

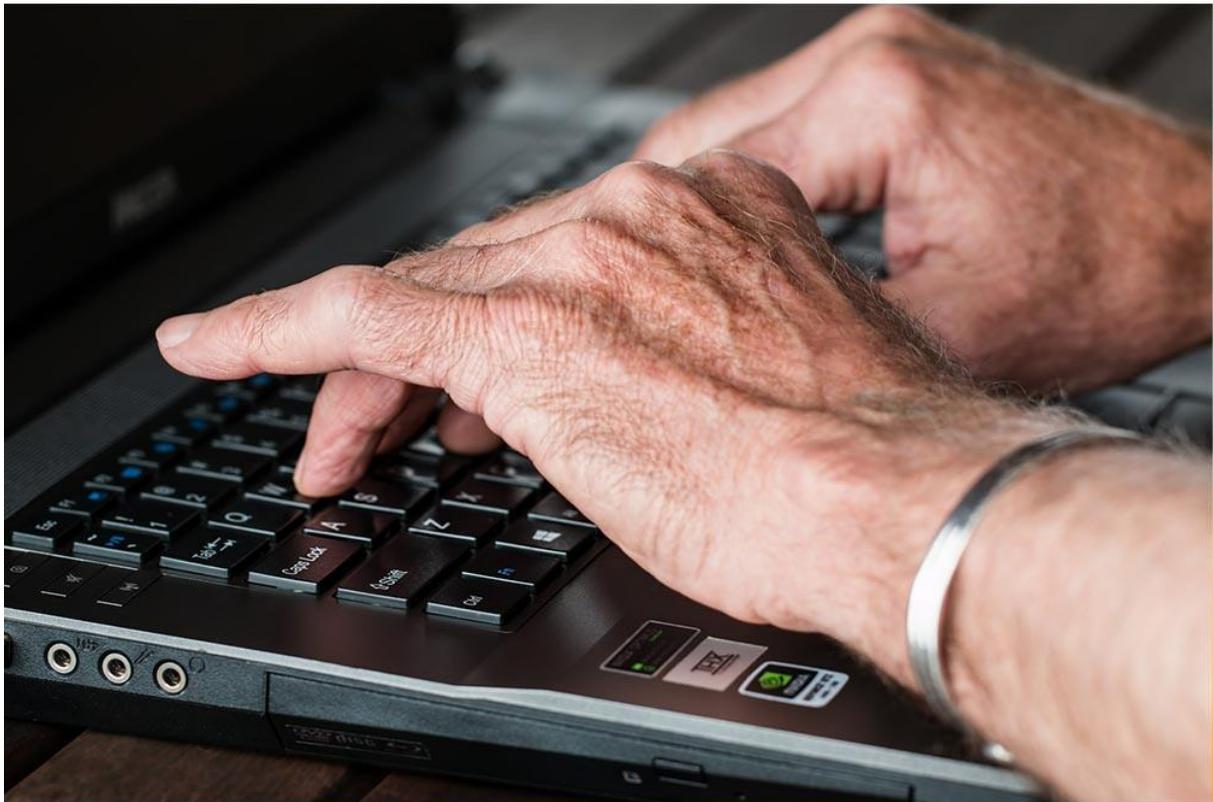
ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER

ISSN-2321-7065

IJELLH

**International Journal of English Language,
Literature in Humanities**

Peer-Reviewed (Refereed/Scholarly), Indexed and Open Access Journal



Volume 7, Issue 8, August 2019

www.ijellh.com

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Love marriage and death in the novels of soul Bellow- June 10, 1915- April 5, 2005

Saul Bellow was a Canadian American literary giant and proficient scholar. He was awarded Nobel Prize for literature in 1976. He was also awarded Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1976, and national medal of arts in 1988. He is the only writer to win the national Book award for fiction three times in 1954, 1965 and 1971. He was a deep observer of feelings, emotions and human relationships. That is why love, marriage and death are the main themes in his literary works.

Infect- Love has always been a subject of great concern in literature, particularly from a time when novel-writing became a popular genre. Subjects like lust, seduction, adultery, and sex or man-woman relationship became more palpable because of the privacy and the reader enjoyed as the fear of the social ostracism was not there.

Love marriage and death are decisive aspect of the same continuum of identity. Identity thus understood is both perceived and projected in the time and space charged with unique human pressures, promises and challenges. At times there appears to be a contradiction between the needs of identity and the demand of the human milieu in which it seeks to establish itself because the human milieu requires an act of assimilation, which may dilute the form of identity. However, there is no contradiction between the two. If identity is truly realized i.e., love, marriage and death are perceived as partaking of the same intensity

which obtains them, then a strong sense of identity became an integrative rather than a subversive force. The claims of identity and the claims of assimilation stands harmoniously resolved, and together create symbolic relationship. They are the essentials, of the contemporary society, the basis and fundamentals on which mankind have depended for salvation and furtherance of humanity.

Not to accept the community implies a rejection of love, marriage and death as the cardinal reality of life. Unable to communicate through love and non-adherence to the institution of marriage and hesitation in accepting the reality of death leads not only to isolation but to a neurotic syndrome.

Love, at times is taken antidote to human contradiction and as a state to overcome Polarities, it has always been associated with beauty restraint, discipline and a sense of social responsibility when embroiled in marriage articulate this beauty. The confronting of death also awakens an appreciation of beauty which corresponds to the quintessence of love.

Love in the Novels of soul Bellow has spiritual connotation. In his Novels, the protagonists yearn for stability and discipline crudity, disorder, ugliness, which is beyond the mundane. They tend to transcend, “the crudity, disorder, ugliness and lawlessness of commercial and industrial expansion which scandalized them,” with a language and intention of affection. I have tried to correlate the Idea of spiritual love which Bellow advocates in his major novels to the contemporary American Society.

In addition to the idea of spiritual love freedom, honesty, responsibility, care, knowledge, respect, moral order, humanism, religion and emotions cumulatively convey what love is in terms of a value system. His protagonists are highly introspective in nature and, by and large, to tend to emerge with inner beauty in spite of the crushing pressure of the contemporary acquisitive society.

Saul Bellow offers some hope to a society which is disillusioned by the holocaust. His novel shows a peculiar struggle between the intractable outside world and fragility of man's feelings. It'll be seen that at many places in this study the dichotomy between inner beauty and outside pressure is pinpointed to emphasize the conflict which the protagonist experiences in terms of Eros and Thanatos and between desires and what is offered by the society. It also shows the contradiction between what man can do and what he doesn't care to do. Bellow intends to remind us that we have forgotten the golden rules of our heart it seems that his posers are; is it that we have become machines? Where are our feelings? Why don't we make use of our "sealed treasure"? Who is our God, Mammon or Eros?

Irving Malin has asked the same question about contemporary American Society which Saul Bellow has artistically represented Malin's remark that, "There is really no free choice we yield to social drives," Explains the predicament Bellovian protagonists. Bellow also promotes the belief that man can go beyond his petty self and endeavor to create a better social order. In this way Bellow reclaims the individual through love.

The ultimate concerns in any culture are love, beauty and death to be pursued and experienced through a network of personal relationship. Specially in the American Context since 1920 and onwards and the Bloomsbury group in England and the liberal humanist thinkers have often suggested that personal relationship are based on faith, human nature and in the integrity of the individual tolerance and good will.

According to Saul Bellow our society is over intellectualized, afraid of life impulses and even more afraid of death, yet there is hope for a man to realize the multitude of moral purposes in wild disorder. Bellow's protagonists find the complexities of their dilemma not only in alienation from society but in their confirmation with inner feelings, whereby arises a disposition of subversion with themselves.

In spite of the manifold problems as poverty, crime, injustice inequality and oppression-the solution lies in having a relationship with people. The nobility of self can be realized and maintained by bringing a fine balance between the “Social dimension and the spiritual, intensely private dimension.” In order to achieve beauty in life a similar balance between social and private life has to be created. Isolation is no way out and that exactly what Bellow has emphasized in his novels.

This is why Alfred Kazin Considers Bellow’s fiction as authentic as that of Lawrence, Joyce and Dreiser. Bellow has shown “Dramatically as well as emotionally” the struggle which the hero undergoes. Moreover everyone can recognize the battle that Bellow puts his heroes through, it is made up of love, sex and marriage, of common apprehensions and natural catastrophes, of struggle between parent and children, between victims and persecutors, between love and hatred, between life and death. Bellow talks of love in the western society as a sensational experience or an adventure to which everyone is entitled. The disillusionment that occurs in love leads to loneliness which can be seen in terms of debilitating Urges.

Bellow’s protagonists undergo an essential reconstruct in their personality because they realize the transformation of love as explained by Dr.EricFromm, According to whom love brings about a “Psychic symbiotic union like that of mother and foetus.” This stage once achieve in love is like having total control of the mind by the other.It is a unique oneness with in two Separate bodies. It is not possible to achieve this kind of state as it has more of biological dependence. He tells us that care, responsibility, respect and knowledge are four basic, elements common to all forms of love.

So love is the saner answer to the problems of existence. It is an active power in man and it breaks through the walls, which separates one from the other. It makes him overcome

separateness and loneliness, yet it permits him to be his own self. For this mutuality and togetherness an inner discipline and strength is needed.

Actually the Bellovian protagonist usually suffers isolation which compels him to desire companionship, due to which they indulge in sexual gratification with their mistress in order to seek somatic pleasures, which according to Freud are essentials of love. Freud explains that love is cosmic force which includes all the tendencies that strengthen and preserve life in man. Love is an undifferentiated human energy which he calls "Libido". It is on the basis of this energy, that Freud explains love and its various forms of patriotism, Sexual Act Perversion, Artistic creation, religious worship, Parental love and for that matter, the very course of human civilization. He believes that another way of looking at love is optimal relationship between two adults of opposite sex for the sake of emotions. Though the life preserving tendency also shows love between man and woman.

Love is basically narcissist and it only changes its forms with the development of the reality principle. The journey of growth is from biological to psychological needs, yet both the qualifications remain important. Love remains an important instinct for existence. Though the need to love is a desire to fulfill an urge for self satisfaction.

Freud also visualized the existence of two basics tendencies in all living beings. First, the life instincts or love, the other death instinct, which is not love. The tension between life and death instinct is the way by which Freud explains not only human development or man-woman relationship but the whole cosmos. He calls this as "Eros-Thanatos" or the struggle between love and death.

Freud says-

“It must present to us the struggle between Eros and death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species. This struggle is what all life essential consists of”.

So, Sex plays an important role in the dialectical relationship between love and death. As sex is vital for marriage. So it is essential for a happy life. The anxiety arises from being important is an index of one's inadequacy in achieving communion. The sexual act is affirmation that everything is alive and it keeps away from gnawing fear of death. Anxieties fears and problems do have a bearing on sexual affirmation. Sex will always be a vital part of human experience and its repression beyond limits will signify emotional freezing.

In this context it has noted that marriage is perhaps more important for women than men. Contemporary society takes pride in letting the man defy marriage as it bolsters the male ego image. For man free sex is the test of his masculinity. It is an adventure for him. It creates a sensational satisfaction. Adultery, then on the part of husbands by contrast, was widely “regarded as a regrettable but understandable foible”. There are no liabilities for man if he transgresses in marriage as there are for women because-

Clarrisa, Emma, Maggie, Anna, Tess and Edna all die, like thousands of other women in fiction, because, in accordance with well-worn stereotypes and morality of their times.

The burden of love is put squarely on woman as love has been feminized in society and it is considered womanly to show love. Woman has been indoctrinated with the notion of her incompleteness without man and the need to sanctify marriage was to assure a wholeness of woman. Throughout Bellow's novels a definite attitude towards woman has been maintained. Mothers and Sisters are good because they follow traditional roles. The liberated women, like Madeleine are intelligent and clever. Fact still remains that the wife enjoys social prestige and honor where as the mistresses have to live with, to make their existence

bearable. For women, marriage is social reorganization a symbol of healthy life and without marriage they do not exit meaningfully.

Though in the twentieth century sexual freedom has been achieved, it has not gone to women's advantage all the time. According to most scholars, greater sexual freedom is responsible for weakening of relationship rather than strengthening them.

Anthony Giddens Says-

“Sex in marriage was to be responsible and self-regulated, not just confined to marriage, but ordered in distinct and specific ways”.

It is implying that there had to be discipline in sex even outside marriage. Still in order to enjoy a healthy sexual life, family is the safest unit, especially nowadays when problems of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are making people more aware of the hazards of sexual libertinism. Sex outside marriage signifies then negation of happy love. Marriage; sex and death are thus related inseparably. Bellow has pointed out the joylessness of sex outside marriage and shown vividly how free sex symbolizes a death wish. Sex devoid of love is no solution to isolation and estrangement.

Social and psychological pressures have affected the life of women in contemporary American Society, especially with the creation of “plastic sexuality”. Now the influence of women's liberation on one side and the legitimate demands of motherhood left a very difficult choice for women to choose a career or to be a devoted mother. This serves conflict in women's life combined with an increasing divorce rate and a declining birth rate and the increasing in single parent families have put a terrible burden on women. The pressure on the self has increased to a level where traditional family roles are marginalized.

Marriage and its sociological ramification in the novels of Saul Bellow are the good mother follows the norms of the traditional institution of marriage. Where as glamorous

women like Ramona Renate and kitty do not support the institution of marriage. They are ambitious women who want to succeed at the cost of marriage. For them pursuing a career is far more important than just being a good mother. Contemporary American society has accepted this gulf and is thereby finding new ways to overcome it. Extramarital affairs on the part whole to serve the cause of marriage.

The institution of marriage has largely failed in the twentieth century as a result of losing of the social control. With more freedom, the problems of contemporary society have multiplied manifold. Adultery has become fashionable and marriage has been gradually losing imposing its traditional sanctity. The social bond which marriage imposed is no longer the need of mass society. Carnal love seems to have conquered the sanctity of marriage and liberated men and women from any bond except that of flesh.

One of the most profound and meaningful paradoxes of love is death. Like the opposite sides of a coin, love and death exist together. In the intensified grip of Love, the awareness of death comes simultaneously.

Roll May says-

“Death and delight, anguish and joy, anxiety and wonder of birth- these are the warp and woof of which the fabric of human love is woven.”

In fact tears of joy are the signs of imminent sorrow. The joyous moment is inevitable accompanied by the consciousness of the creeping death. It seems that one is not possible without other. The opposing polarity of love is the awareness of death.

In art, death finds an exalted expression and usually gets associated with love. Most of the expressions of death literature are also associated with love.

Philippe Aries says-

“Like the sexual act, death was also thought of as transgression from daily life from rational society, from monotonous work, in order to give sudden relief by creating an irrational, violent and beautiful world of its own.”

In this way the artistic concern with death became important characteristic of Romanticism and its image became suggestive of erotic impulses in art. Just as sex was a taboo in Victorian era death became a taboo in the twentieth century. The pleasure one gets by taking of death is similar to the pleasure of taking about sex during Victorian era. Both, death and sex became pleasurable in the art and literature. Just as love expressed human aspiration an achievement, love and death represented a total experience of life which aimed at wholeness in art and literature.