline in cultural life. The urban demise, then, serves as affirmation of Sammler's fatalist view of the demise of the human condition itself. In *Humboldt's Gift,* Bellow charts Citrine's path, relative to the city, from a weak personality with very little sense of self to a much stronger and more self-reliant man. This personal evolution is due in large part to a psychological break resulting from his profound disillusionment with institutions and individuals and the urban society they represent.

Citrine's proprietary relationship not only with his city, Chicago, but with his sociological theories regarding it, is shattered by the vandalization of his car, his experience with divorce court, and the many day to day events he endures. Charlie's response is to fashion his own no-affect belt by altering his sociological profile of the city to include his new and unpleasant metropolitan experiences. What results is a loss
of innocence, as it were, in the emergence of a cynicism that had been absent from the earlier Citrine, but that becomes necessary in order for him to keep from being "wiped out" by daily urban occurrences.

Despite Charlie's unfltering optimism and good intentions that border on the naive, he invariably and repeatedly finds himself taken advantage of and exploited by so-called "well-meaning" friends and associates. Aware of this but reticent to change, he tells himself, "You refuse to be alert about your interests. You let people dump on you" (169). As a result, he is continually reacting and responding to what happens around him, from the allure of sexy women to the threats of two-bit mobsters and the bad advice of business partners, and is therefore seldom in charge of his own life. Wrought with internal conflict and a fundamental absence of SELF, Citrine finds himself mentally debilitated, uninspired, and unable to write. Adding to his internal creative dormancy are the ongoing external conditions that continue to absorb his attention and energy. In order to alleviate this condition Charlie must hit bottom, sever ties with contemporary society, and embark on a journey of soul-searching in the hopes of retrieving both his desire and ability to write. The outside world, the city itself, serves as a shock to the system to awaken Citrine from this spiritual sleep and also instigates his search for higher purpose. The city, then, is both the cause of despair as well as the means by which to absolve it. He leaves Chicago and spends several months meditating in Madrid. A cathartic mending process ensues, during which he recreates a meaningful personal identity and sense of self independent of his past associations with society.

The reader finds Charlie in a state of literary inactivity and travels with him back over the events that led to this condition. The novel, set in the 1970's, refers back across the years of Citrine's rise, Humboldt's fall, and the cloudy years, devoid of
literary creation that followed. Decades earlier, in the thirties, the young Citrine, fresh out of college, had gone to New York to meet and get close to a poet whose work was “just what everyone had been waiting for” (1). Becoming Humboldt’s “ingenu,” (18) Citrine goes on to experience his own Broadway success, which drives a wedge into his friendship with the then suspicious and resentful Humboldt, himself on the verge of insanity. The subsequent series of events includes cliche personalities such as the vengeful and eternally bitchy ex-wife, the bloodthirsty and tacky divorce lawyer, the large-breasted money-hungry younger girlfriend in go-go boots, and strong-arm hoodlum desperately seeking legitimacy and respect. Blissfully content in his relationship with Renata, the beautiful bimbo he has no intention of marrying, Charlie views such a union as his preservation against the aging process. A vain man, he measures his self-esteem not only by his own sexual prowess but inversely by the age and IQ of the woman on his arm. When she leaves him to marry a wealthier man, Charlie, despondent with no blonde bombshell to distract him from himself is finally alone to face himself and his lack of recent accomplishments.

Despite the brow beatings and public dismissal of his success that Charlie experiences at the hands and mouth of Humboldt, he nevertheless feels a responsibility to this man, his former mentor and “blood brother.” Years later, on Forty-Sixth Street, Charlie sees the dirty heavy withering and dying Humboldt eating a pretzel stick and avoids him, unable to face the personification of the failure of creative genius. Having “sinned against Humboldt” by fleeing his “old pal,” Charlie’s sense of duty, of duty neglected, weighs heavily upon him (112). Not long after the chance sighting, Humboldt dies in a New York flophouse. “Estranged from everybody, he was living in a place called the Ilscombe...Welfare lodged old people there. He died on a rotten hot night...Carbon monoxide was thick. Throbbing air conditioners dripped on
you in the street. A bad night..." (7). The condition of the urban night has made the death of this unfortunate, "gray stout sick dusty"(7) formerly nutty, charming, (11) fantastic, (19) slovenly, grand, the "Mozart of conversation" (13) even more tragic.

The memories of Humboldt come flooding back, some fifteen years after his death, after a bequest made to Citrine in his will comes to light. With these memories come Charlie's recollections of their early friendship, dual professorships at Princeton in the forties, bohemian New York in the late forties and fifties, the political climate in the sixties and seventies, the parties, the marriages, and the culture of the times themselves. As in the case of Mr. Sammler, the past puts the present in perspective and brings about a reevaluation of the present situation, which is for Charlie, a far cry from his Pulitzer prize-winning "old days." Despite the fact that he clings desperately to the identity of writer and literary intellectual, the only evidence of this aspect of Charlie's character lies in his past. The present is devoid of any mental activity more strenuous than a poker game. When called for jury duty, he looks forward to having a reason to leave the house in the morning "like everyone else." An eager juror, "a citizen among citizens," Charlie scans the county building for young ladies... and finds a big beautiful blonde one.

Citrine is filled with a sense of higher purpose that instills in him both a frustration at his current mental inactivity and a sense of inflated self-importance at the thought of all his latent creative potential. "I tell myself that when I achieve mental and spiritual clarity... nobody will be able to touch me"(68) and, "I had a funny feeling sometimes, as if I had been stamped and posted and they were waiting for me to be delivered at an important address. I may contain unusual information" (19). Yet he concedes, "I knew everything I was supposed to know and nothing I really needed to know (50). This polemic is the lynch-pin around which the novel evolves. Associating
himself with spiritual greatness, he, nevertheless, continues on the path of spiritual baseness. What Charlie lacks in autonomy and ambition he makes up for in conviction, and strives to create his own credo for legitimacy and survival in the rapidly changing American cultural scene. However, Citrine's commitment to "loftier aims" constrasts sharply with, and is hampered by, the banalities which constantly confront him, such as alimony suits and IRS audits.

Citrine considers himself, if not caught between the Chicago of the past and the present, then at least a casualty of contemporary society, in much the same way as Humboldt. "The noble idea of being an American poet certainly made Humboldt at times feel like a card, a boy, a comic, a fool. We lived like bohemians and graduate students in a mood of fun and games...The USA was a big operation, very big. The more it, the less we" (6). The memory of Humboldt, driven mad by his inability to cope with the pressure to succeed by society's banal standards, haunts Charlie and is his insurance that the same fate will not befall him. At the same time, however, he is aware of a feeling of disappointment in America and all the empty promises it had held for its wide-eyed young poets, and their unmet expectations. "Ah! This society has a lot to answer for" (324). A tormented soul, the pill-popping Humboldt had long been plagued with "periods of mania and poetry," the two imposing a vicious cycle of genius and manic depression upon him (7). Shock treatment and a trip to Bellevue failed to assuage his mental anguish and madness.

By many accounts, Bellow's depiction of Humboldt is a portrait of his own friend and poet, Delmore Schwartz, whose own brief career, manic depression, alcohol and pill-addiction and early death are embodied in Humboldt. Serving as a reminder to Citrine/Bellow of the all too familiar downside of creativity, Humboldt exists to ensure that Bellow acknowledges this dark side and will himself not fall victim
to it as several of his contemporaries had. This parallelism is used by Bellow to
dramatize the fate of the imagination in America and the risk of suicide that "being a
poet in a technologized, antipoetic society" entails.\textsuperscript{29} He also associates success and
failure with actual urban locations.

Was this art versus America? To me Bellevue was like the Bowery:
it gave negative testimony. Brutal Wall Street stood for power, and
the Bowery, so near it, was the accusing symbol of weakness. And so
with Bellevue, where the poor and busted went. And so even with
Payne Whitney where the monied derelicts lay. And the poets like
drunkards and misfits or psychopaths, like the wretched, poor or
rich, sank into weakness... (155)

The environment personifies the element of society it attracts.

Coping rather well with his own profound disappointment, Charlie has a
cheerily fatalistic view of life; a happy-go-lucky everpresent anticipation of doom. His
lack of productivity has not gone unnoticed by those around him, especially the
women, cast by Bellow in an unflattering, bitchy light, and concerned with Citrine's
literary career only for the economic gain or public attention they stand to gain from it.
Denise, his ex-wife and the mother of his two children tries continually to rouse him
from his inactivity:

I just can't believe the way you are. The man who's had all those
wonderful insights, the author of all these books, respected by
scholars and intellectuals all over the world....You've lectured at the
great Eastern universities and had grants and fellowships and honors.
De Gaulle made you a knight of the legion of Honor and Kennedy
invited us to the White House. You had a successful play on
Broadway. Now what the hell do you think you're doing? Chicago!..
You wouldn't have London or Paris or New York, you had to come
back to this -- this deadly, ugly, vulgar, dangerous place. Because at
your heart you're a kid from the slums (40-41).

Not quite understanding his own desire to return to Chicago after years in New York,
this accusation by his wife serves only to further enamor Citrine of Chicago, a fellow
mongrel of sorts, fitting neither one category nor another, "a cultureless city pervaded
nevertheless by the Mind," and indicate the highly personal and referential relationship existing between him and this city (69).

In Mr. Sammler's Planet, Bellow's literary treatment of New York is often negative and uninspiring, and though he speaks unflatteringly at times of Chicago, he does so with a certain camaraderie, and it is the city he uses to illustrate the potential for redemption and salvation.\textsuperscript{9} Humboldt's Gift contains vivid descriptions and elaborate ethnic histories of the neighborhoods and districts in both New York and Chicago, that Charlie recalls with nostalgia, and which provide accounts of vibrant people and of even more vibrant urban activity.

I knew it all by heart. Large parts of Chicago decay and fall down. Some are rebuilt, others just lie there. It's like a film montage of rise fall and rise. Division Street where the old Bath stands used to be Polish and is now almost entirely Puerto Rican... Polish kielbasa no longer hung in butchers' windows... The old shop signs were gone... So we drove again through what had become a tropical West Indies slum, resembling the parts of San Juan that stand beside lagoons which bubble and smell like stewing tripe. There was the same crushed plaster, smashed glass, garbage in the streets, the same rude amateur blue chalk lettering on the shops. But the Russian Bath... stood more or less unchanged. It was also a proletarian hotel or lodging house. On the second floor there had always lived aged working stiffs, lone Ukrainian grandfathers, retired car-line employees, a pastry cook famous for his icings who had to quit because his hands became arthritic. I knew the place from boyhood (71,76,77).

Citrine is often found romanticizing the Chicago of his childhood, reliving memories and reflecting the passing of time. Passionate descriptions of areas of Chicago betray Bellow's obsession and familiarity with the city and with his determination to depict it and it's power to affect us, in a dynamic and compelling manner.

In the last six months more old neighborhood landmarks had been torn down. This shouldn't have mattered much. I can't say why it made such a difference. But I was in a state. It almost seemed to me that I could hear myself rustling and fluttering in the back seat like a bird touring the mangroves of its youth, now car dumps... A whole block had gone down. Lovi's Hungarian Restaurant had been swept
away, plus Ben’s Pool Hall and the old Brick car barn and Gratch’s Funeral Parlor, out of which both my parents had been buried. Eternity got no picturesque interval here. The ruins of time had been bulldozed, scraped, loaded in trucks, and dumped as fill. New steel beams were going up...The old boulevard [Kedzie] now was a sagging ruin, waiting for the wreckers. Through great holes I could look into apartments where I had slept, eaten, done my lessons, kissed girls. You’d have to loathe yourself vividly to be indifferent to such destruction or, worse, rejoice at the crushing of the locus of these middle class sentiments, glad that history had made rubble of them...But I had come here to be melancholy, to be sad about the wrecked walls and windows, the missing doors, the fixtures torn out, and the telephone cables ripped away and sold as junk (75-76).

Through this self-referential view of the city, or parts thereof, Citrine regains both an aspect of self as well as a view of the city oriented to his own expanded (or diminished?) frame of reference. Citrine’s nostalgia for simpler time of his childhood, is expressed through accounts of past personal interaction with the urban areas and neighborhoods themselves, with which he associates these memories. Citrine’s identification with elements of the neighborhood over time help him to reconstruct a legitimacy and self-identity, a sense of himself he had lost along the way. He as well develops for the city a character, due to the unique way in which he describes the city as only a Chicago dweller would be able.

The temperature was in the nineties, and on hot nights Chicagoans feel the city body and soul. The stockyards are gone, Chicago is no longer slaughter-city, but the old smells revive in the night heat. Miles of railroad siding along the streets once were filled with red cattle cars, the animals waiting to enter the yards lowing and reeking. The old stink still haunts the place. It returns at times, suspiring from the vacated soil, to remind us all that Chicago had once led the world in butcher-technology and that billions of animals had died here. And at night the windows were open wide and the familiar depressing multilayered stink of meat, tallow, blood-meal, pulverized bones, hides, soap, smoked slabs, and burnt hair came back. Old Chicago breathed again through the leaves and screens (114).

It is Charlie’s current state of discontentedness that brings about his romanticization of the past. By association with/to this tangible thick historically relevant and palpable
atmosphere he seeks his own sense of legitimacy and authenticity. The element of change within that environment, such as over time, then, often results in Citrine's feelings of disorientation and loss. Such personal identification with his urban surroundings and their events and conditions both exuberates as well as exhausts the protagonist. "As I ran into the Chicago crowd I felt my legs slipping, the strings slacken, my tone going lower. But what was I to do single-handed about a force that had seized the whole world?" (206) There is a sense of society's immensity and the individual's decreasing sense of influence in the face of this immensity. Bellow had previously written, "Public life, vivid and formless turbulence, news, slogans, mysterious crises, and unreal configurations dissolve coherence in all but the most resistant minds, and even to such minds it is not always a confident certainty that resistance can ever have a positive outcome...The fixed points seem to be disappearing. Even the Self is losing its firm outline."31

In Citrine's quest for transcendence over society, he ultimately anchors himself ever more firmly in the criminal and banal. Interactions both with the city and with those within it serve as a backdrop for Citrine's mental gymnastics and rationalizations. In the course of things Charlie has inadvertently become entangled with a small-time mobster, Rinaldo Cantabile. That which Charlie seeks in his relationship with the city, Rinaldo seeks from Charlie. Similar to many characters in Mr. Sammler's Planet, the unrefined Cantabile seeks some element of legitimacy, authenticity and class through association with the literary Citrine. "He wanted me to draw him upward, to lead him to higher things" (174). Citrine's assessment of the situation, however, fluctuates from fear to amusement, but not serious consideration, simply a distraction:

A man who had been for years closely shut up and sifting his inmost self with painful iteration, deciding that the human future depended on his spiritual explorations, frustrated utterly in all his efforts to reach
an understanding with those representatives of modern intellect whom he had tried to reach, deciding instead to follow the threads of spirit he had found within himself to see where they might lead, found a peculiar stimulus in a fellow like this Cantabile...I had a weakness for characters like Cantabile...Cantabile was manifesting these tendencies in Chicago, wildly exalting some human principle--he knew not what (254,173).

Citrine reflects -- "Why was it that I enjoyed no relations with anyone of my own mental level?" (173) and discovers that he, too, finds a purpose in his association with Cantabile. The association with Cantabile affords Charlie the opportunity to observe Chicago personified: brutal yet gracious; cultureless yet cunning; reprehensible yet romantic, Cantabile embodies Chicago and, like the city, simultaneously Horrifies and enthralls Citrine. Charlie has earnestly desired to save the world through his literary genius, but this has been unsuccessful both on account of his audience as well as his methods. His only current employment endeavor is a journal fittingly entitled The Ark which he is trying to produce with Thaxter, a business partner of questionable repute. Citrine's lofty aims for The Ark, for which he is a sort of cultural statesman, are to wake people up to the intrinsic values there are in being American, and the good we should be making of it. In a typical conflict between his intentions and reality he explains, "We were all ready. Wonderful things were to be printed in it--pages from my imaginative reflections on a world transformed by the Mind, for example. But meantime Thaxter had defaulted on a certain loan" (74). Citrine's saving the world will just have to wait, again.

Cantabile proves to be one of the last Charlie's last endurance, as his patience with society wears ever thinner. The last straw is a nasty exchange with the judge residing over the alimony suit his ex-wife has brought against him. Bellow, too, endured lengthy legal battles with at least one ex-wife, one of which reopened her case after Bellow was awarded the Nobel Prize. The judge, informs him that as an artist
generally outside the conventions of society, he can't be allowed to "dabble" in marriage and fatherhood, and other sacred "middle-class institutions" and then "drop out" (230). In essence, he is being punished for his rather "bohemian" lifestyle and forced to make (monetary) amends to society as a whole through the commodification of his talent: "Your problem, Mr. Citrine, is your proven ability to earn big sums...As for [your] lowered productivity of recent years, it could have been a ploy to throw off the defendant" (231). Citrine summarizes the exchange, "I was to quit being an old-time artisan and adopt the methods of soulless manufacture (Ruskin)" (231, 232). The misunderstanding on the part of these bottom-feeding lawyers of the "art," for which he exists leaves him incredulous and wounds him deeply and personally.

Suddenly my detachment ended and I found myself in a state... I understood what emotions had torn at Humboldt's heart when they grabbed him and tied him up and raced him to Bellevue. The man of talent struggled with cops and orderlies. And, up against the social order...I could have cried aloud now. I could have been eloquent and moving...Suppose I were to exclaim about morality, about flesh and blood and justice and evil and what it felt like to be me, Charlie Citrine? Wasn't this a court of equity, a forum of conscience?...having pursued a higher purpose although without even getting close, now that I was aging, weakening, disheartened, doubting my endurance and even my sanity, they wanted to harness me to an even heavier load... (232).

Citrine believes himself to be such an "artisan," put on earth for a "higher purpose," and now struggling against the social order. As an artist disheartened and filled with self-doubt Citrine's state reflects the observation of Norman Mailer years before: 'I would suppose that the artist feels more alienated when he loses the sharp sense of what he is alienated from. In this context, I wonder if there has been a time in the last fifty years when the American artist has felt more alienated.'

If his own lacking sense of self isn't bad enough, Charlie is continually snubbed by those around him as they simultaneously make demands of him. This list includes
his ex-wife, his girlfriend, the judge, and his girlfriend's mother, the Senora, who says, "Writing books is no proof that you're smart," with whom Charlie, ever acquiescent, agrees. Cantabile, also, who is responsible for the damage to his Mercedes tells him, "You've written all that stuff. You're in Who's Who. But you dumb asshole you don't understand anything... Any little Polish girl on confirmation day knows more than you, with all your books and prizes" (473,38). The palooka girlfriend who leaves him when his money runs out tells him, "If you think you're on earth for such a special purpose I don't know why you cling to the idea of happiness with a woman or a happy family life. This is either dumb innocence or else the last word in kinkiness" (432). And more directly, from Cantabile, "When are you going to do something and know what you're doing?" This lack of personal awareness that leads to his saying one thing and being another seems to bother everyone except the docile Citrine, until the Philistine legal circus attempts to assign a dollar value to his creativity; adding insult to injury given the fact that his well of creativity has, seemingly, run dry.

It is this treatment at the hands of the judge and lawyers; men of civic office, that leaves him feeling most alienated and persecuted, and serves as the catalyst for the lengthy process of his deliverance from metropolitan association. "[S]uddenly Chicago was not my town at all. It was totally unrecognizable. I merely imagined that I had grown up here, that I knew the place, that I was known by it. In Chicago my personal aims were bunk, my outlook a foreign ideology..." (233). Profoundly disillusioned with the city and the society it represents, there is nothing left for Charlie in Chicago. Correspondingly, since there is nothing of Chicago left in Charlie, for the time being, there is very little left of Charlie:

And what was it that I was so aware of? I was aware that I used to think that I knew where I stood (taking the universe as a frame of reference). But I was mistaken. However, I could at least say that I
had been spiritually efficient enough not to be crushed by ignorance. However, it was now apparent to me that I was neither of Chicago nor sufficiently beyond it, and that Chicago's material and daily interests and phenomena were neither actual and vivid enough nor symbolically clear enough to me. So that I had neither vivid actuality nor symbolic clarity and for the time being I was utterly nowhere (260).

Joseph McConnell speaks to this when he writes, "the loss of the City is also the loss of "personality," for without the sense of identity within a culture, the individual's sense of his own identity is bound to grow increasingly uneasy, mendacious, and inauthentic." Having acknowledged the void that denouncing Chicago has left in him, Citrine plans his exodus abroad, to recover "an independent and individual connection with the creation, the whole hierarchy of being" (441). It is only physically removed from Chicago that his emotional detachment from the city can begin to play out; a necessary step in the recreation of his personal identity.
**The Dean's December**

"It was not so much the inner city slum that threatened us as the slum of innermost being, of which the inner city was perhaps a material representation."  -- Albert Corde

In 1980, Bellow gave the keynote address to the Conference on Creativity in the Library of Congress, four years after being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. In his talk he focused his attention on the current state of the environment, and blamed the negative and inconsequential criticism of intellectuals for undermining artistic creativity. The absence of this imagination, he contended, threatens our "courage to assert our right to live a life of the spirit in America." The *Dean's December* (1982) is the novel Bellow set out to write, originally in non-fiction form, in order to purge his discontent with the manifestations of this intellectualism in modern day Chicago. Bellow's is a personal bond with Chicago, the city of his formative years, which "was now the most segregated city in the United States, with the largest black ghetto in the nation, and the most corrupt police force in the nation, and the most debased judicial system in the nation...Mayor Daly was the Papa Doc of Chicago. This Chicago was a reality far worse than any he had surmised, a Chicago threatening, duplicitous, faithless, like America." 

Political hypocrisy, bureaucratic waste, economic disparity and an apathetic citizenry all contributed to the crisis Bellow saw before him on his old turf, and which he felt compelled to address with an "eyes-front, face-front, long hard look at his present day city, his Chicago against which no protection, no insulation, was possible."

Dean Albert Corde is the protagonist of the novel. Formerly a journalist, he is now a professor of journalism and Dean of students at the University of Chicago. Corde has just published two articles in *Harper's Magazine*, addressing the political, economic, social, and institutional causes of Chicago's mounting state of decay.
Understandably displeased with the facts he's uncovered and the blame he nondiscriminately places, nearly all of institutional Chicago has it out for him. His wife Minna, an astronomer of Rumanian descent, to whom the "the planet was a far better subject than slums, crimes and prisons," understands even less about her husband's true motives (25). Entire passages, of both Corde's articles and Bellow's novel, describe conditions within the Cook County Hospital, the County Jail, and the massive Robert Taylor Homes, three facilities whose clientele are predominantly poor urban blacks. Corde, not unlike Citrine, is naively surprised by the intense negative response his articles elicit; that those he addresses should find the "truth" so offensive.

Corde, as a professor, has been content to high-mindedly document this decline, but what has he himself done to stop the cessation of morals and values from the American public? Admittedly having been locked away in his high-rise apartment tower, he has emerged, not unlike Citrine from his cultural sleep, suddenly aware and indignant of the conditions he sees before him. Similarly, Bellow, as naive as Citrine or Corde as far as his awareness of his own actions is concerned, considers himself, in the face of criticism, just a story-writer. Biographer Ruth Miller, not fooled by such a statement, presses, "Do you honestly think you can say the whole world is obsessed with money, status, and power, and that we are all deluded, that we have all jeopardized our souls, without provoking hostility?" to which Bellow apparently responded that nobody had to read his writing if they didn't want to.37 Says Corde, however, "I realized...that it would rub everybody the wrong way. This kind of abnormal, professorial Plato-and-Aristotle stuff is the kiss of death...Definitely a mistake..." (102)

The narrative form of this "eyes-front, face-front" novel makes it difficult to differentiate between Corde and Bellow, as the lines have become blurred at this point
in Bellow's career. Previously he had gone to great lengths to imbed his references to reality in ornate creative wrappings, delivered with irony and double-entendre. By The Dean's December, it is as though Bellow has decided that the message has been overlooked in search of a plot. He has responded with a relatively plot-less, token attempt to mask his own diatribe. Do we, the public, no longer deserve the kid-glove treatment of earlier works and Bellow is just going to let us have the ugly truth of our existence?

By the 1980's Bellow had already established himself as a harsh social critic among his contemporaries. His critique was already apparent with the profound and reflective Mr. Sammler, continued with a clever and ironic Charlie Citrine and ends here with an embittered and angry Dean Corde. Writers have long used their texts to rally support for or criticize existing forms of government and political and social causes. Upton Sinclair and socialism; Jane Addams and social philanthropy; Richard Wright and communism, and later, anti-communism; Ayn Rand and capitalism, are a few such examples. But Bellow doesn't propose anything, he simply remonstrates and admonishes. His negative and alienating critique of societal violence, sexual promiscuity and hypocrisy through the eye of Mr. Sammler attracted much criticism from his contemporaries, and earned him the reputation of cranky, critical, elitist and alien to the very literary society from which he evolved. The Dean's December is one more and much stronger indication of this.

Corde's journalistic narrative is much less aesthetic than either Sammler's or Citrine's, though it contains many philosophical, literary and historical references; Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Tocqueville; King Lear; Zarathustra; "the thrills of Shakespeare and Plato; the recitations from "The Garden of Prosperine" and "Lapis Lazuli" and "The Waste Land"; Eros; Psyche; Haussmann; the Iron Curtain; and rococo. The city has
‘evolved’ from the physical application of art and intellectualism to the center of degradation and disparity. Decrying scandal, corruption, waste, inequality and hypocrisy, Corde deeply believes in the cause behind his writing -- maybe too much so. Unable to face or even understand the response to the articles, Corde leaves the country. Conveniently, Minna’s mother, Valeria, is dying in a Party hospital in Bucharest. Valeria, a doctor, had served as the Minister of Health in the government of Ana Pauker, and was cast out of the party after the war for her Marxist sympathies. She had sent Minna to be educated in the West. On her deathbed, Valeria has been allowed medical treatment and attention, but the returning daughter is tormented by the resentful government. Their flat is bugged, food, water and electricity are scarce throughout the country, and Minna is not allowed to see her comatose mother without the approval of the secret police. Valeria’s death, funeral and burial are not even so much as mentioned in the newspaper; a slap in the face to her surviving family members. Minna is considered a defector by the communist regime, yet had been sheltered by her mother from politics and history, had never read the Communist Manifesto and had yet to learn of Stalin’s Great Terror (65). Protected and cared for by Corde, as she had been by her mother, Minna’s mind has been free to ponder galaxies and cosmic space: “She did stars; human matters were her husband’s field” (256). She is unable to relate to Corde’s imploring nature and complex neediness, and is suspicious of his good intentions where society and writing are concerned. Ironically, this, like so many of the personal relationships depicted in Bellow’s works, has as its model Bellow’s own life. Bellow and his fourth wife, Alexandra, also Rumanian, had spent several cold winter weeks in Bucharest tending to Alexandra’s dying mother in much the same fashion as the book.
The December in Bucharest allows Corde, as it did Bellow, to reflect upon his own motivations behind his "inciteful" words, their effect, and what his next move will be. Invaluable is the insight he gains into Chicago from spending time in a city behind the then-still-existing Iron Curtain. Corde sits and "broods" for entire days in the essentially unheated flat, while the women greet visitors, stand in food lines, and await word from the hospital. Corde thinks, "If emigration were permitted the country would be empty in less than a month." Yet does this make him appreciate the city he has left behind? Yes and no. A direct comparison is not possible.

"America didn't have to fight scarcity," Bellow had written five years earlier in *Humboldt's Gift*, "We weren't starving, we weren't bugged by the police, locked up in madhouses for our ideas, arrested, deported, slave laborers sent to die in concentration camps. We were spared the holocausts and nights of terror. With our advantages we should be formulating the new basic questions for mankind, but instead we sleep" (226-27). The words of Citrine, applicable as well to Corde, insinuate that there is no excuse, then, for the poor conditions under which wide proportions of the American population exist. We, as a nation led, ostensibly, by intellectuals, have not, in words of Sammler, fulfilled our human contract to one another. "Philistine by origin," Corde decides, condemingly, "humanistic academics were drawn magnetically back again to the philistine core of American society. What should have been an elite of the intellect became instead an elite of influence and comforts. The cities decayed. The professors couldn't have prevented that, but they could have told us...what the human meaning of this decay was and what it augered for civilization" (303).

It is this "treason of the intellectuals" (302) that has contributed greatly to the decay of not only the physicality of the environment, but the mentality and morality of its inhabitants. Bellow was particularly aware of this and distressed by it.
"The experience, puzzle, torment of a lifetime demanded interpretation. At least he was starting to understand why he had written those articles. Nobody was much affected by them, unless it was himself. So here was the emptiness before him, water; and there was the filling of emptiness behind him, the slums" (285). Corde's, as well as Bellow's, urban investigation is intended to help him come to terms with the city in which he had invested his soul and had himself experienced the "puzzle, torment of a lifetime." Corde attends court cases, visits the hospital wards, and tours housing projects. He talks to lawyers, reformed criminals, stool pigeons, doctors, nurses, patients, and superintendants. He publicly defends Rufus Ridpath, the black director of the County Jail, brought in to clean things up, then canned for not "playing ball" with the political powers that be: "he won his case but lost his reputation" (149). The County Jail system had been run, according to Corde's many sources, on "the barn boss system" with gang chiefs in control and the jail budget supporting a great number of suppliers and contractors, Chicago style. Beatings, murders, suicides, homosexual rape, rackets were rampant and cut down by Ridpath, though the politicians hardly took notice. "What do you expect," the man's lawyer said to Corde, "This is a damn tough city, and damn proud of being tough, and the County [Jail] is the worst -- what you'd expect of Chicago" (153).

Shedding light on corruption and simply raising indignation is not Corde's intention; that would have been easy. No, what Corde had in mind, when he describes the "whirling lives" of the aimless, the soulless and blameless of Chicago is to exercise "his citizen's right" to investigate the administering of justice in his own city (158). "On his own turf, which was also theirs, he found a wilderness wilder than the Guiana bush...dope pushers, gun toters (everybody had a gun), child molesters, shoplifters, smackheads, purse snatchers, muggers, rapists, arsonists, wife beaters, car thieves,
pimps bailing out their whores...No one seemed able to explain what he had done, who he was" (158-59). Malcolm Bradbury has observed: "his [Bellow's] extraordinary power to create in fiction, the historical mire in which we live. A sense of victimization, of alien distance, of bleak historical inheritance, of some deeply rooted disaster functioning within contemporary consciousness, is the authentic Bellowian note."38

Like Citrine's reminiscences of New York and his retreat to Madrid, and Sammler's hellish recollections of the war and fantasies of lunar colonization, Corde's relationship with Chicago is as well aided by separating himself from the city, both physically and mentally. For all these characters, the past, even the immediate past, accompanies the present, informing, qualifying, correcting. Citrine and Corde both have Chicago pasts, which have varying effects on their Chicago of present. Citrine's juxtaposition of past and present elicits nostalgia, Corde brings frustration, lamentation, and bitterness. "You see (Corde saw) you begin to lose contact with human beings in the world. You experience a spiritual loneliness" (161). Reminiscent of Charles Citrine, Corde ponders, "We knew all kinds of things, but not the ones we needed to know. Modern achievements, [he] believed, jets, skyscrapers, high technology, were a tremendous drain on intelligence, more particularly on powers of judgment and most of all on private judgment" (259). Here the term private judgment can be substituted with personal responsibility; the easier life gets --modern achievements have come to mean modern conveniences -- the less effort man seems willing to make, both in his own life, as well as in the lives of others.

The difference in the reaction of these two protagonists to this rude awakening perfectly reflects the change in Bellow's feelings toward and reactions to the state of the urban cultural condition over the course of less than a decade. Citrine is plagued
by a sense of powerlessness as things happen around him that he neither fully understands nor has the will to change. Corde shares this sensation, but bewilderment has been replaced by a resolve to better understand the forces of change -- or worse, of stasis -- around him. His accounts of political abuses and social apathy are his means of working through these issues, both for his benefit, as well as, he supposes, the benefit of society. By the time he was writing *The Dean's December*, Bellow was aware that his words, the things that mattered to him most, were a source of anger and outrage to a large part of his audience. Appropriately, Sammler and Citrine, were also misunderstood by their various audiences; personal, professional, and so, too, is Corde, but much more violently so than the earlier two characters.

The pattern that emerges is the protagonist as an outsider looking in, at first wishing to be understood, then bitterly, poignantly, welcoming his essentially self-imposed exile. Corde, echoing Bellow, perhaps, concludes, "At first I was suspect, and presently I was distrusted and afterwards disliked. Finally by my own sincere efforts I worked my way down into the lowest category -- contempt."39 The rich and powerful understandably do not want things stirred up and are suspicious of any who try. The poor, seem to have accepted their condition with oppressed resolve, or are else beyond having their hopes raised. "As for the broad masses," Citrine had previously expounded, "millions of people born poor now had houses and power tools and other appliances and conveniences and they endured the social turbulence, lying low, hanging on to their worldly goods. Their hearts were angry but they put up with the disorders and formed no mobs in the streets. They took all the abuse, doggedly waiting it out. No rocking the boat" (174).

What exactly was it that Corde, by rocking the boat, had revealed about Chicago that others had either failed to see themselves, or did not care to
acknowledge? Bellow had taken it upon himself, through Corde and Sammler before him, to call attention to the dissolution of society. The content itself was derived from much research, interviews, articles, and historical accounts of the city, in preparation for the nonfiction account of the city he had intended to write to help him sort out this societal dissolution and its relationship to Chicago. Non-fiction proved too difficult to pull-off, though just barely, given the end result.

This task suspended, Bellow lends his research to Corde:

cities were moods, emotional states, for the most part collective distortions, where human beings thrived and suffered, where they invested their souls in pains and pleasures, taking these pleasures and pains as proofs of reality... all of them emotional conditions and great centers of delusion and bondage, death. It seemed to Corde that he had made an effort to find out what Chicago, U.S.A., was built with. His motive...came out of what was eternal in man. What mood was this city? (285).

The city as an emotional state harkens back to Robert Park and the Chicago Sociologists, and the application of statistics to sociological understanding. What this also implies is that the city is constantly changing, as are moods and emotions. Burton Pike has written that the city in modern literature "became fragment and transparent... a place consisting of bits, pieces, and shifting moods." His motive, in discerning the mood of the city, is to rehabilitate the city and to show that it was not the fault of the city, but those in whose hands it had been left. "Cities," writes Lewis Fried, "objectify the 'givenness' of culture and its continuously reinterpreted legacy...[and] bind the promise of America to human conduct...the individual's enactment of civic culture." The conduct of man symbolizes his worth; he is the sum of his actions.

When asked why he had written The Dean's December, Bellow responded that he had been impassioned by his "desire to be understood as a writer and an artist with the right to call attention to the dissolution of society." Who else would do it?
Bellow demands, "The social workers? The politicians? The sociologists? The media? No. The artist alone has the language, the independence, the freedom to speak, and only the artist can compel people to realize they are individuals, human beings, not statistics or types." Bellow's "main concern has always been the individual, the safekeeping and maintenance of the unique self...The soul of the hero seeks to confront the ubiquitous threat of annihilation--in the real world: betrayal, misunderstanding, disdain, contempt, rejection, abandonment..."

The Dean's goal is to come to terms with his own self doubts which surface as his connection to the city weakens." A recognizable pattern emerges: the characters in Mr. Sammler's Planet, desperately seeking some sense of themselves through Sammler, Citrine flitting about the city in search of elements with which to correspond and relate, and Corde attempting to enlighten the masses by revealing the city's worst faults wonders why no one thanks him. "He [Corde/Bellow] has been right about Chicago. It was all true. Why mind that to the liberals he was reactionary, to the conservatives he was crazy, to the urban sociologists he was hasty!" A Cassandra of sorts, Corde's predicament, Bellow's bleakest by far, is how to overcome increasing citizen apathy and bring about such enlightenment. As he asks this question, he seems to already have admitted to its implausibility.

The overall tone of much postwar literature is bleak, questioning and wrought with confusion. Speaking to Norman Mailer's observation of the artists' alienation, Tony Hilfer comments on the unsurprising popularity among postwar American intellectuals of both Freudianism and existentialism: "Both answered anxieties all the more pressing in ratio to their indefiniteness. Fiction, in turn, becomes characterized by diffuse anxiety and normal neurosis." Making this connection between life and
literature is important in acknowledging the artist/writer as herald of social change.

A significant element of Bellow's literature is the continuum represented both within certain novels as well as that represented by his collective works themselves. His literary career has spanned over fifty years and his works reflect nearly a century of both his and his characters personal and societal experiences, often shared by Bellow and his characters. To Mr. Sammler, born in the first decade of this century, Bellow lends his European descent, his Jewishness, his post-Holocaust, post-atomic confusion with human nature and man's inhumanity to man, and his interest in the racial and political issues coming to the fore in the sixties. To Charles Citrine, Bellow lends his youth, literary career, his contemporaries, marriages, his experiences in both New York and Chicago, his play on the New York stage, his international recognition, and the Pulitzer Prize (though he had not been awarded it until after Humboldt's Gift was written). To the Dean Bellow lends his academic career, an odd marriage, the December in Bucharest, the contempt of his peers, and the sense of the world dissolution around him.

All three Bellow works here discussed are peppered with historical facts, actual location descriptions, political and literary references and details, double-entendres and irony. An "autobiographical novel in the realist tradition," Citrine's life follows many of the same curves of Bellow's academic and professional life. Ruth Miller compares many of the characters in Humboldt's Gift to contemporaries, acquaintances and even wives of Bellow, over the course of decades. Both Bellow and Citrine left New York for Chicago after penning a Broadway play, both taught, wrote and enjoyed literary prizes, awards and accolades. Both had marital difficulties weighed down with financial battles. Appendix A lists many of Bellow's literary accomplishments and activities, many of which he shared with Citrine.
Understanding Bellow's own inner issues and confusions with regard to contemporary society can lend insight into the problems some of his characters have in making peace with their own inner turmoil. Miller interviewed Bellow periodically over much of his professional life, and often observed him wrestling with issues that divided mind and spirit, such as in this observation, "It was not so much the inner city slum that threatened us as the slums of the innermost being, of which the inner city was perhaps a material representation" (The Dean's December [281]). His acknowledgement that societal problems lay deeper than physical conditions is insightful, but expected. Bellow is an urban individual and has a lifetime of experience from which to draw his plots and mold his characters. His affinity for Chicago is evident in his use of the city as a ruler for social substance and a grounding for his characters' identity. It is, however, Chicago that spawns some of his greatest disappointment.

Passages in both Humboldt's Gift and The Dean's December reflect Bellow's own disillusion with aspects of civic life in America's 'second city.' "[Bellow] observed that Chicago, which had nourished him, was now the most racially segregated city in the United States, with the largest ghetto in the nation, with unethical judges and cynical lawyers, and a political leadership that had no patience with sentimentality and principle... And further, "What Corde saw in the real Chicago - grotesque, violent, corrupt, dehumanized, the paradigm of a society that may very well signify the future of America - is not fiction. All this Bellow learned as he chased around Chicago interviewing for [The Dean's December]." In their most reflective state, Bellow's characters often contemplate the urban milieu and their opportunity for some transcendent experience, either because of it or despite it.
In *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, he writes, "Madness is the attempted liberty of people who feel themselves overwhelmed by giant forces of organized control...Madness has always been a favorite choice of the civilized man who prepares himself for a noble achievement... a masquerade...a result of the despair we feel before infinities and eternities" (146,147). In *Humboldt's Gift*, Citrine has the benefit of his friend Humboldt's agonizing attempts to reconcile himself with society, in order that he, so informed, may choose a different path. "He did what he could, and lived and died more honorably than most. Being crazy was the conclusion of a joke Humboldt tried to make out of his great disappointment" (476). And finally, in a less literal manner, the Dean's eye-opening experience with society is described: "he went out to investigate the surrounding city... and went slightly mad" (*The Dean's December* [302]).

In a 1963 essay, "Some Notes on Recent Fiction," Bellow criticizes the seemingly noncommittal middle-class writers, of which Citrine is a parody:

[Who] are taught that they can have it both ways. In fact they are taught to expect to enjoy everything that life can offer. They can live dangerously while managing somehow to remain safe. They can be both bureaucrats and bohemians...They are both conservative and radical. They are not taught to care genuinely for any man or any cause."  

Many characters in *Humboldt's Gift* embody such traits, starkly contrasting the poet Humboldt, who was so true to his cause that he followed it willingly and knowingly into madness. "The terrors of freedom and modernity were fearful" (292). Grasping on to sanity as well as onto some romantic notion of protocol, Citrine finds himself taken for all his money, left by his gold-digging floozy girlfriend, and guilt-ridden over his commercial success and the abandonment of his personal standards and loftier goals. "We crave more than ever the radiant vividness of boundless love, and more and more the barren idols thwart this. A world of categories devoid of spirit wait for
life to return” (17). Tanner’s belief, “that too much autonomy involves loss of world, while too little leads to loss of self” is exemplified by many Bellow characters. Those falling into the first category include Humboldt, whose sense of reality slipped through his fingers, and Mr. Sammler and Dean Chord, whose saner views of the world become overshadowed by their internalized and personal disappointment in their fellow man. Citrine, whose lack of autonomy renders him overly susceptible to the activities of those around him, had little left to offer the city or to learn from it. With Sammler Bellow confronts America’s encroaching culturelessness and sixties generation societal confusion. With Citrine Bellow addresses disillusion with intellectual and institutional America. The smashed phone booths of Sammler’s New York become entire blocks bulldozed or vacant in Citrine’s Chicago. The Dean, then takes the dilapidation to another level, from the decay of the physical to that of the spiritual.

Reflecting the time period in which they were conceived, the works of Bellow and others, notes Bradbury, contain “the image of the disoriented man, the parvenu in the culture, the stranger in the city, the wanderer displaced between origins and the present, offering to substantiate the culture if the culture will show its humane substance.” The relationship between the “stranger” and the “city” is enhanced by Bellow’s excellent characterization of both and the characters he creates are clearly manifestations of the cities in which Bellow places them. His treatment of the urban environment evolves from one novel to another, and indicates a shift in his interpretation of the nature of this environment and man’s place within it. In Mr. Sammler’s Planet and Humboldt’s Gift, the urban dweller is caught up in an inundation of cultural chaos, changing values and the reduction of reality to “pseudo-event.” Sequences of urban description reveal insights and characteristics of place indicative of
the period in which they were written. Referred to as "intensely contemporary,"
Bellow's textual images compellingly reflect the intimate relationship between the
individual and the city over several decades and allow us to examine and orient often
conflicting social elements and conditions within a cultural and historical context. The
sense of upheaval for which that era is known reflects a condition that has befallen the
city and in turn affected it with an anonymity of "the fallen world of appearances."52
Observes an earlier Bellow character sardonically, "The painted veil isn't what it used
to be. The damn thing is wearing out. Like a toller-towel in a Mexican men's room."53

The scope of contemporary fiction such as Bellow's responds to the
diminution of the character and addresses tensions of the individual within that
increasingly immense society: self versus world.54 The fragility of man's existence
within the city is constantly reiterated.

Twenty five years after WWII...novels depicted heroes and their
institutions in some disarray, grappling with crises that ranged from
systemic breakdowns to personal troubles that undermined effective
participation in the public world...from the late 1950's on, novelists
were no longer portraying this public world as a simple backdrop for
trepreneurial conquest, they showed protagonists responding to
its difficulties in a variety of ways: some retreating towards
existential, spiritual, or experiential quests, some surrendering to the
blandishments of immediate gratification, some reasserting
traditional commitments to family or religion, and some continuing
their tasks with weary stoicism. Long (149)

Mr. Sammler has endured much at the hands of mankind, and fills his narrative with
references to his European past. The essence of Mr. Sammler's Planet is Bellow's
preoccupation with relating history to present consciousness in a stylistic manner.55
Sammler's views of New York, then, are necessarily detached, historically reflective,
and experienced through the filter of another life lived, one which entailed a real fight
for survival. Sammler's final task is to attend to "the growth of his spirit," as is Charles
Citrine's in Humboldt's Gift, as is Dean Albert Corde's in The Dean's December. To each of his protagonists Bellow assigns the same troubling task, while he struggles with it as well. Bellow and his characters alike corresponding to Long's above passage; Sammler reasserting traditional commitments to family; Citrine surrendering to the blandishments of immediate gratification; and Corde, continuing his task of husband and dutiful societal watchdog with weary stoicism. Speaking directly to these and other issues and concerns of those in the post-war decades: citizen, worker, housewife, activist and writer alike, who were plagued by societal disengagement. Of his protagonists Miller recalls telling Bellow, "Your Citrines and Sammlers and Albert Cordes are reflecting on significant questions, tough ideas, seeking purpose and meaning, talking about God and the soul and death and time and history and nature and I am glad to have them speculate for me...You figure it all out for me."56

Bellow is as devoted to his character development as he is to developing characteristics of New York and Chicago in order to best illustrate nuances in the relationship between man and city. Aptly documenting the relationship between the city and the internal anxieties of the urban hero,57 the settings about which he writes, "whether it be the upper West Side of New York or gold coast of Chicago...his hero pauses to recall the world out of which Bellow came"58 affect his character as he himself was affected. The city, long perceived as chaotic and disordered, is often done so as a result of the way in which it has been depicted in urban literature (The Jungle, Sister Carrie, An American Tragedy, The Courier's Tragedy) -- note the titles. David Weimer, in The City as Metaphor observes: "Bellow's is a 'city imagination' by virtue of its representation of a New York and Chicago 'dense with neighbors and noise, with streetcars, subways, families, friends, soot, and filth,' but more importantly in its metaphorical use of these particulars to evoke the clutter, the chaos, the burdensome
things' of contemporary American life."9 Shaping his work is the knowledge that "process and environment are determining powers over man [and that] consciousness is a collective historical flow" which is internal to us.60 In this respect, his characters, notably Mr. Sammler and Citrine, reflect Richard Sennett's characterization of the urban dweller "[who] passes from place to place, activity to activity, taking on the coloring of each scene, as easily as a chameleon changes colors in various surroundings...A fragmented self is more responsive."61 For Citrine, this responsiveness is manifested to the detriment of his literary creativity. His is not a strong enough character to maintain autonomy as he takes on the 'colors' of each surrounding. Becoming the eager juror, the victim of vandalism, the aging racquetball champ, the casualty of alimony court, the boyfriend left in the lurch, Citrine embraces each new identity for the lack of one of his own. Mr. Sammler similarly passes from place to place, and memory to memory, but maintains the "critical mass of indifference" that Citrine is unable to.

The characters he creates are clearly manifestations of the cities in which Bellow places them, and the interactions between man and city reflect the turbulent times in which the novels are set. The streets of Sammler's Upper West Side reflect the sixties with groups of young unkempt hippies flopped in parks, militant students disrupting lectures, an increase in racial violence and growing cleft between classes and generations. The Chicago Bellow saw before him in the seventies bore little resemblance to the city of his fond memories. His landmarks were gone, buildings boarded up, riots plagued the old parks, "drug pushers sprawled on the benches where once garment workers read their poems...and on the corner of Potomac and Rockwell Streets, the city's largest narcotics market thrived. On his old turf, murders were now daily occurrences," while arson, stabbings, depravity, desolation, illiteracy both in and
daily occurrences," while arson, stabbings, depravity, desolation, illiteracy both in and outside the slums, and media pollution were rampant.42

Citrine's Near North Side of Chicago is also caught between two Chicagos, one of the past and one of the forbidding future. The authentic old men of the Russian baths with their "fatty breasts as yellow as buttermilk...hard stout old-fashioned bellies...thick pillar legs affected with a sort of creeping verdigris or blue-cheese of the ankles. After steaming, these old fellows eat enormous snacks of bread and salt herring...and they drink schnapps...Things are very elemental here. You feel that these people are almost conscious of obsolescence, of a line of evolution abandoned by nature and culture." The future is represented by encroaching technology and the lowering of all human standards: "But now...our preoccupations are so low, language has become so debased, the words so blunted and damaged, we've said such stupid and dull things, that the higher beings hear only babbling and grunting and TV commercials - - the dog-food level of things."

While the city is represented by an array of individuals, institutions and emotions, the Bellovian city at times seems to fill the role of a character itself, assuming its own dialogue and personality. These three novels are representative of Bellow's later work; commentary on a new American culture, "an age of mass, post-cultural energy, romantic expectation, of new elites and underclasses, of cities riven by exploited power and deprived crime, of energy and barbarism working side by side to the point were the implicated mind can find no way to question it - since the violence becomes an understandable phenomenon arising from the deprivation, the undersystem of the system above."63
Chapter III Notes

1. Tanner p.298.
3. Hurm p.9; Weimer p.3; Pike p.12.
5. Fuchs p.214.
8. Bach
15. According to Yippie Editors Dana Beal and Steve Conliff in the Introduction to Blacklisted News, Secret Histories: From Chicago '68 to 1984, p.xv. "The Yippies were created in political upheaval, during the tumultuous period that often goes by the misnomer of "the 60's" or "the youth movement." Both names are misleading because they turn what was a massive cultural upheaval into a rite of passage. Nonetheless, in the midst of that chaotic era of public revolt and antiauthoritarian expressions of personal liberty, the Yippies emerged as a coherent emblem of the anarchic self." Joseph Urgo, Novel Frames, pp.189-221.
17. "Madness is the attempted liberty of people who feel themselves overwhelmed by giant forces of organized control. Seeking the magic of extremes...Even this madness is also to a considerable extent a matter of performance, of enactment. Underneath there persists, powerfully, too, a thick sense of what is normal for human life. Duties are observed...And however rebellious at heart, however despairing, terrified, or worn bare, [people] come to their tasks...For such a volatile and restless animal... there is a great mystery, too...One cannot mistake this for thorough madness, therefore. One thing, though, the disciplined hate the undisciplined to the point of murder. Thus the working class, disciplined, is a great reservoir of hatred...the clerk behind the wicket finds it hard to forgive those who come and go their apparent freedom. And the bureaucrat, glad when disorderly men are killed. All of them, killed." (Mr. Sammler's Planet,147)
22. Charles Citrine in Humboldt's Gift.
26. Robert Park, Ernest Burgess and Roderick D. Mackenzie, "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment." The American Journal of Sociology, 20, 1915, p.578. "It is the structure of the city which impresses us by its visible vastness and complexity, but this structure has its basis, nevertheless, is human nature of which it is an expression."
27. Simmel p.635.
29. Bellow's references here include not only Delmore Schwartz, but the many poets and writers who were unable to combat the increasing societal pressure on artists in the forties and fifties Robert Lowell, Isaac Rosenfeld, John Berryman, and Ernest Hemingway, among others.
30. McConnell p.49.
Writing on Riis, Mumford, Farrell, and Goodman, Fried writes that "meditation about the city is a pressing task. They invariably write about the crises of the metropolis and community... The city becomes a text to be deciphered. Making its meanings rational is the first step in realizing an authentic self and an authentic city... For these thinkers there is no urban history but the relation of the self to the urban heritage, and this animates their characteristic styles. For they are commitments to ways of depicting the city that break the spine of an often abstract and impersonal account. As a result, these writers transform the city into their text and into their language." Fried, Makers of the City, 1990, p.7,8,207.

42 Miller p.269.
43 Miller pp.267-68.
44 Miller p.277.
45 Miller p.275.
46 Hilfer p.4.
47 "Many personalities in Humboldt's Gift are a pastiche of recognizable counterparts in reality, as well as characters familiar from Bellow's fiction.... Readers familiar with Bellow and his world can recognize references to Harold Rosenberg, Meyer Shapiro, R.P. Blackmur, Gordon Ray, Richard Stern, Dwight Macdonald, James Laughlin, David Peltz, Sidney Harris, Oscar Tarkov, Isaac Rosenfeld, Delmore Schwartz, John Berryman. Readers without direct knowledge of Bellow and his circle are at no disadvantage; they can recall the fiction." Miller p.204-05.
48 Miller p.271.
51 "Technology," writes Tony Hilfer, "impacted perception most directly in the 'graphic revolution' described by Daniel Boorstin as inundating Americans with a 'current of hot and cold running images' so striking that images threatened to displace 'real experience'. Hilfer p.5.
52 Daniel Fuchs, p.287.
53 Augie March in The Adventures of Augie March
54 Hurm p.1.
56 Miller p.338.
57 Wilson p.36.
58 Miller p.295.
61 Sennett p.127.
62 Miller p.257.
63 Bradbury, 1982 p.84.
Conclusion

...thrilled by the vast, anonymous and impersonal life of the city... I began to read with a certain amount of enthusiasm Whitman’s musings on the city’s surging life... I felt, as he did, that there was something inspiring, majestic – in the spectacle of the manifold and multitudinous life of the city... something at once moving and mystical. Robert Park 1

Every person has some prevalent creed, a set of assumptions about man and his purpose, about the functioning of the individual in society and nature... that informs the fundamental considerations of conduct and is an essential aspect of the common identity... and when creed and reality conflict... then the collective mind can no longer cope with events... and the society is likely to suffer a nervous breakdown. Ronald Segal 2

The most important issues that have been addressed within this work are those of the evolution of the American city and the effect on the individual within that environment. Issues of cultural and individual identity have been intrinsically linked to place, and have been irrevocably affected by its metamorphosis. Literature has proven an invaluable source of insight into the unique relationship forged between man and his surroundings. As Daniel Fuchs has written, “Writing mediates the urban environment... rhetoric interprets the metropolis and comes to stand for it, if not in its place.” 3

In Georg Simmel’s The Metropolis and Modern Life, he begins, “the deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces... of external culture, and of the technique of life.” 4 Attempting to alleviate tensions between the individual and the environment, culture influences the very meaning attached to places or experiences. DJ Walmsley, author of The Individual in the City, writes that culture itself “can be considered the very process by which people attach meaning to the world.” 5 One’s culture invariably provides a frame of reference which enables one to come to terms with his environment. Wide segments of the American postwar population, in the face of rapidly evolving national and world events,
experienced feelings of alienation and disillusion. "The self produced by its cultural environment," writes Urvo, "will mirror the peculiarities of that culture. A diverse, stratified, and embattled social order will produce a multiple, contradictory self known more by its anxieties than by its tranquillities." A fragmented society and pervading sense of cultural shift undermines the individual's ability to cope with, relate to, and exact meaning from, his environment.

In his book Ladders, Professor Albert Pope describes the transformation of the open 19th century city to the closed twentieth century city that resulted from the blind acceptance and misapplication of modern architectural theory. Once existing within an open grid extending indefinitely outward, any one point relative to the whole, areas of the city became truncated, bounded, "contained and implosive" (23). The failure on the part of cities to constitute an essence of civic identity is therein attributed to the fact that the heretofore preserved grid of the historic urban form was "no longer linked to a larger metropolitan continuum," thereby compromising the "generative urban processes" with which the city has historically been associated. The elimination of vital aspects of the meaningful city, i.e., the grid, by the superimposition of "centripetal" forces such as highways and suburbanization, has resulted in an entropic manifestation; the "interstitial void."

Michael Sorkin has written similarly about the city.

The new city replaces the anomaly and delight of such places with a universal particular, a generic urbanism inflected only by appliqué...This "place" is fully geographic...With its components reduced to a repetitive minimum, space is departicularized. Obsessed with the point of production and the point of sale, the new city is little more than a swarm of urban bits jettisoning a physical view of the whole, sacrificing the idea of the city as the site of community and human connection.
This "human connection," that itself has been "sacrificed" or "jettisoned," is what I have hoped to have shown through the examination of Bellow's texts of urban alienation. The many particular changes occurring within the city have been previously discussed in terms of their political, social and economic effects. With these manifestations of grid-change we are now familiar, and as well have been given many ways in which to make the connection from that physical transformation to the transformation of the individual within the "residuum." Both the postwar city as well as the postwar individual have experienced such a transformation: open to closed; centrifugal to centripetal; communal to singular; active to residual. "Modern America," writes Long, "was witnessing not merely a new ideology, but a shift in 'modes of conformity,' or personality formation, as fundamental as the shift from traditionalism to the 'spirit of capitalism' discussed by Max Weber in his original formulation of the Protestant Ethic." Long's typology of social character facilitates the understanding of character re-formation under periods of our own fundamental historical, economic, or political shifts.

Sorkin's statements with regards to the city can be attributed to the transient nature of urban America giving rise to tensions between the individual and the environment and results in a greater resolve for acquiring self-knowledge. Such a response represents a desperate attempt to defend oneself against the increasing banality of modern existence. It is this modern existence that renders the city dweller's experience "fragmented," his social relationships "short-lived and superficial" and his very status in society "ambiguous... revealed only in the fast-changing appearances of his mobile, anonymous existence." Sorkin, echoing Pope, refers to certain emerging characteristics of the new city, "Liberated from its centers and its edges by advances in communication and mobility" and fostering "the dissipation of all
stable relations to local physical and cultural geography, and the loosening of ties to any specific space." Correspondingly, comments made by Bellow characters reflect the immensity of society and the comparative diminution of self: Charlie Citrine' in *Humboldt's Gift*, "The USA was a big operation, very big. The more it, the less we."

Addressing the effect of this on the individual, Tanner in *City of Words*, American Fiction from 1950-1970, writes:

The dread of being reduced...to uniformity is particularly intense in American fiction, suggesting, perhaps that many writers feel that the powers working against variety, diversity, distinction, individuality, are being ominously successful in their own contemporary society. The feeling that, whatever the individual may do, he cannot help but contribute to the entropic process, is responsible for a great deal of pessimism in this fiction...

This entropic process, feelings of powerlessness against the machine --what Long has referred to as the "organizational leviathan"-- is indicative of the societal climate during the latter half of this century. The schizophrenic relationship that results, however, is the choice between conformity and alienation. Swept up in some larger force at work around him, the postwar individual is threatened by the outcomes of both action and inaction. Both the individual and the city, facing this dilemma, are left at a frustrating impasse. The "real obstacle to our present urban evolution" has been described by Pope as a rift between "center and field, tradition and innovation, figure and field...the "inability of the center to either assert its hegemony or die off throws the metropolis into an interminable confusion." (175)

The scope of contemporary fictions has changed, accordingly, to address tensions arising between the modern city and the modern individual within that environment. The role of the city and its streets plays a crucial role in the evolution of the urban individual, his widening sense of self-knowledge, and his increasing disillusionment with his culture and environment. Barbara Rader, in *Rite of Passage*: 
The Quest of the Hero in Saul Bellow's Novels, has examined the exploratory nature of contemporary man within Bellow's work and his attempts at integrating self and [urban] world. For the Bellow hero, however, subject to a "diverse, stratified, and embattled social order," such integration is, of course, difficult, if not impossible. Instead, he must seek some alternative means of transcendence over the "political, economic, and technical upheavals of this century [that] have created uncommon discord and stress in a society...already discordant and rife with contradiction."

"The tensions that produced great literature," writes Robert Walker, "rose from reasons both intensely personal and provocatively public. The treatment of this literature and its makers allows one to see how interestingly it has been dominated by this deliberate American paradox: The creative singular and the receptive plural, the lonely conscience and the collective need, the individual versus the democracy." What Bellow aims to show, through each suffering urban protagonist, is that no matter the outcome -- alienation or conformity, too much autonomy or too little, transcendence or implosion -- cultural comprehension is itself the vehicle for self-knowledge, and self-knowledge is itself the key to a more meaningful life. This transcendence is made possible by the elevation and primacy of personal and imaginative experience in Bellow's work. Through his texts, Bellow legitimates the perception of the individual and infuses that perception with the energy necessary for comprehending and applying meaning to societal and cultural experience.
Conclusion Notes

1 Robert Park, "Walt Whitman," University of Chicago, Regenstein Library, Special Collections, Robert Park Papers, 5:13; in Cappetti p.25.
3 Fuchs p.3.
5 Walmsley p.55.
6 Ungo p.xiii
7 Pope pp.115,117.
9 Long p.163.
10 Long p.159.
11 Sorkin p.xiii.
12 Tanner p.147.
13 Hurm p.1.
Appendix A

Chronology of Saul Bellow's Literary Career

1915 Born June 10 in Lachine, Quebec, the youngest of four children of parents who emigrated from St. Petersburg, Russia in 1913.

1924 Bellow family moves to Chicago.

1937 Graduates from Northwestern University after transferring there from the University of Chicago in 1935.

1938 Joins the WPA Writers' Project in Chicago. Teaches at Pestalozzi-Froebel Teacher's College until 1942.

1944 *Dangling Man*, first novel.

1946-48 Teaches English at the University of Minnesota.

1947 *The Victim*.


1950 Returns to live in New York; teaches at New York University; writes book reviews and journal articles.

1951 "Looking for Mr. Green"; "By the Rock Wall."

1952 National Institute of Arts and Letters Award; joins faculty of Princeton as Creative Writing Fellow.

1953 *Adventures of Augie March* (National Book Award); joins the faculty of Bard College.


1955 "A Father-to-be"; Guggenheim Fellowship; travels in Nevada and California.

1956 *Seize the Day*.

1958 "Leaving the Yellow House"; Ford Foundation grant.

1959 *Henderson the Rain King*.

1960-62 Co-editor of *The Noble Savage*; Friends of Literature Fiction Award.
1962 Moves to Chicago; Honorary Doctor of Letters, Northwestern University; joins Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago.


1964 Herzog (National Book Award, Fomentor Award, Prix International de Litterature); The Last Analysis premieres at the Belasco Theatre in New York City.

1967 Covers the Six-Day War for Newsday.

1968 Mosby’s Memoirs and Other Stories; Jewish Heritage Award; Croix de Chevalier des Arts et Lettres (France).

1970 Mr. Sammler’s Planet (National Book Award).

1975 Humboldt’s Gift (Pulitzer Prize).

1976 To Jerusalem and Back: A Personal Account; Nobel Prize for Literature; Neil Gunn Fellow (Scottish Arts Council).


1978 “A Silver Dish”; National Arts Club Gold Medal of Honor; New York premiere of Leon Kirchner’s Lily (the opera adaptation of Henderson the Rain King).

1982 The Dean’s December.

1984 Him with His Foot in His Mouth and Other Stories; Commander of the Legion of Honor (France).


1989 A Theft; The Bellarosa Connection.


1994 It All Adds Up: From the Dim Past to the Uncertain Future (nonfiction collection of previously published essays).

1995 “By the St. Lawrence” (story).
Appendix B  Images of Postwar Decades...

1944
Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp: aerial view, detail.

World War II Image
Bodies in mass grave, Belsen extermination camp.

1953-68
Prairie Shores Public Housing, Chicago, Illinois

Late 1950's
Robert Taylor Homes, Home to 15,000 in Chicago, Illinois
1954
Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy and Roy Cohn
Associated Press

1962
President Kennedy
Sorensen, Kennedy, jacket photo.
November 21, 1963
President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy
Dallas, Texas
Internet photo.

November 24, 1963
"Dallas, Texas: Lee Harvey Oswald grimaces with pain as his is shot...by Jack Ruby"
United Press International
May 1963
Police using dogs on civil rights demonstrators.
Birmingham, Alabama
AP. Internet photo.

August 1964
"Police attempt to maintain order as leftist demonstrators against Vietnam move toward the U.N."  Pictures of the Times, 1996, p.134.
1968
Robert F. Kennedy
Los Angeles, California
*Photojournalism. Life Library of Photography. 1971*

April 4, 1968
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King is assassinated in Memphis.
*Associated Press. Internet photo.*
1968
Execution of suspected Viet cong.
Saigon, Vietnam

1968
Democratic Convention
Chicago, Illinois
1969
New York City Subway Commuters
Internet Photo.

July 19, 1969
"Kennedy Car off Bridge to Chappaquiddick Island, Massachusetts."
May 4, 1970
Confrontation between Kent State University students and the National Guard.

1972
Nine year old napalm-burned Kim Phuc Phan Thi.
Trangbang, South Vietnam
*This Critical Mirror: 40 Years of World Press Photo*, 1995.
1969
Buzz Aldrin, Jr. on the surface of the moon. 

One small step for man, one giant step for mankind. 
1972-3
St. Louis
Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project Destroyed
Curtis, Modern Architecture Since 1900. 1982. p.294

June 16, 1987
"Bernard H. Goetz as he Arrived Home."
Commodification of culture.

JackieO! The Opera.

What is America?

The question remains.

1997 Chevrolet Commercial
Bibliography

Literature


Literary Criticism


**Urban Studies**


Estall, Robert. *A Modern Geography of the United States.* Harmondsworth, 1976


**Newspaper and Magazine Articles, Radio Interviews**


