

**A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF THE SELECT
FICTION OF ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER**

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

ENGLISH

By

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PUNJAB

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, solemnly declare that the thesis titled **A Psychoanalytic Study of the Select Fiction of Isaac Bashevis Singer** is based on my own work carried out during the course of my study under the supervision of **Dr Balkar Singh**.

I assert that the statements made and conclusions drawn are outcomes of my research work. I further certify that

- i) The work contained in the thesis is original and has been done by me under the general supervision of my supervisors.
- ii) The work has not been submitted for any other degree/ diploma/ certificate in this university or any other university/institute of India or abroad.
- iii) I have followed the guidelines provided by the university in writing the thesis.
- iv) Whenever I have used materials (data, theoretical analysis, and text) from other sources, I have given due credit to them in the thesis's text and in the references.

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Certificate

The Thesis titled **A Psychoanalytic Study of the Select Fiction of Isaac Bashevis Singer** submitted to the department of English, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy was carried out by Hina Wali at the Department of English, Lovely Professional University, under my supervision. This is an original work and has not been submitted in part or full for any other degree/diploma at this or any other university/ institute. This thesis is fit to be considered for the degree of Ph.D.

Dated: 27/02/23

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Introduction

The thesis entitled: *A Psychoanalytic Study of the Select Fiction of Isaac Bashevis Singer* explores the psychological ailments of the Jewish characters of Bashevis Singer who was an acute observer of human nature and the environment. Singer was extremely disturbed when he observed the inhuman oppression and brutalities perpetrated on the Jews by the Nazis. He used his writing talent to chronicle the psychic wounds of the Jews in his fiction. The psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud, Cathy Carruth, and Judith Herman are relied in this study to analyze the themes of depression, mental disorder and neurosis of the characters of Singer. In the chapter *Brief Candle*, the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud is analysed. Freud proposed the theories of repression and unconscious, sublimation, transference, defence mechanisms in his seminal works such as *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1919), *On Narcissism* (1914), *Beyond the pleasure Principle* (1920). It is found that the Jewish characters of Singer such as Yasha, Herman, Aaron, Jacob and Asa Heshel Banet are traumatized character suffering from multiple psychological ailments. They were subjected to all forms of physical and psychic tortures and they had to migrate to other countries for survival. Singer has faithfully depicted their sufferings; their displacements and neurotic condition in his novels. Asa is an anti-hero of Singer; his painful struggle ends in despair and he always feel lonely and cut off from the roots of the Moskat tribe. Singer's main mission is to resurrect a tiny world that was brutally extinguished from the face of the earth. He had witnessed the poverty-ridden ghettos of the Jews living in Poland.

Singer is always haunted by the images of Polish Jews, who were massacred in the concentration camps of Auschwitz.

In the second chapter of the thesis entitled: Jews and Their Predicaments the tragic events of the Jewish Holocaust are investigated. The transported the Jews to Buna and Auschwitz where they were treated like animals. The Holocaust continues to bring endless sufferings and psychological ailments to the survivors and to their families. Giorgio Agamben (1999) traces the social and political causes that motivated Adolf Hitler to launch the drive to decimate the Jews. Hannah Arendt published *The Human Condition* (1958) *Men in Dark Times* (1968), and *The Life of the Mind* (1978) in which she discussed the savage cruelties of the Nazi army. They suffered the traumas of Holocaust as they experienced the loss of memory and became the victims of neurosis and depression. Bashevis Singer was greatly influenced by the traumatic events of the Holocaust. Asa Heshel suffers from the loss of faith in Jewish God This spiritual bankruptcy is the main cause of depression and disintegration of most of the characters in the world of *The Family Moskat*.

In the third chapter entitled: Politics of Survival and Hysterical Outbursts Singer argues that in an era of global uncertainty people are concerned about the survival. The Jews were treated like animals by the Germans; millions of them were butchered and killed. Grippled by the feeling of insecurity many of them migrated to other countries. Singer himself migrated to America to save his life. Singer has depicted the theme of the consciousness of survival of his characters who struggle against the forces of chaos and uncertainty unleashed by the Holocaust. The scenes of violence and barbarity were common and the Jews suffered humiliation, starvation

and psychic depression. The Jews experienced displacement and alienation and their main concern was to survive in harsh and cruel society. The world of *The Family Moskat* is of chaos, uncertainty and decay of the Jewish culture and religion. The novel begins with the note of uncertainty and dark future. Singer's novel *The Manor* depicts the struggles of the characters to survive in Jewish society in which people have lost faith in Talmud and Kabala. They cannot forget the scenes of destruction of Poland.

In the fourth chapter entitled: Psychological Expressions of the Social and Economic Implications Singer the economic worries of the Jews whose business establishments were destroyed by the Nazis and they suffered economic loss. The Jews were basically business men and they were worst hit as the forces of chaos and disorder brought about uncertainty and huge financial loss. The shops of the Jews were burnt by the Nazis and they were forced to flee from Europe to escape death and destruction. The economic disaster of the Jews was a major factor that brought the psychological anguish. In the novel *The Family Moskat*, Bashevis Singer deals with the themes of social and economic worries of the Jews who were displaced and migrated to other countries for safety and survival. Irving Howe (1969) observes that Bashevis Singer depicts the tragic fate of his Jewish characters that look lost and bewildered because of the basic conflict between the personal liberty and destiny. They feel guilty in renouncing their Hasidic identity and guile according to Freud the main source of depression.

In the fifth chapter entitled: Comparative Analysis of the Selected Novels of Bashevis Singer the entire major issues such as the identity crisis of the Jews; their guilt and shame; their physical and psychological ailments are discussed and investigated in detail. Singer created a galaxy of characters such as Herman, Jacob,

Masha, Tamara, Yadviga and Yasha who experienced the psychological ailments such as anxiety disorder, alienation, depression, neurosis and loss of self. Most of his characters resort to hedonistic pleasures to escape from the burden of guilt. Each novel of Singer is a heart-rending tale of the struggles of the Jewish protagonists who are the victims of external and internal forces of chaos and disorder. Singer's family saga, *The Family Moskat* (1950), together with *The Manor* (1967) and the sequel *The Estate* form a trilogy narrating the tale of the disintegration of Polish Jewry. The disintegration is caused by the displacement and rootlessness of the Jews who are forced to move from place to place to survive.

In Conclusion the outcome of the study is highlighted. This part of the study reveals how all the objectives of the research project are achieved. The fiction of Singer has great social and historical significance since it chronicles the physical and psychological ailments of the Jews. Like Elie Wiesel and Philip Roth, Singer is a Jewish writer who writes with ghosts in his eyes. In all his novels and short stories Singer struggled to resurrect a tiny world of the Jews destroyed by the Nazi's Holocaust. Singer observed that the Jews were forced to leave homes and cities to escape the wrath of the Nazis. They were always haunted by the scenes of death and destruction. They were afflicted with ailments such as depression; frustration; neurosis and anxiety disorder. The relevance of this study is indubitable as it inspires the youth to fight with the problems in a positive manner.

In 1935, Isaac Bashevis Singer emigrated to America and in 1978, he got Nobel Prize for Literature. In sixty years of his writing career, he was basically concerned with the problems and dilemmas of his Jewish protagonists who struggled

against the existential realities of the harsh world being stranded and wounded by the Holocaust. He was lucky to survive the Holocaust though his younger brother Moshe lost his life. Singer was so much haunted by the scenes and events of the concentration camps of Auschwitz that he depicted the dark vision of life and modern civilization in his stories and novels. In *The Family Moskat* there are clear references of World War 11 and the atmosphere of death and destruction. The German bombs killed Hadassah who is a major character in the novel. Asa Heshel is anguished, depressed suffering from the traumatic experiences. His death is indeed tragic as he dies as a heart broken Jew in the novel. Aaron in *Shosha* leads a hedonistic life to escape from the sordid and mundane world. He is always haunted by the idea that the world is very quickly heading towards a big catastrophe and very shortly the world will end. This psychological fear is the root cause of his psychological ailments. He expresses his anguish thus: “It is preferable to enjoy the present moment: “Yes, I had fine pleasure before I died and returned nothing” (Bashevis Singer, *Shosha* 56). Bashevis Singer’s novel *Shosha* is about the theme of survival and death. Singer records that “from the day they were exiled from their land, Jews had lived in anticipation of death or the coming of Messiah” (239). In this novel the role of death is paramount; the Jews have lost their hope and faith and peace in the future. The protagonists are struggling through time alone without their God and this is the main cause of their psychological traumas. They wait death in the darkness before the dawn of life and civilization. In this study a fresh psychoanalytical perspective has been taken to reinterpret the novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer who was a contemporary of Earnest Hemingway William Faulkner and Scott Fitzgerald. Like Elie Wiesel and Philip Roth, Singer is a Jewish writer who writes with ghosts in his

eyes. In all his novels and short stories Singer struggled to resurrect a tiny world of the Jews destroyed by the Nazi's Holocaust. Most of his novels and his short stories are set in Poland and Warsaw; poverty –stricken ghettos and shtetls and it seems Singer takes up the moral responsibility to depict the psychological anguish of the Jewish protagonists alienated from religion and God. Singer puts his faith in Judaism that has survived in spite of the innumerable obstacles from within and without. The Jews suffered because of their alienation from traditional norms and rituals and their mad race of assimilation. Singer's hero is torn between two conflicting fates as he begins his quest; he is carried away lust; sensual pleasures grip his psyche and he often confronts failures as he confronts truth and God. Each character of Bashevis Singer is alone survivor of the Jewish Holocaust struggling to find his roots; his religion love and God. He stands on the ruins of his destroyed world struggling to re-create Judaism in the void. Jacob in *The Slave* had witnessed the massacre of Chmielnicki and Herman Broder in the novel *Enemies* had to spend two years hiding in the hayloft. Both the characters are mentally stressed and psychologically disturbed as they confront a harsh world where the loss of identity is inevitable. Both are paralyzed by the terror of the modern civilization; its absurdity and anxiety. Herman is so much obsessed and terrified the existential realities that he wants to hide somewhere like Kafka's cockroach. Jacob's dilemma is heart rending as he refuses God to grant the quality of mercy: "It was different to believe in God's mercy when murderers buried children alive. But God's wisdom was evident everywhere" (Bashevis Singer, *The Slave* 19). Singer's characters suffer moral and spiritual degeneration and the guilt that they are no longer in communion with God leads to psychological trauma. Jacob of *The Slave* is a lonely Jew cut off from his roots. He

doesn't know the whereabouts his wife and two children and the other people of the town who are believed to be killed in the massacre. He is twenty-nine years old and is employed as a slave by Jan Bzik. He is a stranded protagonist leading the life of a prisoner in a remote pagan village with no hope and peace of mind. He is suffering from mental depravity and physical deformity and he seems to be the first primitive man on the earth. The pagans are like the beasts and he is also living among the beasts. He expresses his psychological torture thus: "Shame was unknown to them as if they had been conceived before the eating of the forbidden fruit" (5). The main cause of Jacob's disorientation of mind is the ugly and primitive environment of the pagans. He was pitted against the odds of life and was obliged to witness the uncivilized and uncouth living of the pagans. The world was surrounded by:

cripples, boys and girls with goiters. Distended heads and disfiguring birth marks, there were also mutes, epileptics, freaks who had been born with six fingers on their hands or six toes on their feet. In summer, the parents of these deformed children kept them on the mountains with the cattle, and they ran wild. There men and women copulated in public. (16)

Jacob suffers because he is at war with himself; he is torn in body and in spirit. There is a conflict inside his soul; between his body and spirit; good and evil and finally he succumbs to his sensual desires. Singer's novel *The Estate* is packed with the images of death and alienation and psychic disorder of the characters. Ezriel suffers from the series of misfortunes; Shaindel dies in an insane asylum; his sister Mirale is exiled to Siberia; his lover Olga deserts him and becomes the mistress of a rich landlord and his daughter Zina becomes a revolutionary. All these events give him psychological

tortures as he realizes that the modern world has given him nothing but pain and anguish. His son Joziek expresses his plight and says the truth that “Jews aren’t men. You know that, Papa. We’re emasculated” (Bashevis Singer, *Estate* 59). Bashevis Singer has depicted the real life and existence of the Jews who are mentally and psychologically tortured people leading a life in death:

We’re people without a home and we can’t live with anyone, we remain alien, always the object of mockery and derision. Nothing has changed. Conditions are as bad today as they were a thousand years ago. Even worse: in those days, there was no enlightenment. In those days, at least, Jews kept their faith. (359)

The textual analysis of the novels of all the novelists under research has revealed that all the major protagonists of Isaac Bashevis Singer suffer from psychological ailments in one form or the other. Joseph Wood Krutch had rightly pointed out that “modern malaise, nausea, angst, alienation, loss of identity, entropy, nihilism were forces that had dehumanized and deflated the heroes” (Krutch 79). Bashevis Singer evolved his own strategy in his stories and novels and sought inspiration from Gogol, Dostoevsky and Kafka in depicting the psychological traumas of the life of his Jewish protagonists.

In this study serious efforts have been made to explore the causes and symptoms of the sick and wounded protagonists trapped in the abyss of darkness and despair. Nietzsche wrote his famous book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883). Nietzsche brought about a wave of pessimism and nihilism. In the present study the researcher has relied on the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud; Lacan; Ihab Hassan; Dr. Karen Horney and R. D. Laing and Cathy Carruth.

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Chapter 1

Brief Candle

Isaac Bashevis Singer, a Nobel Prize winner in literature, born on July 14, 1902 in Radzymin Poland, left his native place and migrated to America in 1935 to escape the tension and anxieties that prevailed in his life post holocaust. He started his career in literary writings by publishing a story entitled *In Old Age* in Warsaw Literarishe Bleter followed by his first novel *Satan in Goray*. During sixty years of his writing career, he emphasized the problems and dilemmas of the people who struggled against the existential realities of the harsh world being stranded and wounded by the Holocaust (in World War II) through the characters of his works. The term 'holocaust' was coined in 1895 to describe the destruction caused by Armenians but later it was used for the genocide caused by Nazis during World War II (1933 – 1945). Singer was the fervent promoter of East European Jewish culture and this passion is clearly depicted in his works. He always struggles to resurrect a tiny world of Jews destroyed by the Nazi's in Holocaust.

Giorgio Agamben (1999) takes up the historical perspective and traces the social and political causes that motivated Adolf Hitler to launch the drive to decimate the Jews. Hannah Arendt published *The Human Condition* (1958) *Men in Dark Times* (1968), and *The Life of the Mind* (1978) in which she discussed the nature of power structure of the Nazi army. The SS guards passed draconian laws to crush and bulldoze the individuality of the Jews.

Bashevis Singer was greatly affected by the Jewish genocide and like Saul Bellow he depicted the problems of the Jews in all his novels. Singer finds the people of his community experiencing the trauma of war and genocide; the life of the Jews in Europe and America was not safe. They were discriminated; the Jewish children were ignored admission and employment. Saul Bellow and Singer had to lead a very tough life in America. The scenes of death and destruction haunted Jewish community day and night and most of them suffered from the psychological ailments such as depression, schizophrenia and dementia. Those who survived the concentration camps didn't like to live any longer. The Jews had experienced violence and barbarity and these traumatic experiences haunted them day and night. There was dispossession, terror, degradation, humiliation, starvation and systematic annihilation. Bashevis Singer wrote novels to highlight the psychological disorders of the Jews in his novels.

In this study entitled "*A Psychoanalytic Study of the Select Fiction of Isaac Bashevis Singer*," the main focus is on the reinterpretation of the ideas of Isaac Bashevis Singer relying on the psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud was born in 1856 to Jewish parents in Moravia. In his early days he was immensely fascinated by the Bible which later took his attention towards Darwin's theory. Soon he was fascinated by the medical studies for which he joined the University of Vienna in 1873, but he was treated as an excluded one because of his Jewish origin. After the completion of his medical degree in 1881 his attention drew towards the study of nervous diseases. It was Freud who founded that neurosis is more of a psychological aspect than physiological. Freud observes thus:

The symptomatic picture presented by traumatic neurosis approaches that of hysteria in the wealth of its similar motor symptoms, but surpasses it as a rule in its strongly marked signs of subjective ailment (in which it resembles hypochondria or melancholia) as well as in the evidence it gives of a far more comprehensive general enfeeblement and disturbance of the mental capacities. (Freud 36)

Sigmund Freud proposed the theories of repression and unconscious, sublimation, transference defence mechanisms in his seminal works such as *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *The Psychopathology Of Everyday Life* (1901), *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1919), *On Narcissism* (1914), *Beyond the pleasure Principle* (1920). He worked on the aspects on unconscious mind, although Aristotle denied the fact that man is driven by the unconscious behaviours, he said man is a rational being but:

Freud in a sense postulated that we bear a form of “otherness” within ourselves: we cannot claim fully to comprehend even ourselves, why we act as we do, why we make certain moral and political decisions, why we harbour given motive, we may be deluding ourselves; and much of our thought and action is not freely determined by us but driven by unconscious forces which we can barely fathom. Moreover, far from being based on reason, our thinking is intimately dependent upon the body, upon its instincts of survival and aggression, as well as obstinate features that cannot be dismissed (as in the Cartesian tradition where the mind is treated as the disembodied phenomenon) such as its size, colour and social situation. (M. A. R. Habib, 571)

Sigmund Freud explored the unconscious mental activity through the inner workings of human mind where the individuals are oblivious about the concept of their conscious, sub conscious and unconscious emotions and behavioural activities. He has investigated in his works the complexity of relationships between the mind and the body of an individual and the consequence of emotions and behaviour. This thesis attempts to add a new perspective demonstrating Isaac Bashevis Singer writing potential to document the scenes of oppression that he had witnessed during the Holocaust. In all his major works he is trying to promote the Old Jewish Culture and is evoking a sense of fight in his characters to overcome their psychological traumas caused due to Holocaust. Paul Kresh writes in “*The Magician of 86th Street* that America gave him a chance to feel free as a Jew in comparison with the treatment Jews received in Poland” (Kresh 154).

The famous novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer : *The Family Moskat*, (1950) ; *The Magician of Lublin* (1960) ; *The Slave* (1962) ; *Enemies: A Love Story* (1966) ; *The Manor* (1967) ; *Shosha* (1978) ; *Satan In Goray* (1979) created moral and spiritual strength among the people to preserve the past and contribute to the propagation of Jewish culture. Singer has been appreciated much by his English readers than Yiddish speakers. He was the one who maintained the canonical status.

The critics of past and present have analysed the technical, cultural and historical aspects of the novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer. In his novels psychological issues such as anxiety disorder, depression, insomnia, Schizophrenia, hysteria, survival guilt, neurosis and suicidal tendency are discussed. The application of psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud is relevant to understand the psychic wounds of the Jews.

In his various lectures, books and in his interviews, Freud has discussed in detail the psychological disturbances prevailing in the 20th century among the Jews during Holocaust. As a psychologist and Freud critic John Kihlstrom himself admits, “More than Einstein or Watson and Crick, more than Hitler or Lenin, Roosevelt or Kennedy, more than Picasso, Eliot, or Stravinsky, more than the Beatles or Bob Dylan, Freud's influence on modern culture has been profound and long-lasting” (Kihlstrom 123). Freud in his famous lectures on psychoanalysis explains the terms like hysteria, physical traumas equating to somatic traumas (post-traumatic stress disorder) which lead to hysterical paralyses. Adolf Grunbaum in his “*Précis of the Foundations of Psychoanalysis: a Philosophical Critique*” asserts that “While psychoanalysis may thus be said to be scientifically alive, it is currently hardly well” (Grunbaum 228). Freud was the prominent figure of twentieth century talking about psychoanalysis and other ailments leading to hypnosis. Undoubtedly, twentieth century was known as Freud century. He focused on the neurotic conditions of the people with a ‘damaged ego’ to cure them. Freud in his final chapters of “*An Outline of Psychoanalysis*” insists “that it is neither practical nor fair to scientifically define what is normal and abnormal, and despite his theory’s accuracy, ‘reality will always remain unknowable” (83). He claims that although his theory is correct to the best of his knowledge. “It is unlikely that such generalizations can universally be correct” (Freud 96). He has further focused on the studies on hysteria, dream interpretation, neuroses and dreams, theory of instincts in his famous books: *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1919), *On Narcissism* (1914), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). His works are

the landmarks of twentieth century giving an insight into the psychoanalytical and socialistic approach. Sigmund Freud has given 320 different books, articles, and essays explaining the varied concepts and ailments related to Psychological, Sociological disorders. In 1996, *Psychological Science* reached the conclusion that "There is literally nothing to be said, scientifically or therapeutically, to the advantage of the entire Freudian system or any of its component dogmas." Jacques Lacan a renowned psychologist and psychoanalyst rejected the link of psychoanalysis with social theory saying:

That human passion is structured by the desire of others and that we express deep feelings through the 'relay' of others. He thus saw desire as a social phenomenon and psychoanalysis as a theory of how the human subject is created through social interaction. Desire appears through a combination of language, culture and the spaces between people. (Lacan)

Ana Freud was the daughter of Sigmund Freud, she continued the psychological investigation of her father and investigated and experimented on new patients suffering from the psychological diseases such as depression; neurosis, hysteria, schizophrenia and concluded that man is governed by Id, Ego and Super –Ego affirming the explorations of her father. Anna explored the conscious and unconscious mind and continued the tradition of Freud. The science of psychology flourished and the scholars took keen interest in the study of human mind in the 20th century. Freud's theories about Oedipus complex, libido, repression and unconscious became very popular. Psychology became popular with the researchers and critics

and the tools of psychiatry and psychotherapy were applied to cure the patients suffering from psychological ailments.

In 1885 Freud went to Paris and met Jean Martin Charcot who was a neurologist dealing with medical psychopathology. He had specialized in hysteria and Freud got influenced by Charcot. In France, there was another famous psychologist Josef Breuer who treated his patients and recorded the results and published his findings in various International Journals. His approach was clinical. Wilhelm Stekel was a renowned student of Freud and he founded the “psychoanalytic Society. He specialized in repression and made valuable contribution to the development of psychotherapy in Europe. Stekel observed thus:

In anxiety the libido is transformed into organic and somatic symptoms; in doubt, the libido is transformed into intellectual symptoms. The more intellectual someone is, the greater will be the doubt component of the transformation forces. Doubt becomes pleasure sublimated as intellectual achievement. (Stekel 92)

Erich Fromm was connected with the Frankfurt School of critical theory and was a reputed social psychologist and psychoanalyst. He developed the theory of freedom and wrote *Escape From Freedom, Psychoanalysis and Religion*, and *The Sane Society*. He was influenced by the writings and ideas of Freud but the Neo-Freudian such as Karen Horney, Carl Jung joined him. Fromm gave new insights to the ideas of Freud about Oedipus complex and death instincts. Fromm gave new insights to the concepts of Freud and laid emphasis on the role of freedom in the life of the individuals. He observes in *Man For Himself* thus: “Man’s main task in life is to

give birth to become what he potentially is. The most important product of his effort is his own personality” (Fromm 123).

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was a German philosopher who gave the concept of nihilism as he declared the death of God. Nietzsche and Freud held the similar views on the concept of unconscious mind, on the idea of repression and about the concept that repressed and instinctive drives condition the behavior of man. He expressed his views on illusions of illusion and on dreams that are complex. He made positive contribution to the development of psychoanalysis. Nietzsche interprets “the unconscious differently than Freud. Nietzsche considers ‘the unconsciousness as a stake than a central concept. Nietzsche holds that the unconscious mind holds repressed feelings, hidden perceptions and concealed phobias” (Nietzsche 123).

Alfred W. Adler played a major role in the field of personality development. He was the first thinker who considered human beings as an individual whole. He laid stress on the development of individual personality. He believed that society has a major role in the personality development of the individuals. In 2002, Adler published “A Review of General Psychology” and he became a prominent psychologist of the world.

Carl Jung brought revolution in the domain of psychoanalysis introducing for the first time analytical psychology. He was a Swiss psychiatrist who investigated the fields of anthropology, archeology and philosophy. He studied Freudian theories and gave new vision of human psychology. He carried out the science of psychology making several experiments in consciousness and collective consciousness and

investigated the role of archetypes. He delivered many lectures on issues such as collective consciousness, psychological complex and introversion. He published *The Archetypes* and *Psychology and Alchemy*,

Lacan was a French psychologist and controversial psychiatrist who influenced most of the psychologists of the 20th century. He also influenced the post-structuralists of his time as he delivered in many lectures the future of post-structuralism. His ideas in the identity formation based on *Mirror Stage* became very popular in the history of psychology. He experimented in the female patients called Aimee and gave fruitful analysis of paranoid and neurosis. He published *The Four Fundamental Concepts* re-interpreting the theories of Freud.

Karen Horney was a German thinker settled in America who questioned the traditional theories of Freud and gave new theories in the context of the 20th century. She is the founder of female psychology and challenged Freud's theory of penis envy. She expressed her disgust at the Freudian theories of men and women psychology. She is called Neo-Freudian; she published *The Neurotic Personality of our Time* and *Inner Conflicts*. Horney looked at the neurosis syndrome from various angles and investigated it from scientific point of view. She believed that neurosis is a continuous process. She believed that the main cause of neurosis is the growth of inner conflicts. Divorce, failure in life, loss of job and terror of death are some of the causes of neurosis.

Ihab Hassan is a modern psychoanalyst who wrote many books on postmodernism and cultural issues. He belonged to Egypt but became Professor at

the University of Wisconsin, America. His book *Disintegration of Orpheus* became very popular because of his new approach to the Freudian concepts.

Laing was a British psychiatrist who wrote several articles on mental illness. He explored new phenomena relating to psychosis. He studied existential philosophy and wrote his famous *The Divided Self* and *Self and Others*. He investigated the feelings and emotions of the patients and came to the conclusion that stress of life, anxieties and tensions or some unfortunate accident in the life of man result into the loss of self. When man is born he has the unity of self but the stress of life often brings about the dissociation of self. Laing observes that the disintegration of self brings chaos in life and man loses balance in his behavior. Laing also investigated the causes and symptoms of schizophrenia.

In this study the following psychological disorders of the characters of Bashevis Singer will be explored and investigated:

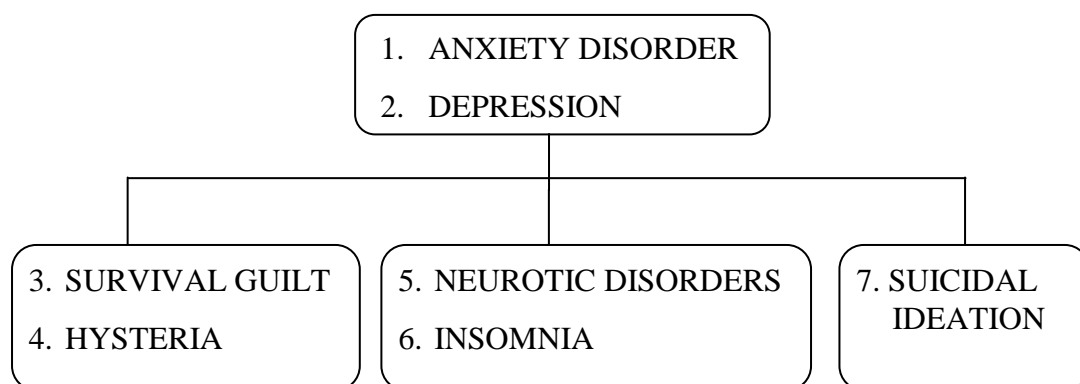


Figure 1.1 : Psychological Ailments

In antiquity the word anxiety was used to express the abnormal behavior of man. The psychologists in the 19th and in early century took keen interest in anxiety syndrome.

Anxiety is a normal human emotion. Anxiety promotes stress disorder and often leads to the dissociation of mind. In cases it leads to depression. In poetry the term anxiety was used for the first time by John Auden. In 1998, Alfred Adler described anxiety as of non-aggressive character. Anxiety derives an individual with great force to behave in an abnormal manner. Adler called anxiety a aggression drive. Freud felt that “it would detract from the pivotal position of the sex drive in psychoanalytic theory” (90). Freud observes that “feelings of anxiety and fear disturb the normal working of mind” (90). C.S. Hall in his *A Primer of Freudian Psychology* observes that “anxiety refers to the fear of danger that seems impending. Freud outlined three types of anxiety; the Objective Anxiety, Neurotic Anxiety and “Moral Anxiety” (Hall 13).

In life often people experience periods of depression of related to work, social and family responsibilities. Continuous depression affects adversely and impacts the ability of the individuals. Freud wrote “Mourning and Melancholia” to discuss the nature of depression. Freud observes that “the reality of depression lies in the structure of the mind in which Freud’s libidinal drives and topographical structure of mind bring forth conflicts in relation to an object” (Freud 90) Freud explored the causes of depression and points out that loss of objects, repression of libido into the ego and often are conflicts that remain hidden. In *The Magician of Lublin* (1960), *The Slave* (1962) the heroes suffer from depression of life. The hero of *The Magician of Lublin* is Yasha Mazur who leads a life of sexual adventures “walking the tightrope merely inches from disaster” He is a heretic and is cut off from the roots of the Jewish tradition of nobility and this is the main cause of his mental disorder. He is false and leads an artificial life indulging in the tricks of his magical games. Singer

gives him freedom to make conscious decisions that determine the progress of life. In his journey of life he is battered and suffers the psychological anguish leading an alienated life; changing women in the mad pursuit of sexual pleasures.

The survival of guilt is extremely important in the Holocaust literature. Giorgio Agamben takes up the historical perspective and traces the social and political causes that motivated Adolf Hitler to launch the drive to decimate the Jews. Hannah Arendt discussed the nature of survival guilt in *Men in Dark Times*, *The Human Condition* and *The Life of the Mind*. The SS guards passed draconian laws to crush and bulldoze the individuality of the Jews. Arendt's famous essay, "On Violence", distinguishes between violence and power. Gillian Banner explores the loss of memory and the guilt of survival in her book. Murray Baumgarten in, takes up the issue of resistance to the Holocaust in *Resisting the Holocaust*. Bashevis Singer dramatized the guilty consciousness of the survivors of the concentration camps. Cathy Caruth discusses in detail the symptoms of "Dissociative Identity Disorder." And survival guilt in detail in her study on trauma. Cathy has observed that mental disorder is caused by memory impairment of the survivors of the concentration camps and the psychological ailments experienced by the survivors who didn't live after having witnessed so much cruelty and barbarity at Auschwitz.

Freud is famous in the world who investigated the symptoms of hysteria. Charcot also examined traumatic hysteria and investigated the process of unconscious system-formation. Josef Breuer further investigated the symptoms of hysteria. Josef Breuer diagnoses Anna's illness as a case of hysteria. Anna suffered from disturbances of vision, hearing and language. She also suffered lapses of consciousness and hallucinations. Webster Dictionary defines hysteria as "a

psychiatric condition variously characterized by emotional excitability, excessive anxiety, sensory and motor disturbances, or the unconscious simulation organic disorders” (*Webster Dictionary*, 2017 edition, 231).

Freud investigated the causes and symptom of neurosis in his *Interpretations of Dreams*. Freud argued that the main symptom of neurosis found in human behavior is the result of repression. An individual is afflicted with neurosis when his mind is in conflict and he fails to resolve the conflict. In his *Introductory Lectures 16 Freud explores the concept of neurosis arguing that "ostensibly healthy life is interspersed with a great number of trivial and in practice unimportant symptoms" (Introductory Lectures 457)*. A neurotic person loses the charm of life and symptoms of neurosis prevent his enjoyment and active achievement of life. The characters of Bashevis Singer such as Yasha and Jacob become neurotics because of their victimization of the forces of Holocaust. Freud took pains to distinguish between neurosis and psychosis and argued that “in neurosis the ego suppresses part of the id out of allegiance to reality, whereas in psychosis it lets itself be carried away by the id and detached from a part of reality” (Freud 202).

The psychologists took keen interest in exploring the causes of insomnia which is very common psychological disease. Insomnia is also known as sleeplessness in the simple language. It is a sleep disorder which disturbs the sleep of people. Sleep is a source of rest and comfort; it releases from the tensions and worries of life. Sleep is indispensable for a healthy life like food for the body. Many patients suffering from insomnia have difficulty if falling asleep. When an individual suffers from the mood of aggression; fear and horror or when a patient is haunted by unforgettable memory insomnia is a common affliction. Watson Vaughan in his book

Clinician's Guide to Sleep Disorders observes that insomnia can be short time and long time and can result because of chronic pain, heart failure, restlessness. Bashevis Singer has depicted the Jews who are experiencing insomnia because they are restless and have no future. Yasha in *The Magician of Lublin* is always haunted by the nightmares because his job is risky and death can come to him any time. He admits to Magda and Emilia that he often flies in the air and death can come to him at any time. He suffers insomnia and often is haunted by the terrifying scenes of death and accident. Freud in his *Interpretation of Dreams* explored the main cause of sleeplessness in his patients. He came to the conclusion that insomnia is the product of restlessness and anxiety disorder. High stress, depression and psychological obsession bring about the symptoms of insomnia. Sleep disorder is the main cause of many psychological ailments. The complexity of sleep disorders result into psychic disturbance and often the individuals behave in an abnormal manner. Freud observes that sexual repression is one of the major factors of sleep disorder. It is found that the regression that takes place during sleep disturbs the mental balance; sleep disorders hinder the harmonious growth of the individuals. In Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth walks in sleep being the victim of sleep disorders. In *The Slave* of Bashevis Singer, the protagonist Jacob is a victim of sleep disorder since he is always haunted by the scenes of killing of the members of his family.

Freud was the first psychologist who propounded his theory of suicidal tendency. Suicide is very common in the modern people because many individuals are too fragile to cope with the existential realities so they end their life. The term "suicidal tendency" was coined by Freud for the first time. Suicidal tendency is common with the weak characters. The weak and the coward characters feel that

death, a sign of deliverance from sufferings and pain. As Freud claims in his *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death*, in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality. There is no sense of the passage of time; time does not work chronologically in our unconscious (123). Dr Laing in his book *The Divided Self* observes that death weak people fear death. In the novels of Bashevis singer death is a reality of life. Vickroy observes that suicide tendency is common in those who fail in life or who lost their jobs or are divorced.

Singer's first novel *Satan in Goray* was published in 1935 exploring the degeneration of Sabbatai Zevi who is the head of messianic movement. Singer focuses on the theme of catastrophe and ambiguity in his first novel. The background of the novel is Chmielnicki massacres that led to the killing of one million Jews. The town of Goray which was the seat of scholars was completely deserted. "For weeks after the razing of Goray, corpses lay neglected in every street." Sabbatai Zevi was a big debauch who married Sarah, the famous prostitute. Singer exults in sexuality, the grotesque and absurd depicting the chaos and disorder in the life of Sabbatai Zevi and Gedaliya. The world view which emerges is that of a world totally inverted and disintegrating. The novel depicts the scenes of degradation and tragedies which ensue from the libertine behavior of Sabbatai Zevi. Gedaliya as leader of Goray believes in the principle "Be fruitful and multiply" and moral chaos follows; the streets are filled with pregnant 12 years old brides; adultery is openly encouraged. Gedaliya sees sex as a way of reuniting the dichotomized male and female worlds. Sarah is a mysterious woman; her bizarre behavior, her promiscuous style of living and her witchcraft intensifies the gruesome atmosphere in the novel. Richelle is always haunted by the old memories and experiences nightmares. Singer has created a

surreal world where all characters are psychic wrecks. Richelle suffers from mysterious ills and Sarah suffers from madness because of her sexual forwardness. For Freud, ‘the unconscious is the object of a meta-psychological codification, a double point of view, at once *topical* and *dynamic*’ (Freud 114). For Freud, “the unconscious is a systematic part of mind like the other psychic co-systems” (Freud 114) namely “the conscious and the preconscious. The unconscious mind holds repressed feelings, hidden perceptions, concealed phobias, automatic reactions, blocked memories, thoughts, and desires that impact human behavior, burdened with traumatic experiences” (Freud 114).

Jacob in *The Slave* is psychologically battered since he feels that he has no divine father and is abandoned to a life of care, anxiety and failure. The critics have compared this novel with *Silas Marner* because of religious issues. Jacob is burdened with his moral responsibility of restoring faith in the savage world. He is young and a learned man working as a slave in 17th century Poland. Jacob is sick of life as he leads a directionless life. He lives alone on the top of a mountain as a social outcast bound to herd cows. Jacob is sick and sullen because the semblance of civilization is lost. The tall girls come to him exciting his sexual powers but behaving like beasts. They pull their skirts to show him insect bites on their hips and thighs. “Some of them could scarcely speak Polish, grunted like animals, made signs with their hands, screamed and laughed madly.... The village abounded in cripples, boys and girls with goiters, distended heads and disfiguring birth marks...” (Bashevis Singer, *The Slave* 7). Jacob is living with people who are on the verge of disintegration. For them sex is simply copulation and the corpse of a baby is just a garbage. Jacob represents

all those Jews who were stranded by the Holocaust and fled away for survival. Irving Kristal observes thus:

When sex is made public the human emotional connection disappears. Jacob is psychologically disturbed to observe the scenes of human degradation on the mountain. Jacob's plight is expressed by Singer in a simple and lyrical language. He feels lonely and only hears men barking like dogs and growling like animals. (Kristal 13)

Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* observes that "when the humanizing force of religion declines the result is pull towards obscenity. In such a situation the functional role of religion is lost and people become uncouth, pernicious and degrading" (123). Singer comments thus:

An awful stench rose from that mob; the odors of sweat and urine mingled with something for which there is no name, as if these bodies were putrefying while still alive.... The men hee-hawed and whinnied, supported themselves on each other's shoulders, and barked like dogs. (42)

Jacob is seriously concerned with the dismal fate of man and he feels depressed observing the depth of debasement. He is sick of the heartlessness of the people around him and becomes depressed. Jacob lives alone atop the mountain; Jacob comes in contact with Wanda who daily brings food for him on the mountain. They fall in love with each other. Jacob's spiritual struggle becomes the main cause of his mental disorder; his soul is in conflict as he cannot enjoy the sexual pleasures with Wanda. His self-imposed restraints give him psychological tortures.

The hero of *The Magician of Lublin* is Yasha Mazur who leads a life of sexual adventures “walking the tightrope merely inches from disaster” He is a heretic and is cut off from the roots of the Jewish tradition of nobility and this is the main cause of his mental disorder. He is false and leads an artificial life indulging in the tricks of his magical games. Singer gives him freedom to make conscious decisions that determine the progress of life. In his journey of life he is battered and suffers the psychological anguish leading an alienated life; changing women in the mad pursuit of sexual pleasures. The main cause of the psychological ailments of Yasha is his involvement in the constant battle with life and the conflict between his fantasy and reality. In spite of his best efforts, he fails to conquer the evil drive. He finishes an issue and the other begins draining him away from the inner energies. In his early childhood Yasha was reared in a pious atmosphere as his mother and father were religious people. He studies Talmud but as he grew he discarded religion and joined the circus after his parents died. He has a home in Lublin with his wife Esther but he goes from place to place to show his tricks to make money. He has become famous as a “circus performer and hypnotist.” Like a true magician he is not a stable personality, he assumes various guises; has a different mistress in each city. His libertine nature, sexual exuberance becomes the chief causes of his degradation and depravity. The relationship with a middle class Gentile Emilia brings anguish and depression in Yasha’s life. He wants her to be his mistress but Emilia wants him to marry her divorcing his wife. It is a challenging job for Yasha; he has to divorce his wife and embrace Christianity to live with Emilia. Yasha’s sufferings begin as he remains restless and is in the grip of anxieties and tensions of life. He falls and gets injured as he cannot concentrate on his tricks. He has no communion with God

because he thinks that the gifts of God are “plagues, famines, poverty, and pogroms.” He is faced with the dilemma of choosing “between his religion and the cross, between Esther and Emilia, between honesty and crime.” These choices will “seal his destiny.” Freud comments thus:

The symptomatic picture presented by traumatic neurosis approaches that of hysteria in the wealth of its similar motor symptoms, but surpasses it as a rule in its strongly marked signs of subjective ailment (in which it resembles hypochondria or melancholia) as well as in the evidence it gives of a far more comprehensive general enfeeblement and disturbance of the mental capacities. (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 36)

Bashevis Singer wrote his famous novel *Enemies: A Love Story* in 1972 depicting the tattered life and the struggles of Herman Broder. The plot of the novel portrays the life poignant life of Herman conditioned by the gripping force of past trauma. Herman is a neurotic protagonist of Singer who escaped Nazi persecution by hiding in hayloft for three years with the support of Yadwiga. He marries Yadwiga; migrates to New York and struggles to survive in a mercantile alien society. He resorts to deception and professional dishonesty to earn money and developing relationship with several women. He believes that “survival is based upon guiles. Herman is so much lost in the bog of lies and deceptions that there seems to be no escape for him. He is always haunted by fear that sooner or later his lies will be exposed and all will be lost for him. He lives presently in an idyllic Brooklyn home with his dedicated wife Yadwiga but it all seems a disguise and deception. His

intimacy with Masha virtually consumes him and disintegrates his self. He becomes a divided soul; half of his nights are spent with Yadviga and other half in dreaming of sexual pleasures with Masha. His house of cards collapses with the arrival of his former wife Tamara. She has come out of the graves and visits Herman who is guilt-ridden. Herman had thought she had been killed by the Nazi along with her two children but her arrival creates further complications in his life. Herman has already built a house on the sand and his tangled web of lies is threatened by his former wife Tamara. The plot of the novel deals with the trivial love triangle of a sick and adulterous anti-hero Herman. His heart rending tale is poignant; his anguish is indescribable and his trapped existence is the main cause of his psychological ailments. Herman lacks the courage to commit suicide. He is on the rack and often he thinks of ending his life. Freud writes: "Our habit is to lay stress on the fortuitous causation of the death-accident, disease, infection, advanced age; in this way we betray an effort to reduce from a necessity to a chance event." (Freud 290).

Herman lives "like a worm" by managing to "shut his eyes, stop up his ears, close his mind" (Bashevis Singer, *Enemies* 19). Indeed, Herman admits, "When a man hides in an attic for years, he ceases to be a part of society. The truth is that I'm still hiding in an attic right here in America" (101).

In *Shosha*, Singer dramatizes the fate of the Jews marching toward their own destruction in pre-war Poland. They are trapped like beasts in a cage by the will to believe that resulted into their eternal anguish. The main protagonist of the novel is Aaron Greidinger who is also the main narrator is leading a hellish life because of his libertine nature. Shosha is the child-bride of Aaron; the next door neighbour at

Krochmalma Street in Warsaw. Shosha suffers from trauma in her life as her sister dies in an epidemic during World War 1. This tragedy leads to her mental disorder and she behaves like a mentally retarded girl. She is completely dependent upon her mother. She is not an impressive beauty; physically, Shosha is nearly-flat chested and her breasts are not growing. It seems she has never reached womanhood and this complex gives her mental torture. She is unable to have children and this is another cause of her disorientation of mind. Aaron ignores all these disabilities of Shosha and is mad in love with her. He marries her taking responsibility to look after her. Aaron's mother was cold and he enjoys the warmth of motherly love from Shosha's mother Bashele. All the characters in the novel condemn Aaron for his liaison with Shosha and this becomes the main cause of his mental anguish and psychological ailments. Aaron has various girlfriends and his libertine nature becomes the main cause of his psychic pressures. Dora, Celia, Betty the actress from America and the gentle peasant girl Tekla are his mistresses. Aaron confesses his intimacy with various women thus: "In all the novels I have read, the hero desired only one woman, but here I was lusting after the whole female gender" (Singer 23). Aaron emerges as a womanizer trapped in the abyss of darkness and despair. Aaron's swarm of women and his harem is a moral transgression and he suffers because of this "forbidden sin." His perversion is an act of dehumanization and as the novel progresses he grows tenser and tenser in life.

Singer's famous novel *The Family Moskat* written in English was published in 1952 focusing on the years 1911 to 1939. Singer dramatizes the conflict between the old world and the modern world depicting the plight of the Jews who are

dispersing and disintegrating. The novel is about three generations; sons fight with their fathers and all characters are restless and traumatic. The novel begins with the return of Reb Meshulam with his wife Rosa. His new marriage symbolizes his decline and begins the sexual tensions in the novel. The novel begins with the theme of unity and togetherness but as the plot progresses the separation and disintegration takes place.

The Chapter Second introduces Asa Heshel Bannet; innocent and philosophical who feels that he is misfit in the Jewish society. Reb is the first to suffer psychic depression; he grows sick and lies on his death bed regretting the way he led his life. He realizes that “all is vanity and vexation of spirit”. Asa is always in conflict and suffers eternal tortures because of the guilty consciousness. He fails to follow the dictates of the Hasidic values of life. Asa is an anti-hero of Singer; his painful struggle ends in despair and he always feel lonely and cut off from the roots of the Moskat tribe. He feels that the Jews are trapped in history by family and heritage. Freud observes that the guilt and repressed memories lead to the internal psychic disorder. To Freud, “when a subject is attacked externally, it becomes unconscious, but it also remains unconsciously active” (Freud, *The Unconscious* 47). Freud further states that the “repressed does not constitute the whole of the unconscious. The unconscious is the more extensive; the repressed is part of the unconscious” (Freud 47). When “a traumatic subject is reminded about its original trauma or it witnesses a similar incident or associated signifiers, it goes back to its original distressing incident” (Freud 47) Both Freud and Singer place great emphasis on the deterministic process. In Singer’s religious terms man suffers dislocation of mind when he loses his communion with divinity but Freud believes that the final

pathological result is psychosis and debilitation. In *The Family Moskat*, Asa brings his own dissolution. Asa tells Barbara in desperation: "I have a feeling that all of humanity is caught in a trap. No going forward and no going backward. We Jews will be the first victims" (Bashevis Singer's *The Family Moskat* 526).

Bashevis Singer used his creative potential to depict the inner turmoil of his Jewish characters; his characters struggle in their life to survive in a harsh global world but their sexual adventure and moral transgression eventually lead them to death and despair. Singer's main mission is to resurrect a tiny world that was brutally extinguished from the face of the earth. He had witnessed the poverty-ridden ghettos of the Jews living in Poland. Singer is always haunted by the images of Polish Jews, who were massacred in the concentration camps of Auschwitz. In his novels Singer is always a boy and Warsaw is always on the verge of destruction. He was influenced by the writings of Spinoza, Gogol and Dostoyevsky with full faith in Talmud and Kabbala. He imitated Thomas Mann's novel *Buddenbrooks* depicting the collapse of families and disconnection of human relationships; the clash of modernity and old age rigidity. The old families are broken up by the emergence of new age and culture and how they are split, financially, socially and humanly. His characters are caught in the whirlpool of despair, depression, envy, helplessness and confusion.

Singer's fiction is for the growth and transformation of humanity. The themes promote understanding among different groups and in the resolution of all conflicts obstructing the growth of individuality. In novels *The Slave*, *The Magician of Lublin*, *Enemies*, *Shosha*, *The Family Moskat* and *Satan in Goray* Singer has directed his art to explore his Jewish identity and to restore order out of chaos. Singer's heroes strive

to vanquish society and political system in quest for truth and justice; peace and social stability and for ideal relationship between man and woman. Asa Heshel of *The Family Moskat* struggles to liberate his self from the quagmire of poverty and misery preaching the ideal of “more sex and fewer children” Yasha Mazur of *The Magician of Lublin* seeks magic to escape from the sordid and mundane existential realities. He desperately goes on changing women for his sexual liberty in his urge to get release from the tensions of life and existence. But all his experiments prove counterproductive and at the end of the novel he experiences that only true love and loyalty and faith can give man stability of life and happiness. Herman of *Enemies* begins his quest for love and God breaking all the norms of society. Aaron Greidinger of *Shosha* seeks true love in the cruel war-ridden world. Singer wrote in Yiddish language which was dying about the world of Polish Jews destroyed by the Second World War. Singer employed the elements of fantasy, magic and folktales. . In all his works, Singer articulates his longing to restore order out of chaos and to explore the eternal truths depicting the true relationship between man and God. All the novels of Singer are connected with his life and his people: “the novels *The Family Moskat* and *Satan in Goray* portray people in an object manner.

In *Satan in Goray* he rejects religious fanaticism; *The Family Moskat* deals with relationship between individual and community. Investigating Singer’s novels in the context of chaos and disorder that he found in the world is a poignant experience. This study will investigate the main issues taken up by Singer in the famous novels such as *The Family Moskat*, (1950), *The Magician of Lublin*, (1960), *The Slave* (1962), *Enemies: A Love Story* (1966), *The Manor* (1967), *Shosha* (1978)

Satan in Goray, (1979) and although, he lived in America for thirty years, but he always thinks of poverty; violence; massacre; misery and persecution and reveals in his novels that the American Dream gradually dissolves and harsh Polish reality grips his psyche. In the world of Singer the light is gone out; a switch is turned off and there is darkness everywhere. His world exists before and after the fall suffused with horrors. His characters suffer since they explore; experiment and use their individuality expressing an irrepressible love of irrepressible life.

Singer's novel *The Manor* depicts the traumatic experiences of Calman and his wife Clara who dies because of massive heart attack. The novel is a heartrending tale of the Jews who suffered alienation, psychological trauma because of the Jewish massacre. The hero Ezriel Baddad is portrayed as a typical Jewish merchant confronting with the forces of chaos and disorder. Calman has four daughters, Shaindel, Miriam Lieba and Tsipele who lead a desperate life. Jochebed is the oldest suffers acute poverty; Shaindel marries a doctor who ill-treats her. Miriam Lieba runs away with a doctor who proves worthless.

Objectives of the Proposed Research

- 1) To trace the socio – political forces of the contemporary era and their impact on the psyche of the characters of Isaac Bashevis Singer.
- 2) To foreground Holocaust and its deep rooted psycho-social implications.
- 3) To analyze themes, metaphors, symbols and stylistics variations used by Isaac Bashevis Singer.

- 4) To analyze select texts of Isaac Bashevis Singer with reference to psychoanalysis.

The following texts are selected

- 1) *The Family Moskat*, (1950)
- 2) *The Magician of Lublin*, (1960)
- 3) *The Slave* (1962)
- 4) *Enemies: A Love Story* (1966)
- 5) *Shosha* (1978)
- 6) *Satan in Goray*, (1979)
- 7) *The Manor* (1998)

Review of Literature of Past and Present

Susan More (1982) in her article “The World of I. B. Singer” observes that the novels of Singer depict the antics of dybbuks reflecting his view of life and reality; portraying the oddities and the struggles of the Jewish characters.

Impact of Jewish Holocaust on Bashevis Singer

The majority of critics of Singer wrote articles and books describing the impact of Jewish Holocaust on the vision of Singer. Murray, Baumgarten, (1998) takes up the issue of resistance to the Holocaust by Bashevis Singer and the discussion focuses on the resistance and displacement of the Jewish characters of Singer. He observes that Singer wrote novels to depict the horror of the Jewish Holocaust and the scenes of mass destruction. Giorgio Agamben describes the plight of the inmates of camps of Auschwitz. He has given the examples of the hellish life lived by the Jews in their

struggle to survive the trauma of Auschwitz. All these historical episodes motivated Singer to write about the plight of the Jews. No wonder the characters of Singer are the victims of these forces of Holocaust. Inga Clendinnen in *Reading the Holocaust* describes the events of the Holocaust. Her reinterpretation reveals the moral and intellectually bankruptcy of the people who were transported to the concentration camps. Inga Clendinnen has given the term the "Gorgon effect" to explain the sickening of imagination. The Jews lost the will to live after their liberation. Clendinnen explores the experience of the Holocaust from both the victims' and the perpetrators' points of view. She discusses the novels of Singer from historical perspective. Finally she considers how the themes of Holocaust found place in fiction of Singer. This study is simply historical and misses the psychoanalytical investigation. Joel E. Dimsdale did the case studies of some of the survivors and found that the traumas of the Holocaust are transmitted to the next generation. The long-term after-effects of Holocaust traumatization are far-reaching. The Holocaust continues to ruin the families of the survivors even today. The radio -activity of the Holocaust are felt even today. Like an atom bomb the Holocaust destroyed homes; families and life of the millions. The Holocaust continues to contaminate everyone who was exposed to it in one way or another.

The Psychological Ailments of the Jews: Loss of Memory.

The critics have published books on the theme of loss of memory of the Jews who were sent to the concentration camps. Singer was greatly impacted by such historical books. Arendt published *Men in Dark Times*, *The Human Condition* and *The Life of the Mind* in which she discussed the nature of power, authority. Arendt's essay, "On Violence", distinguishes between violence and power. Gillian Banner investigates the

loss of memory of the survivors of Holocaust. Loss of memory was a common affliction with the Jewish characters of Singer. Banner has given a detailed analysis of the loss of memory, the symptoms of the psychological ailment. This book provides an evaluation of the dynamics of memory in relation to representations of the Holocaust. Cathy Caruth discusses in detail the symptoms of “Dissociative Identity Disorder”. Cathy has observed that mental disorder is caused by memory impairment. The uncontrollable events of life put heavy pressure on the mind and sensibility of the victim who doesn’t find any meaning in life. The Jews turned pessimistic and nihilistic since they witnessed horrible scenes of death and destruction in the concentration camps. Freud discusses in detail the development of the stages of disintegration of the Jews who were the victims of the Holocaust. William James *Principles of Psychology* “uses four methods to explore an individual, analysis, introspection, study of brain and experimentation” (2). He discusses “illusions giving physiological explanation of the mind he observes and says. “Illusions are thus a special case of the phenomenon of habit” (12). Dominick La Capra discusses the events of brutality, burning of the living Jews and the impact of such horrible events on the mind and sensibility of Bashevis Singer. La Capra explores the problems of alienation, displacement and migration of the Jews who struggled for survival. Harry Stack talks about the symptoms of neurosis in his book *The Inter-personal Theory of Personality* found in the survivors. Harry Stack Sullivan is known for his vision known as the “interpersonal theory of Psychiatry”. He observes that “an individual carries with him the wildness memories of former personal relationships that continue to influence his mind and sensibility. This book is very useful to investigate the role of memories of the survivors of Auschwitz) 23).

Otto Rank averred in his *The Trauma of Birth* that shame and guilt are the products of social and political forces that govern and dominate man. He also investigates the significance and impact of the pre-oedipal phase investigating the Oedipal-complex of Freud. Rank has put forward his psychological interpretation of shame and guilt. Dr .Karen Horney in her book *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, observes that the feeling of guilt is the product of social neglect and differentiation. The emotions of guilt and shame generate fear and inferiority complex. Horney speculated the fact that human beings try to make others feel guilty in society. Horney repudiated the traditional psychoanalytic theory and repudiated Freudian theory of penis envy. Horney contended that “what Freud was really detecting was women's justified envy of men's power in the world” (Horney 123). All latest theories are applied to dig out the inner landscape to investigate the protagonists of Bashevis Singer. Daniel Fuchs recorded the interview of Bashevis Singer with Richard Burgin. Singer discussed his view of life and his art characterization. For Singer, character is the “very essence of literature”. He has dramatized “the demonic, the unconscious and irrational impulse” (Fuchs 308).

The Themes of Love and Tensions: Sex and Sexuality

Singer created the Jewish characters who seek sexual pleasures to overcome the psychological anguish. In most of his novels the Jews develop multiple sexual relations because they believe that life is futile and uncertain and death can come at any time. Many critics have written on these themes. Anne Smith observes that the novels of Singer describe adventurous of love and tensions generated by the relations between the sexes. His protagonists are lecherous, deceitful and egotistical. John

Grass reviewed the novels of Singer in *The New York Times* and commented that his novels are packed with the sexual relations. Yasha, Jacob and Herman are real Jews who indulge in liberal sexual activities and supernatural elements. Each protagonist of Singer wails; screams and cries in his moments of despair giving vent to his mad hurricane of passions.

Anita Susan Grossman reviewed the novels of Bashevis Singer in *The American Spectator* and observed that like Conrad and Nabokov, Singer depicts the “fate of all the Jews of Eastern Europe who came from the shtetl into the flux and chaos of the twentieth century, at the mercy of the forces of history and of their own turbulent passions” in all stories and novels (Grass 307).

The Theme of Depression and Loss of Self in the Novels of Bashevis Singer

Many critics have written on the themes of depression and the loss of self of the characters of Bahevis Singer. His Jewish characters such as Yasha, Herman, Jacob suffer from depression because they have lost their homes and families. Rose Kamel published *Auschwitz and After: Holocaust and Genocide Studies* to document the plight of the Jews who lost their homes, cities and families. Singer got Nobel Prize because his novels are social and political documents structured around the them of depression and acue mental anguish of the Jewish people. Combs A. W. and Snug D discovered “Phenomenal field theory and contributed to the growth of the psychology of personality” (1). They contend that “behavior is determined by the conscious self, described as the phenomenal field of the behaving organism” (12). The working of the mind of an individual can be seen through his eyes and mind. In this study this theory is applied to dig out the inner world of the Jewish characters of

Bashevis Singer. Sean French discussed the themes and the issues depicted in Singer's novel *The King and the Fields*. In this novel "the state of nature is a realm of depravity, violence and unbridled lust. It's also dirty, hungry and chaotic" (315). Irving Malin published *Critical Views of Isaac Bashevis Singer* to explore the radical vision of Bashevis Singer.

The Theme of Struggle for Survival of the Jews

One of the famous themes of Singer is the depiction of struggle of the Jewish characters to exist and survive in the harsh environment of Europe. It is pertinent to note that Singer used the historical events and created a galaxy of characters who struggle for survival. Marcia Allentuck discussed in detail the socio-political forces that transformed the lives of the Jews. The inhuman oppression of the Nazis on the Polish Jews made them sick. They moved from place to place to find a secured place for survival. Herman had to live in hayloft and with the help of Yadwiga he migrated America. In all his major novels Singer depicted the struggle for existence of the Jewish characters. Irving Buchen in his *Isaac Bashevis Singer and the Eternal Past* explored the allegorical nature of the novels of Singer. The learned critic has focused on the metaphor of holocaust that occurred in the 17th century and in the 20th century by the Nazis. Singer depicts a metaphor for God's inconsistency with his chosen people.

Autobiographical Elements in the Novels of Bashevis Singer

It is pertinent to note that Singer himself was a victim of Holocaust. His brother was killed and he had to experience physical and cultural displacement. Many critics wrote articles to explore the auto-biographical elements found in his novels. Singer

uses his own personal traumatic experiences to structure the plots of his novels. Paul Kresh is the only biographer of Bashevis Singer who published *Isaac Bashevis Singer: The Magician of the West 86th Street*. In this book Kresh traces the causes of the anxieties of Singer. In childhood “Singer often speculated on God’s injustices as he discovered that the center no longer seemed to be holding for the world” (Kresh 13). Singer told Joel Blocker and Richard Elman in an interview: “my maternal grandfather was an anti-Hasid; there was always a conflict between my father and my mother about Hasidism because my mother was a little bit of a skeptic” (Blocker 12). Marshall Berger in *Critical Views of Isaac Bashevis Singer* tracing the development of his mysticism and the impact of Spinoza on his mind and sensibility of Singer. The idea that God’s intellect is not balanced by compassion seems to be an obsession in the mind of Singer and his characters. “After nearly a lifetime of pondering the matter, he is sure that his God’s is not Spinoza’s God” (Kresh 63) Bob Barnhardt investigated the inner world of the characters of Bashevis Singer.

The review of literature of the past and the present reveals that no full length study has been done on the topic “*A Psychoanalytic Study of the Select Fiction of Isaac Bashevis Singer*. His characters struggle to explore the meaning of free will in this universe. Singer observes in his many interviews that the man can overcome the snares and evils of this world, but the exertion on the free will is the most difficult of all tasks in this universe.

Narrative Techniques: Images and Symbols in the Novels of Bashevis Singer

Singer is an inventive and creative American writer who revolted against the traditional techniques and evolved his own original style to depict the plight of the

Jewish characters. Tracy Mishkin in his *The Emerging Landscape: Tradition and Innovation* explores the use of magical realism technique in the works of Bashevis Singer. He commented thus:

Isaac Bashevis Singer was born in Poland in 1904 to a Hasidic early life contained many contradictory elements, which may have his development as a writer of Magical Realism. He was raised in rural settings, which gave him access to both the folk culture and the modern intellectual culture. (2)

Cathy Caruth observes that Trauma is a close and personal experience of a lethal event which can lead to the death of a victim or the death of its loved one. Trauma is something beyond the expectation and the acceptance of a subject. It comes immediately to an individual but exists in its psyche forever. Its frequency fluctuates within the mind and the body of its victim but it never leaves the casualty. Trauma studies have become significant in literary criticism with the contribution of Cathy Caruth. Cathy Caruth suggests that “in a catastrophic age, that is, trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves” (Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 11). Judith Herman observes thus:

One of the many casualties of the war's devastation was the illusion of manly honor and glory in battle. Under conditions of unremitting exposure to the horrors of trench warfare, men began to break down in

shocking numbers. Confined and rendered helpless, subjected to constant threat of annihilation, and forced to witness the mutilation and death of their comrades without any hope of reprieve, many soldiers began to act like hysterical women. They screamed and wept uncontrollably. They froze and could not move. They became mute and unresponsive. (Herman, 20)

Singer employed the images of bones, fire, ruined hills and towers to depict the ruined and depressed life of the Jewish characters. Robert Jay Lifton in his book *The Life of the Self: Toward a New Psychology* observes that “the survivor undergoes a radical but temporary diminution in his sense of actuality in order to avoid losing his sense completely and temporarily; he undergoes a reversible form of psychic death in order to avoid a permanent or psychic death” (Lifton 144).

Supernatural Elements in the Novels of Bashevis Singer

Many critics have written on the theme of supernaturalism found in the novels of Bashevis Singer. Hawthorne's “Satan dwells in the forest of man's imagination, but Satan in Singer's work is an actual Character or persona, usually invisible, sometimes in disguise” (466). “Regarding supernatural element in Singer, Nili Wachtel says: “Satan and demons are a 'Spiritual Stenography', symbols through which he expresses his view of inhuman condition.” (184) Michael Fixter says: “Singer's greatest achievement is the convincing authenticity with which he handles the supernatural as a real but different dimension in human existence” (110). Ben Siegel is of the view that Singer's devils and imps symbolize those erratic, wayward, and

diabolic impulses that deter one from the path of piety and morality” (43). Thus, it shows that the temptations of Satan are very strong in the novels of Singer and a scholarly person like Jacob is unable to withstand those temptations.

Research Gap

The majority of the critics and the reviewers of Bashevis Singer examined and investigated the plots and the social and political issues discussed by Singer, but there is no full length study on the topic “*Isaac Bashevis Singer: A Psychological Study.*” The review of literature of past and present clearly highlights that the texts are analyzed from the fresh perspective. There are plenty research papers on Singer but present thesis is a comprehensive study on the psychological ailments of the characters of Singer. The impact of the Jewish Holocaust on the mind and sensibility of the characters of Singer is explored and investigated relying on the psychoanalytical theories of Freud, Herman and Carruth.

Outcomes of the Study

Following observations are made in this chapter

1. Isaac Bashevis Singer was a victim of Holocaust; he wrote novels to depict the miserable condition of the Jews who are mentally and psychologically tortured people leading a life in death.
2. The Jews suffered because of their alienation from traditional norms and rituals and their mad race of assimilation.
3. Each character of Bashevis Singer is alone survivor of the Jewish Holocaust struggling to find his roots, his religious love, and God.

4. Owing to non-conducive circumstances, some protagonists like Yasha Mazur hadn't developed the superego, and their actions are led by Id ignoring all moral values.

CHAPTERIZATION

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Second Chapter: Jews and Their Predicaments

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Chapter 2

Jews and their Predicaments

The Jewish Holocaust was an unusual event in the history of mankind. The Holocaust literature throws a light on the brutal cruelties of Nazis on European Jews. The Holocaust was the systematic effort to eliminate European Jews before and during World War II. The Jews were rounded up and transported like animals to concentration camps such as Buna and Auschwitz where they were sent to the gas chambers. The Holocaust continues to bring endless sufferings and psychological ailments to the survivors and to their families. If they did not die in transit they lived to endure continuous threats to life, depersonalization, abuse and other significant loss. More than eighty decades after the war, the Holocaust continues to make its presence felt on survivor families and others in a variety of ways. Like an atom bomb that disperses its radioactive fallout in distant places, often a long time after the actual explosion, the Holocaust continues to contaminate everyone who was exposed to it in one way or another. Traces of Holocaust associations may even be found in the third generation who, in their quest for past roots, discover the prematurely broken branches of their family trees. The trauma of the holocaust survivors was so tremendous that as a result they stayed in a state of internal dissonance. Bashevis Singer has explored the traumatic life of all the prominent victims of the Holocaust who survived by the will of destiny or by chance, and who are leading a desperate life carrying with them the haunting memories of the tyranny of the Nazis who inflicted crimes on the poor and innocent men, women and children. The journey of the Jews who fled from Europe was indeed traumatic. Giorgio Agamben in his

Remnants of Auschwitz: the Witness and the Archive traces the social and political causes that motivated Adolf Hitler to launch the drive to decimate the Jews. Hannah Arendt published *The Human Condition*, *Men in Dark Times*, and *The Life of the Mind* in which she discussed the savage cruelties of the Nazi army. They suffered the traumas of Holocaust as they experienced the loss of memory and became the victims of neurosis and depression. Bashevis Singer was greatly influenced by the traumatic events of the Holocaust. In this chapter the trauma of the Jews is explored applying the psychoanalytical theory of the Freudians and Post-Freudian thinkers. Hannah Arndt “observes that the impact of trauma continued in the life of the Jews even after their survival” (Arndt 123). Anna Freud was a victim of the Holocaust as her aunts were killed in the concentration camps. Freud explored the causes and the symptoms of Holocaust trauma. Lawrence Langer published *Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* and investigated the cause and symptoms of the survivors afflicted with the Holocaust trauma.

Isaac Bashevis Singer is rooted in Yiddish culture as he took the noble responsibility to recreate the vanished world of the shtetls and the ghettos of people of Poland. In all his novels the Jews of Poland do the normal routine things as if nothing had happened to them. They are presented as ghosts that walks, talk and even marry, unaware that they are dead. Singer lived in America for more than half of his life and led a cozy and comfortable life but he was never happy as the traumatic memories of the death and destruction of the Polish Jews haunted him day and night. He couldn't forget the Polish misery, poverty and persecution: “the American dream gradually dissolves and harsh Polish reality returns” (Séance 65). The Jewish consciousness is a part of all his characters; and the Jewish God is always laughing as

He watches their futile struggles of life. In the novels of Singer God is invoked, shouted at and wrestled with on every page of Singer. Singer believes that the Jews survive today because of God and God exists because of the Jews; it is a complex and exciting relationship depicted in the novels of Bashevis Singer. The famous novel of Singer, *The Family Moskat* is rendered with a sense of mimetic richness. David Seed observes that the characters of Singer are “types” as his characters recur again and again with the same struggles and whims and oddities of life. Bashevis Singer published his first novel *The Family Moskat* in English in 1950 focusing on the historical events from 1911 to 1939.

Ted Hughes reviewed Singer’s *The Family Moskat* in *The New York Book Review* and observed that Singer has depicted the Jewish consciousness in his epic novel in a poetical style. His characters are “disintegrated as they are haunted by the nightmarish memories of the Holocaust” (Hughes 613). Interestingly he doesn’t glorify his Jewish characters but depicts them as common human beings suffering from the frailties as human beings. Singer has depicted the reality of the Jews; their struggles and confrontations; failings and depression and nihilism. Hertz Yanovar is dispirited in the midst of the bombardment of Warsaw. He tries to console the hero Asa Heshel “The Messiah will come soon” (Bashevis Singer, *The Family Moskat* 23) Asa is shocked to observe the deceptive hope and he gazes at him blankly giving the sarcastic and cynical reply: “Death is the Messiah. That’s the real truth” (Singer 23). This spiritual bankruptcy is the main cause of depression and disintegration of most of the characters in the world of *The Family Moskat*.

The main cause of the loss of self and depression of the characters of Bashevis Singer is the oppression and cruelty that they experience in this world. The

characters of Singer are not great heroes as they don't perform great deeds but are distressed people since the world has crushed them. Most of them experience suffering, trauma and discontentment in their love and life. They don't enjoy domestic happiness at all. The Jews were persecuted; humiliated, butchered like animals; their women were raped and millions of them were sent to the gas chambers of Auschwitz and Buna. Singer has given the images of darkness in the novel. Jekuthiel raises a serious question to the rabbi: "Where is your Lord of the Universe now? Where are the miracles? Where is your faith in Torah and prayer?" (Singer 259). The Polish Jews live in fear of losing their cultural and religious identity. They try to hold on to their Hasidic ways but find themselves incapable because of the forces of transformation and Enlightenment. Murray Baumgarten observes that the Jewish characters of Singer feel that "to have a self and be an individual and thereby have the capacity to choose, is the great scandal and secret of their expulsion from the communal garden" (Baumgarten 97). As Judith Herman pointed out that "atrocities refuse to be buried" (Herman 1). They penetrate into the psyche and minds of the survivors. The psychological wounds are too deep to be cured. The Holocaust survivors were in the grip of powerful and acute trauma resulting into their internal dissonance. Singer does not simply glorify the characters but depicts their follies and foibles. The dilemma of the Jewish characters is that their individual wills clash with the will of the society. Asa Heshel is a young boy ambitious to rise in the ladder of success.

Bashevis Singer depicts the traumatic self of Heshel Bannet who is a victim of the Holocaust. Irving Howe observes that Bashevis Singer depicts the tragic fate of his Jewish characters that look lost and bewildered because of the basic conflict

between the personal liberty and destiny. They feel guilty in renouncing their Hasidic identity and guile according to Freud is the main source of depression. Sigmund Freud discusses the theory of displacement of self in *Interpretation of Dreams*. Freud gives his theory of guilt in the final section of *Civilization and Discontents* stating that “the sense of guilt is the most important problem in the development of civilization; the price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt” (Freud 134). Singer’s *The Family Moskat* is a family saga of degeneration, and perversion. The main cause of the trauma of all the Jewish characters is their displacement and up rootedness. F. Schultz in his book *The Achievements of Isaac Bashevis Singer* argues that “*The Family Moskat* is a family Chronicle; records the fortune of Moskat family over three generations” (Schultz 81).

In *The Family Moskat* the main cause of depression and frustration is the romantic love of Hadassah and Asa Heshel. Hadassah is the modern girl; she is the granddaughter of Meshulam. Asa Heshel is an enigmatic personality who is always uncertain and unpredictable and this is a major tragic flaw in his personality leading to deflation of self and neurotic disorder: Asa Heshel was haunted by the illness of his mother. He was always in dilemma. His sister Dinah “complained that because of him she could not find a husband” (Singer 33). There was a psychological pressure on his mind; “his grandmother Tamur was no longer alive; his father had disappeared” (34). Whenever he decided to start a new career in a new city, his mother “would tremble and red spots would flare up on her cheeks” (34) as she would cry: “You too will leave me” (34). His moral transgression leads to his depression as he has sleepless nights dreaming about Hadassah.

Singer describes the beginning of the love affair between Hadassah and Asa Heshel. Bashevis Singer describes the modern beauty of Hadassah thus: “She appeared to about eighteen, tall and slender...her light blue eyes charmed Asa Heshel” (Singer 34). He also comes in contact with Adele who plays great role in his life. Singer holds Hadassah’s mother responsible for her sufferings: “Her mother sent her to those modern schools; the books they read are full of adulteries and abominations” (Singer 103). Both Asa Heshel and Hadassah know that Hadassah is going to marry Fischel and the wedding was to take place before “Passover.” Hadassah didn’t like to marry Fischel as she was burning in the romantic fire ignited by Asa Heshel. She was having sleepless nights and looked pale and sullen.

In “On the Psychological Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication”, Breuer and Freud point out that “any experience which calls up distressing affects, such as those of fright, anxiety, shame or physical pain may operate as a trauma of this kind” (Breuer and Freud, 6). Asa looked guilty as he indulged in wild fantasies about Hadassah. He cursed himself as his guilt appeared on the surface: “He had come to Warsaw to study, not to moon about love” (118). Asa was stunned to find Hadassah in her room: “Her cheeks were flushed from the cold. Scattered flakes of snow clung to her shoulders. She was carrying a black handbag and a thin book with red covers” (121). Asa expressed his romantic love for her; “I longed for you very much” (122). They decided at last to run away to escape the wrath and harsh criticism of the orthodox Jews and stifling environment. Hadassah too had been an encapsulated self-longing for liberation. Hadassah’s disappearance created a sensation in the Jews; the whole town talked about their adulterous elopement. Hadassah’s father was shocked to know that his only “child had run off”

(Singer 217). He cursed his wife in the most virulent and abusive language and called her “a curse- a plague” in desperation. Shafira also condemned the rebellious step of Hadassah. Hadassah is arrested and her romantic adventure turns tragic misadventure. The psychic disintegration of Hadassah begins with her unfortunate art by soldiers” “Her dreams had a nightmarish quality. She “imagined herself flying like a bat and then falling precipitately through space like a stone” (227). All dreams of Hadassah are shattered and she is lost in the abyss of guilt and darkness. She had a painful experience and the traumatic experiences made her sick and a psychological wreck. Being burdened with guilt, Hadassah is psychologically battered since she feels lonely and cut off from her community and God. She lost everything her name, lover and her parents. She had to spend a fortnight in the jail where she met many types of prisoners; the murderers, political activists and the criminals. It was a strange and harrowing experience for Hadassah; she had never imagined that her marriage with Asa would end in the prison. When she comes back home she is completely disintegrated and looks like a dead statue. All the brightness of youth had disappeared and the heavy weight of guilt made her sick and despondent. She is confronted by her mother in a humiliating manner: “What are you standing there like a dummy for? What are you staring for? Where were you? Tell me. What miserable holes have you been in? Who ripped your dress?” (Singer 225).

She expresses her death wish in depressing tone: “I’m not living, I’m dead. They’re going to wash the corpse” She let her mother pull her clothes off her, the dress, the petticoat, the shirt and the drawers and stockings (225). She blames Judaism for not giving the solace she requires after the abortive affair with Asa. The Holocaust ruined the life of the Jews who were forced to flee from their home town

to save their families. Many of them were killed and sent to the concentration camps of Buna and Auschwitz. They lost their faith in God because they believed that they couldn't have suffered if God had supported them.

The Magician of Lublin is a very typical novel of Singer as in this novel Singer has created a memorable character of Yasha Mazur who is an acrobat, magician, lock-picker, psychic, womanizer, mystic and a philosopher. Hailing from Lublin, Yasha manages to carve a place of importance for himself in the world of entertainment all over and even he draws some attention abroad. He even dreams of executing somersaults on the tightrope but in spite of his multiple achievements, Yasha is sick at heart obsessed by the psychological pain. Wylie Sypher in his famous *Loss of the Self in Modern Literature and Art* talks about the dark abyss that separates man's thinking from his feeling in the modern world. Loss of self is linked with the spiritual decadence of man. Yasha of Singer's, *The Magician of Lublin*, lives in two worlds. He is a great performer and the popular fan of many people but when returns home he feels lonely and conflicts overcome him. His dual character shows us that beneath all of his public appearances he is actually very anxious and a fragmented self. Irving Malin in his book *Isaac Bashevis Singer* comments thus: "The magician is also caught by passion. Singer's *The Magician of Lublin* is full of the images of Holocaust and the exodus of the Jews of Warsaw depicting the mood of melancholy and psychic trauma" (Malin 52) Yasha is trapped in the new cultural transformation of Europe during the days of Hitler's Holocaust when Warsaw was burnt and genocide of the Jews took place. Yasha lost his faith in God and severed his relations with the Jewish community of Lublin believing in his freshness of youth and his sexual passions reveal his craze for money, power and fame. Singer gives

total freedom to his protagonist and allows him to take free choices in his life. Singer excavates the interior world of Yasha. He was an exceptional character full of energy and vitality and the strong ambition to rise in the world:

Yasha has the weakness for women; he cannot stop pursuing women. He loves many at a time because he shuns formal commitment. But at the same time he feels oddly bound to his wife, Esther. Marriage or any lasting relationship inhibits his freedom. Singer comments thus: “He could not be watched over like other husbands; he spent more time on the road than at home, met all sorts of women, wandered further than a gypsy. Yes he was as free as the wind...” (Singer 5). Singer as usual describes the imprisonment of self-love which destroys marriage, but he is perhaps more successful in presenting it here in his comprehensive novels. (Malin 53) The plot of the novel deals with human passions and is not much concerned about the gloom of the past events. The focus is not on the future of the Jewish community but on the issue of the survival of the hero Yasha Mazur. Singer gives him full liberty and allows him to develop in the changed political set up of Lublin after the Nazi Holocaust. The novel reflects human passions by reflecting an extensiveness often missing in the novels of Singer. For the first time Singer is concerned with the problems of the individual; his challenges; his ambitions; his sexual adventures and the failures that grip his psyche. Singer’s magician protagonist is well cast. Yasha is representative of the artist, but in symbolical level every person may be seen as a magician living life. He is multidimensional personality; religious, heretical, good and evil, false and sincere. Yasha is walking “the tightrope merely inches from disaster.” Singer gives the image of a falling rope to describe the uncertainty of life and the existential challenges faced by modern Jew. Singer focuses on the psychic

ailments of Yasha as the entire plot of the novel revolves around him. The choices of Yasha are important in the novel as they determine the journey of his life.

In the opening chapter of *The Magician of Lublin*, Yasha is in bed feeling lonely and bored. He suffers from weariness; nausea and restlessness. He has named his mares “Dust and Ashes” suggesting the real nature of Yasha’s dilemma. Although always masked by his sexual involvements, Yasha’s journey is his long day’s journey into darkness; depression and despair. Yasha’s journey is of painful self –discovery, Singer has given the powerful image of “tight rope” to describe the nature of his journey. In his life, he is always juggling, balancing; his relations with four women turning somersaults for them upon high wire. His journey also reflects the tensions of his soul and the growth of his restlessness. The dark reaches of his soul are described by Singer thus: “He constantly felt that only the thinnest of barriers separated him from those dark ones who swarmed around him, aiding him and thwarting him, playing all sorts of tricks on him” (Singer 425)

Being guilt-ridden, Yasha is always fearful of his own capacity for evil and of the fear of losing the precarious balance he maintain on the tightrope. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) observed that guilt and shame are the natural products of intra psychic conflicts developing in the mind of man. They act as a weapon used by the superego to influence decisions made by the ego. Freud observes in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*: that moral sense of guilt is the expression of the tension between the ego and the superego” (Freud 76). He insisted that the superego created guilt without any consideration to the outside world. There are some traces of interpersonal relations in Freud. He writes in *Civilization and its Discontent* that the superego is an adaptation of the human organism living in the civilised world in his

encounter with other people. Helen Block Lewis wrote *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis* contending that interpersonal factors eventually lead to shame and guilt. She holds that “guilt is evoked only from within the self; it is thus a personal reaction to an “objective act of transgression” (Lewis 84). Yasha is so much stressed that he is on the verge of madness, landing smack in the middle of the demonic part of the self. Yasha’s fragmentation of life, evident in his drifting from one woman to another and from one family to another, is indicative of a more profound fragmentation within himself. Singer in this novel deals with the themes of the negation of values that gripped the psyche of Yasha. Singer has created dreamlike atmosphere in which the protagonist is overwhelmed by the chaotic or irrational nature of his environment. Singer has described the conflict in Yasha’s soul thus: “One moment he cried elatedly like a rooster, squealed like a pig, whinnied like a horse and the next was inexplicably melancholy” (Singer 6). Yasha was an unpredictable character; he lived in the company of monkey, horse and parrot and he had developed the animalistic disposition. His wife Esther had observed his strange behaviour. To her “he was all sorcery. Even at night in bed she would hear him clicking his tongue or snapping his toes” (6). Esther could not understand the duality of life of Yasha. Singer describes the whole situation thus:”He was a maze of personalities; religious and heretical, good and evil, false and sincere. He could love many women at once” (Singer 372).

Yasha is a master of illusions; he camouflages himself adopting protective coloration which makes him comfortable in any environment. He lives in an eternal present bewildered and confused not knowing himself “if he was telling the truth or lying” (378). Yasha is alone on his tightrope, “merely inches from disaster” (351), he is in exile himself. His exile from himself and exile from his family is the root cause

of his psychological depression and mental anguish. He is alive physically but mentally remains upset and restless; he is always finding a new way to escape the guilt and sins. Yasha suffers from the feelings of guilt and shame. On the other hand, Gerhard Piers and M. Singer firmly denied interpersonal aspects of shame and guilt. They observe that these emotions are drawn off of castration anxiety. The learned theorists believe that the feelings of guilt and shame are the outcome of the reactions to aggression, destruction and sexuality. They allege that genuine shame and guilt are “experienced in solitude and contain no conscious or realistic reference to an audience” (Singer 68). James Gilligan asserts that shame and guilt comes from a reaction from aggressive instincts connected with the early stage in Freud’s scheme; the “oral-biting-cannibalistic-sadistic, anal-sadistic and phallic-competitive” stage (Gilligan 149). Gilligan also writes that punishment is an important aspect to shame and guilt. In the book *Self-Consciousness and Social Anxiety* “Guilt is essentially private. The best test of guilt is whether anyone else knows of the transgression” (Buss 159). The fact that no one has to know about ones guilt, just as with shame, confirms their intra psychic nature.

In *The Magician of Lublin*, the images of God and the magician are conflated so that the ontological search of Yasha for redemption leads him to awareness. He can perform “even finer tricks” (Singer 400). He is debased form of the traditional magician. He is a cheap performer and not a prophet, entertaining people with his tricks rather than performing miracles. However, Esther thinks of him in the terms often reserved for God: “She had long since come to the conclusion that she would never be able to understand all his complexities. He possessed hidden powers” (324).

But in reality there is darkness inside Yasha; he is lost in the world of trickery and romance; he uses the power of magic for his sexual pleasures and to save the people from perdition.

Yasha Mazur is a complex personality, very passionate and a man with a personal destiny. Yasha has an intricate personality. It engages him constantly in a struggle of opposing forces and this created psychological problems for him. He is often restless; depressed and expresses his outbursts to dominate others. Yasha Mazur's entire life is a battle. He can never conquer the sexual drive. He can only negotiate with it, appease it, or in some other way deal with it, so that it remains dormant. He never knows when it will awaken to begin another round. He lives in the world of possibility, avoids the restrictions and has multiple identities. He performs many roles to suit his mood and situation and often emerges as a chameleon in the novel. He is an expert charmer and has the power to hypnotize women for his sexual pleasures. Yasha suffers from "the psychic disorder, they "mirror the chaos, disintegration, and sexual confusion of an increasingly violent and perverse world" (Pelzer 103). Singer calls him as an "open man" given absolute freedom to follow any road in his life. Singer depicts the real dilemma of Yasha in the novel which eventually leads to his disintegration of self and gives him depression:

Can a man soar in the air? Can he cross and re-cross his tightrope between warring dualities with grace? Can he, with his wisdom and sleight of hand, come to be regarded as a minor deity in his own right? (Singer 374)

Yasha Mazur was reared in a pious Jewish home, studied the Talmud until his father died. Yasha's mother died when he was seven and then he joined the circus. He maintains a home in Lublin with his wife, Esther, but roams the Polish countryside as a "circus performer and hypnotist" (Singer 400). Yasha's only affection there is for his childless wife, Esther. She keeps herself busy in work; managing her small sewing business. Apart from providing her with a steady income, it keeps her occupied and enables her to forget her sorrow. Her youthful and jovial appearance is seen as a façade behind which she hides the void in her heart: "Esther was small and dark, had a youthful face, a straight nose, black eyes in which both, gay and sorrow were reflected" (10). She feels that it would have been better to have a husband with a steady job, but at the same time she cannot think of loving anyone but Yasha. Esther knows that Yasha's profession as a travelling magician brings him into contact with many women and she often questions him about his affairs: "I wish I had twenty silver pieces for every girl you have had" (13). Yasha loves his wife dearly. In spite of his escapades, he always returns to her and resumes the threads of life at home. He never conceals the fact that he is married, and can never really think of deserting his wife for another woman. But Yasha is not orthodox he breaks the marriage vows repeatedly. Yasha is not a faithful husband and he had suffered long years of separation, despite twenty year of marriage, "still as playful with her as he had been on the first days after their wedding" (14). She is certain that he has illicit relations with other women; but the eagerness and passion he shows to her make her believe that he had been living the life of a saint during her absence" (13). His boyish enthusiasm and hypnotic power over her make her feel as though he is both son and husband to her" (14). Esther is a true psychologist; she is the first woman in the novel

who diagnoses the main psychological malady of Yasha. She observes that Yasha is an unsatisfied and discontented personality; he can never be happy in any company because he is living with a void. According to Freud, when a subject is attacked externally, it becomes unconscious, but “it also remains unconsciously active” (Freud, *The Unconscious* 47). Freud further states that the “repressed does not constitute the whole of the unconscious. The unconscious is the more extensive; the repressed is part of the unconscious” (Freud 47). As an artist or magician, he moves in various worlds, assumes various guises or personalities, and has a different mistress in each world.

The picaresque and adventurous journey of Yasha begins since he has to leave Warsaw to be a performer in the town moving from one place to another. His desires and behaviour range through the entire spectrum of Singer’s imagination. His life tale is a story of a roguish performer caught in the whirlpool of sexual passions. He goes on shifting roles and goes on changing identities to escape the inner turmoil of his heart but he remains bankrupt of ideas and lives with void till the end of the novel. His character is a case study of a man who loses everything because he fails to overcome his passions. In this chapter various causes and symptoms are explored to trace the gradual decadence of Yasha and his fall from grace and the loss of self. The first major cause is his Jewish consciousness and his loss of faith. He loses his connection with God. The primary problem of Yasha is his disconnection with God and his failure to build his relationship with God. He feels guilty through out of the novel because he is always haunted by the guilt of sin and his detachment from the Jewish roots further precipitates his problems and often suffers melancholy. Freud, in his essay *Mourning and Melancholia*, explains that “the distinguishing mental

features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, and loss of the capacity of love” (Freud 244).

Yasha often becomes restless and directionless and with a view to escape from the guilt consciousness he indulges into sex adventures. Yasha is a man of many worlds so he is held in low esteem by the Jewish community of Lublin. Being possessed of a quick mind and an even quicker tongue, he answers the prodding of ‘the earnest moralists of the community with,’ When were you in heaven, and what did God look like? (Singer 8). Yasha is an enigma, a dilemma and a trick-maker with multiple masks. He is “half Jew, half Gentile; neither Jew nor Gentile: (11). He works out his own religion: “There was a Creator, but He revealed himself to no one, gave no indication of what was permitted or forbidden, those who spoke in his name were liars (11). Yasha suffers from schizophrenia because all his choices are contradictory and uncertain; he doesn’t know what he is doing and what he is planning. His lack of belief in any particular revelations or dogma frees his extremely bright mind to explore the world about him. The journey of Yasha is adventurous, romantic, tragic and traumatic.

Yasha suffers from alienation and this puts heavy pressure on his psychic behaviour. He has alienated himself completely from his Jewish community. Yasha is typical character because his conscious mind works contrary to the unconscious mind. For Freud, ‘the unconscious’ is the “object of a meta-psychological codification, a double point of view, at once *topical* and *dynamic*” (114). For Freud, ‘the unconscious’ is a systematic part of mind like the other “psychic co-systems” (114) namely ‘the conscious’ and ‘the preconscious’. The unconscious mind holds

repressed feelings, hidden perceptions, concealed phobias, automatic reactions, blocked memories, thoughts, and desires that impact human behavior. Freud divides the mind into the conscious mind (the Ego) and the unconscious mind (the Id and the Superego). Though the Superego is a part of the unconscious but it controls the Id (instincts and drive). Freud proposes a vertical and categorized architecture of human mind: the conscious mind, the preconscious mind, and the unconscious mind—each lying beneath the other. In the Freudian psychoanalysis, the preconscious is the state of mind that exists beneath the conscious but above the unconscious mind. In the preconscious, though the thoughts remain unconscious, but they are not repressed and they can be easily recalled unlike unconscious traumatic thoughts or memories. Yasha is a unique character of Bashevis Singer who acts under passions and is a slave of emotional exuberance.

The fact that he can perform acrobatic feats without peer or use his psychic powers to locate lost objects only serve to make him more of a mystery to himself: “Walking a tightrope” becomes the symbol of his own life to Yasha. He is always balancing his life between worlds never fully comfortable, knowing always that one slip may lead to disaster. In *The Magician of Lublin*, Yasha Mazur is caught between the two worlds’ the one sacred and the other profane. He vacillates between the two on a journey from exile towards the possibility of redemption through community and love for God. Yasha, the famous tight rope walker and the master of illusions begins his journey from country to city to show his acrobatic performances. Symbolically, his journey is from innocence to experience; from the unity of self to the disintegration of self; from a healthy state of mind to the neurotic being. He leaves Warsaw and his wife Esther and goes to meet Emilia who is a “high-born

professor's widow" (Singer 335). His entry into the world of Emilia is the first step towards the road to self-destruction; melancholia and depression. The problem with Yasha is that he lacks self-discipline and has no control over his passions. Emilia is Gentile and Yasha is a Jew; both are from different worlds but Yasha fruitlessly makes efforts to bring union of the two worlds. And this becomes the major cause of his hysterical outbursts and psychological disintegration.

The complexities of Yasha's life unfold when he is on his adventurous journey. He gets entangled with women and his choices of life; his vision of life and the conflicts of his psyche are revealed in the three chapters of the novel. Singer describes the temptations of Yasha and his two love triangle. His affair with the Gentile Emilia brings in his life the religious and cultural issues because Emilia demands not only marriage but his conversion. She even asks him to leave his country and settle abroad. This puts Yasha into a dilemma where he is unable to choose between Emilia and Esther. Even while Emilia's Slavic appearance aristocratic way of life attracts him, Emilia's devotion makes him conscious of treacherous intentions: "Can I leave her? Yasha thought. During all years she has been my only support. Were it not for her devotion I would have long since drifted like a leaf in a windstorm" (19). Time and again asks her hypocritical questions about the future. He talks of possible death or disability to himself, trying to find out Esther's reaction to such situations. Emilia is a sensible woman, she loves him but at the same time she demands the price of her love.

Bashevis Singer's *The Slave*, (1962) the aftermath of Chmielnicki massacre is clearly referred in the beginning of the plot. Jacob is presented as a symbol of the Jewish people and his psychological trauma is the outcome of moral and spiritual

disconnection from God. Cathy Caruth asserts that trauma is experienced and witnessed through "a response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, or other repetitive phenomena" (Caruth 91). Judith Lewis Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery* contends that "the ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness" (Herman1). She finds a dialectical relationship between the trauma and the desire to reconnect trauma and often trauma is enacted outside the bounds of normal human beings. Buchen compares enslavement of Jacob with the Jews' slavery in Egypt. Siegel also opines "that a parallel exists" (Singer 28). Malin states that Jacob "recognizes the timelessness of his name" (Main 66). Jacob struggles in his life to learn the significance of free will. But Yasha of *The Magician of Lublin* rejects the free will as he expresses his desire to fly in desperation of life. Singer employs a broader theme describing the implications of evil. Jacob realizes "that how deep were the wounds" (106). Singer put forward the problems and tension of the deserted wives, Cossack brides forced conversions; they witnessed the horrors of genocide and Singer depicts the traumatic experiences of the Jews in the novel *The Slave*.

The Slave is a story of Holocaust and the plot analyzes the internal and external pressures of Jacob who is a victim of the Cossack persecution. Jacob is a young and highly learned man who has been made a slave in 17th century Poland. The novel is set at a time when the Cossacks massacred Jews of Poland and destroyed the country. Jacob lost his wife and was forced to run away to save his life. His faith in God was shattered. The main focus of Singer in this novel is to depict the fate of a Jew who gets involved in endless misfortunes because of the persecution of

the Jews by Cossacks. Jacob passes through various stages of freedom and slavery. His journey of life begins with his loss of faith and his slavery is due to the Holocaust. Depressed and frustrated, Jacob begins his quest for love and God. Nili Wachtel says “Jacob breaks a wrong, naïve passive slavery, in order to choose for himself a right, sober and active slavery” (Singer 186). He is conscious of being a slave and this feeling tortures him day and night; torments his soul as he cannot even pray to God: “Thou hast not mad me a slave” (Singer 10). Ironically, Jacob is not only a slave to God and his master, but also a slave to his emotions and passions. Maria P.P. Root observes that insidious trauma is “usually associated with the social status of an individual being devalued because a characteristic intrinsic to their identity is different from what is valued by those powers” (Root 240).

Jacob’s hometown was burnt by Cossacks and his family was killed in a brutal manner. Jacob lives alone in the abject circumstances of slavery; he lives alone on top of mountain next to a Christian village. He is always haunted by the old memories of his wife and children. Herman opines in her book *Trauma and Recovery* that the “typical phenomena of hyper arousal and intrusion cause trauma survivors to lose authority over their memory” (Herman 33). Jacob is a social outcast and herd’s cows only. He has to go downtown every day to get food and he observes the rituals and traditions of Judaism though secretly. Root further observes that alienation is a “threat to psychological safety, security, or survival” (241).

Jacob of *A Slave* does not doubt the existence of God but at the same time he refuses to grant God the quality of mercy: “It was different to believe in God’s mercy when murderers buried children alive. But God’s wisdom was evident everywhere”

(Singer 19). As Judith Herman pointed out in her book *Trauma and Recovery*; that “atrocities refuse to be buried” (Herman 1). They penetrate into the conscious and unconscious minds of the survivors. The psychological wounds are too deep to be cured. The Holocaust survivors were in the grip of powerful and acute trauma resulting into their internal dissonance. Sigmund Freud discusses the theory of displacement of self in *Interpretation of Dreams*. Jacques Lacan’s *Mirror Stage* examined psychic pressures and tensions resulting into neurosis. The novelist has portrayed a barbarous world. Jacob is surrounded by savages living in a state of degradation. Sex for them is simply copulation and the corpse of baby is like garbage. The Christianity thrives on sexual morality, chastity and sanctity of religion. Among savages, Jacob is more thoughtful, sensible and hardworking than his fellow cowherds. The main conflict in the life of Jacob is to lift him from obscenity and to open his mind to higher ideals. Elie Wiesel once wrote that when God created man, he gave him a secret...and that secret was not how to begin again” (Wiesel 32). Jacob is confronted with a baffling problem to reconstruct his life and the world for his survival. Jacob feels his moral responsibility to resurrect a world that is torn by the genocide. Jacob’s wife and children were killed by the Cossacks and he was sold to Gazdas, a tribe living in the mountains of Poland. Singer has depicted the tribal society of the mountains where Jacob lived. He is a slave of Jan Bzik and whose daughter Wanda falls in love with him. Wanda is the widow of a drunken farmer and is known as “The Lady” in the tribe because of her good manners. Wanda is a beautiful girl. The real conflict begins when there is a psychological pressure on his soul to forsake Judaism and to get freedom from slavery. Ronnie Janoff-Bulman in his book *Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma* asserts that

trauma radically destroys people's fundamental beliefs in the benevolence and meaningfulness of the world, and the worthiness of the self" (Ronnie 5). But Jacob refuses to leave his God and remains faithful to the Jewish God. In the last section of the novel Jacob gives in succumbs to the sexual passions for Wanda. Finally Jacob sexually consummates his love for Wanda. Singer has used the images from the Bible and Genesis to describe the ritual of their sexual consummation. Both of them immerse themselves in the stream ritually undergoing a symbolic union of souls. Jacob, however, is a victim of guilt though nature seems to sanction their sexual consummation next morning: "Dew covered the grass, and each droplet gleamed. Birds were singing, and in the distance a cow lowed" (Singer 70). He exhorts her to embrace Judaism, though he feels sinful. He realizes that Wanda's desire to accept his faith is not natural and truthful but is the result of impure motives. Their union is a moral transgression of the Jewish and the Polish laws. Singer presents men in terms of their traumatic experience and psychological aberrations. Women are presented as a class; subservient to men.

Jacob lost his family so he suffers from alienation and according to Patrick Colin Hogan "alienation is not itself an experience one chooses to have, it is, rather, an inability, as we shall see, frequently associated with emotional and mental disintegration" (Hogan 88). Hogan further suggests that alienation is a kind of "cultural disintegration involving a sense of alienation from all cultures, being no longer at ease in any cultures, finding a home neither in indigenous tradition nor in Europeanization" (88). Jacob's dilemma is that he cannot forget his wife and children and he remains restless and depressed. He becomes a guilty of murder through his forgetfulness. He had witnessed horror of Chmielewnicki genocide and in such a case

his memory becomes a source of poignant torture. Robert Jay Lifton in his book *The Life of the Self: Toward a New Psychology* observes that “the survivor undergoes a radical but temporary diminution in his sense of actuality in order to avoid losing his sense completely and temporarily; he undergoes a reversible form of psychic death in order to avoid a permanent or psychic death” (Lifton 144). Jacob struggles to forget his wife and children in his exercise of scratching forty-three commandments and sixty nine interdictions into a rock but all these spiritual efforts prove futile as memory of death intensifies his trauma. He keeps an ultimate faith in God as he realizes: “The leaves drop from the tree, but the branch remains; the trunk still has its roots” (268). He seeks the help of God in his traumatic situation believing that he may get peace of mind and freedom from the present dilemma and depression. Wanda tries her best to give him solace and to retrieve his trauma through her love and affection.

Jacob is a teacher and he knows Jewish law and the meaning of sinful transgression very well. He becomes a slave to his passions and keeps on making love to a gentile. In his loneliness, he thinks of Wanda in his quest for anima. He knows that he is a married man and Wanda doesn't belong to his faith and cohabiting with her amounts to adultery with her. But it is extremely difficult for him to control his emotion and passions. The wrestling match of love and religion begin in the mind of Jacob. His resolve to live with God flounders: “His yearning stayed with him praying and studying, sleeping and waking. He knew the bitter truth: compared to his passion for Wanda, his mourning for his wife and children and his love for God were

weak. If the desire of the flesh came from Satan, then he was in the Devils' net. (Singer 47).

They fall in love with each other but Jacob struggles to escape and resist the temptation of Satan. Jacob interprets his powerful sense of lust and longing for sexual pleasures. He becomes slave to passions urging him to sacrifice the eternal for the temporal: "Remember this world is only a corridor; the true place lies beyond. Don't let yourself be barred from it for the sake of a moment's pleasure" (Singer 16). He even dreams of Wanda in his sleep and feels sleepless and restless. Freud says that the "dreams are the royal road to the unconscious" and no wonder, Wanda is the center of his unconscious mind. She has become a part of his existence and he is ready to make sacrifice his life for her. He waits for Wanda like a bridegroom waiting for his bride and visualizes her thus: "her eyes which were sometimes blue, sometimes green, her full lips, here long slim neck, her womanly bosom. Like any other peasant she worked in the fields, but her hands remained feminine" (17). Wanda is a slave to her animus; she proposed Jacob but he is afraid of committing sin of adultery. Wanda is perplexed to know the ambiguous attitude of Jacob. She is bold and beautiful; she offers her body to him and expresses her free will to offer him cohabitation without marriage. She has the supernatural power to predict the events as she has strong intuition. She has seen Jacob in her dreams and visions. Jacob's refusal to respond to her lov intensifies her emotions. Her repressed passions come on the surface: "She was even ready to leave her village, her parents, her family and follow Jacob naked and empty handed" (26). She is in conflict as she has to fight with Jacob's asceticism and her dormant sexuality. Like Wanda Jacob is also on the rack as he is trapped in moral consciousness: In the mercy of the nations' sin, he tried to strangle the love he felt for her" (19).

Singer has depicted the conflict in Jacob's soul between his religious commitment and instincts. He subdues his sexual urge towards Wanda but when he looks at her in silence, he is fired with sexual passions but restraining himself. Wanda excites his repressed instincts and he knows that he is the victim of a split between his repression and passion. Wanda troubles him and makes him sleepless day and night; passions overwhelm him and many unknown ideas leap into his brain. He wakes up in the middle of night with tensions gripping his psyche." He had become a man at war with himself. One half of him prayed to God to save him from temptation and the other sought some way to surrender to the flesh" (Singer 33). Wanda is portrayed as a ritualistic temptress who says: "I must have you" (25). Jacob tries to repress his instincts but in this struggle he becomes a psychic case as he loses his balance of mind. Freud gave the theory of repression that is a normal part in the growth of human beings. In "normal life our secret desires continue to find outlet in perfectly well-adjusted individuals. But the problems arise when an individual is faced with the obstacles to satisfy his libido and experience trauma and pressure on his psyche" (Freud 350). Jacob knows that Wanda is an outsider but she transcends the savage existence of the Gazdas in her true love for Jacob.

In desperation Jacob searches for the loopholes in the scriptures to justify his desire for Wanda. In the Talmudic Law: "The Talmudic law stating that a man who cohabits with a gentile could be put to death by anyone in the community was only valid if there had first a warning and the adultery was seen by witness" (34). Like Dimmedale of *The Scarlet Letter* of Hawthorne, Jacob wants to establish his relations with Wanda and is not psychologically under pressure to commit adultery. Despite all these efforts he failed to forget Wanda; he longs to go back to meet her and even

thinks of converting her to Judaism. His faith in Judaism is shaken. He feels that it is useless to follow Torah blindly; he criticizes people who follow the code of Judaism blindly. This attitude and shaken faith symbolizes his disintegration of self and trauma.

The journey of Sarah from Wanda to the wife of Jacob and her new identity as a mother of a Jew raises so many questions to the Jewish community. Her pretended muteness sends shock waves to the Jews and her gentile background is a matter of concern for them. Jacob and Sarah are found in the strange situation. The sufferings and psychological anguish of Jacob is intensified by the cruelty, complacency and smugness of Jews to which he belonged. Broken hearted, alienated and depressed Jacob loses interest in life and turns nihilistic and depressed at the end of the novel. Jacob represents the Jews who lead a turbulent life suffering from alienation, uncertainty and threat to life and exile. He is in the pursuit of love and sex to breaking the conventions of Orthodox Judaism. He is a victim of society as he struggles to shape his destiny in a world characterized by horror and fear.

All the main characters of Bashevis Singer's novel *Enemies: A Love Story* are immigrant survivors of the Jewish Holocaust. They are settled in America but they are always haunted by the intrusive memories of the past trauma as the past repeats itself in the life of each character. Singer has poignantly depicted the psychological pain and anguish of the major characters in the plot of the novel. Herman Broder is the highly neurotic character of Bashevis Singer whose traumatic journey is the chief interest of the novel. Herman Broder is a Polish intellectual who escaped the persecution of Nazi by hiding in a hayloft for three years. Yadwiga who is his family

servant helps him to save his life. Herman marries Yadviga and migrates to New York for safety and survival. He is jobless there and penniless but he earns his living by ghost sermons writing for a rabbi. His sexual relations with several women land him in problems and as a professional he emerges as a pack of lies. Herman believes that “survival is based on guiles; he is devious and enmeshed in lies.” Herman lives in constant fear that his deceptions may not be revealed and exposed.

The setting of the novel is idyllic and peaceful in Brooklyn. Herman lives with his wife Yadviga. She is indirectly supporting the passionate affair of Herman with Masha who is another Holocaust survivor. Herman is trapped in a taxing situation with the sudden return of his former wife Tamara from the open grave during the Nazi mass murder and visits Herman who is passing through crisis of his life. She was presumed to be dead for several years Tamara’s unexpected visit shatters all the dreams and plans of Herman. Her return brings to life all the suppressed memories and emotions and conflicts of his past life. The novel *Enemies: a love story* is a complex novel dealing with the love triangle of an-antihero. Herman’s exile from the society is detrimental leading him to his loss of self and dissociation of mind. He spent three years of his life hiding in a confined space in utter isolation from other human beings. His nightmarish experiences push him into an extreme pessimism. Although he survives the horror of alienation and death haunted him day and night and his mind was deranged. He feels guilty and thinks that he doesn’t deserve to live and his life is not worth living.

Otto Rank averred in his *The Trauma of Birth* that shame and guilt are the products of social and political forces that govern and dominate man. He also

investigates the significance and impact of the pre-oedipal phase investigating the Oedipal-complex of Freud. Rank has put forward his psychological interpretation of shame and guilt. Dr. Karen Horney in her book *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, observes that the feeling of guilt is the product of social neglect and differentiation. The emotions of guilt and shame generate fear and inferiority complex. Horney speculated the fact that human beings try to make others feel guilty in society. Horney repudiated the traditional psychoanalytic theory and repudiated Freudian theory of penis envy. Horney contended that “what Freud was really detecting was women's justified envy of men's power in the world” (Horney 123) Horney propounded her own personality theory reformulating Freudian thought She presented a holistic and humanistic perspective discussing the significance of social and cultural forces which condition and determine the human growth.

Singer has depicted his mood of utter despair and despondency ‘for lacking courage to commit suicide, he lives like a worm by managing to shut his eyes, stop up his ears, close his mind’ (19). Being depressed Herman confesses: “When a man hides in an attic for years, he ceases to be a part of society. The truth is that I’m still hiding in an attic right here in America” (101). Herman was raised as a traditional religious Jew but the Holocaust events transformed him into a nihilist. In Poland, Herman would have enjoyed respect and honour but ironically in America he calls himself as “a fraud, a transgressor; a hypocrite too. The sermons he wrote for Rabbi Lampert were a disgrace and a mockery” (Singer 15). Herman is the only child of his wealthy father in Tzivkey who educated his son. Herman’s mother wanted Herman to be a doctor but his interest was in philosophy. He joined the University of Warsaw and entered into the school of philosophy. He met Tamara in the university; he fell in

love with her and married her against the wishes of her parents. She was a student of biology and active in the leftist movements raising the cries of the working people in her protest demonstrations. He impregnated her before marriage; she refused abortion and forced her parents to marry her with Herman. His relationships after marriage with Tamara were not cordial as he was a neglectful, absentee father and wanted to divorce Tamara. Herman expresses his dissatisfaction thus: "Tamara talked incessantly of redemption of humanity, the plight of Jews, the role of woman in society" (63). But Herman differed from the ideas of Tamara because his philosophical background developed in him the nihilistic attitude. Singer comments thus: Herman is an intellectual snob who takes pride in being an independent thinker. He rejects the radical views of Tamara as Singer points out: "She seemed to Herman to be the incarnation of the masse, always following some leader, hypnotized by slogans, never really having an opinion of her own" (64)..Singer has depicted the hunted personality of Herman Broder:

During the war and in the years after, Herman had time enough to regret his behavior to his family. But basically he remained the same: without belief in himself or in human race; a fatalistic hedonist who lived in pre-suicidal gloom. (Singer 30)

The novel begins in New York with the dream of Herman. The scene provides the inner turbulent world of Herman; his nightmare of the Nazi occupation of Poland and the loss of his home, family and children. Herman is involved with three women and all these women; Yadviga, Masha and Tamara fill a vital need in Herman's lonely life. Chandler comments thus: "The three women in this novel represent three modes of existence: action, speech and simple being. Each function as a catalyst in

Herman's tragic odyssey" (Chandler 147). Singer describes Herman's dependence on Yadviga who saved and protected her: "For three years Herman had depended on her utterly. She had brought food and water to him in the hayloft and carried out his waste" (6). The commitment of Yadviga is evident in the plot "she put her mother and sister in constant jeopardy; if the Nazis discovered that a Jew was hiding out in the barn they would have shot all three women and perhaps burned down the village as well" (6).

Herman's first wife Tamara is lost and is rumored to have been killed by the Nazis. Herman marries Yadviga out of obligation with belief in his religion: "Yadviga had been ready to adopt the Jewish faith, but it seemed senseless to burden her with a religion that he himself no longer observed" (5). Herman and Yadviga are living in Coney Island near the seashore in Brooklyn *shtetl* existence for immigrant Jews. Herman married Yadviga but from the start of his married life the cracks appeared because of the differences of opinions and religious ideas. Yadviga was a Christian and Herman was a Jew; she was innocent and Herman was a pack of lies. However he is unwilling to leave Yadviga because of his guilt. Singer comments thus: "She had the freshness and shyness of a Polish village girl. She used no cosmetics. She had learned only a few English words. It even seemed to Herman that she carried with her the odors of Lipsk" (4).

Masha is Herman's Lilith, his object of chaos. Chandler observes that his association with Masha is the main source of his psychological ailments and become the main cause of his downfall: "Herman is drawn into Masha's world of unreality, succumbing to the seductions of ungrounded intellect and imagination and passion detached from life-giving love, which in the end destroys both" (Chandler 147).

Yadwiga lives in a cozy world but Masha lives in a world of decay haunted by the harrowing memories of the Holocaust. Singer writes about the neighborhood of Masha: “It only had a few houses separated by empty lots of overgrown with weeds. There were an old warehouse bricked-up windows and a gate that was always shut. In one dilapidated house a carpenter was making furniture that he sold unfinished” (Singer 32). Masha lives with her mother in the third floor “of a house with a broken porch and a vacant ground, the window of which were covered with boards and tin” (32). Masha has strong influence on the life and ideas of Herman. She is a tortured personality and a victim of the Holocaust. She narrates her wild stories from the ghettos, the concentration camps and her walking through the destruction of Poland after the war.

Singer has given an effective image of “retreat” and “withdrawal” to depict the traumatic experiences of Herman; he breaks from the active life of society and reenacts his previous retreat from life. The war is over; Herman continues employing the strategies of exile, secrecy, and disguise for his survival. He continues living in the old style and distrusts everyone around him suspecting all the loving bonds with others. His misanthropic detachment and pathological lies trap him in his own isolated world. Interestingly, Herman’s disconnection from others reinforces the stasis in his life. He carefully crafted his re-enactment of the past in his present life to dramatize his traumatic experiences. The Holocaust becomes the main cause of his disconnection, fragmentation and stasis. Herman’s morbidity and neurotic fantasies are realistically portrayed by Singer. His progression of life is blocked by the traumatic war experiences. Herman returns of the frequent fantasies reveal his fears

and wishes and particularly his frequent fantasy about the fears and the wishes take on “the character of obsessions” (10).

When the Nazis discovered hiding place and came to arrest him, he would welcome them with a volley bullets and leave one bullet for himself. (Singer 10). His daydream exemplifies Freud’s insight in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that “the repetitive re-enactment of the painful situation is often created by an inner drive more primordial and more powerful than the pleasure principle” (Freud 32) Trauma is an experience that is not lived. Freud differentiates between fright and anxiety and explains the lack of preparedness as the main cause of trauma. Freud argues that “in cases of trauma, people are caught off-guard, unprepared when an overwhelmingly painful and devastating incident overtakes them with a threat of annihilation” (Freud 31). Like other Holocaust survivors, Herman repeats the past and is often overwhelmed by the events of the killings of his family and friends. His repetitive fantasizing reveals that he is alive. He tests his foothold in reality to claim his survival. His close encounter with death leaves permanent marks on his life. His parallel existence of the past and the present confounds his disordered and disoriented life. The negative impacts of his past trauma make him sick and mentally disturbed. He moves like a shuttle cock between “intrusion and constriction exhibiting the symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder” (Herman 47). Past memories haunt him day and night intruding his daily life making him a prisoner of the past. Lawrence Langer in his book *Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays* observes that fade in people’s memory, traumatic upheavals have a durational integrity that exists outside the flow of normal time” (Langer 141). Herman, Masha,

her mother Shifrah Puah and Tamara live in the past as they are always haunted by the past. Masha can never forget the Holocaust killings, Shifrah Puah always wears black and lights memorial candles for the dead and her life is just a temporary reprieve for death. Singer comments thus: “The further removed they are from the holocaust, the closer it seemed to become” (Singer 43). All the characters of the novel suffer from this syndrome. The Holocaust has turned their present into a dismal graveyard for the past” (Krystal 74). All the characters in the novel live an abridged and truncated life. Herman leads an alienated and secret life in his cocoon-like world. He lives always on guard; sits on an edge of his chair always ready to jump at any time. He has a conviction that “in a world in which one’s children could be dragged away from their mother and shot, one had no right to have more children” (7). He resolves not to have a child. He believes that the world is full of fantasies of attacks, betrayal, and pains. He was once a “fatalist hedonist who lived in pre-suicidal gloom” (30).

Herman lost all the members of his family in the Holocaust and he migrated to America; he lost almost everything and looks wounded and dispirited. Tamara reflects on her current life after the war and state: “My life seems to have been peeled away like the skin of an onion” (Singer 100). Like Tamara Herman becomes emotionally and spiritually bankrupt. Herman is an utterly uprooted human being who can never feel at home again in the world after his traumatic experiences: “Reduced to the positive-psychological basic content of the idea, home is security. Jean Amery “explains homesickness and he continues to be alienated from the self” (Amery 43). Amery further argues that “Home is security and without home one becomes subject to disorder, confusion and dislocation” (Amery 43). Herman’s sense

of displacement originates from losing his home, family and Jewish culture by the blow of the Holocaust. He suffered the multiple losses and was left homeless. Herman's narrative is characterized by stasis and fragmentation instead of assimilation. He is fixated in his traumatic past and fails to forge his new identity in the random and hostile world. His dilemma lies in the reality that he is unable to assimilate in the American society forgetting his past experiences. Judith Herman argues that "the PTSD patients need to create the flow of their life and to restore a sense of continuity with the past" (Herman 77). His broken and fragmented self-narrative is the outcome of his schizophrenic attitude towards life. Tamara aptly describes it "talking consistency to Herman is like discussing colors with a blind man" (143). He is a "riddle of himself" (15). Ironically Yadwiga adores him despite his flaws and contradictions "with the devotion of a dog" (16). Herman seeks solace in his neurotic relationship with Masha who constantly tortures him emotionally. In his quest of security and safety Herman is in the grip of lies and deceptions. He admits his dilemma thus: "I'm caught in a vice and can't free myself" (144). These incoherent and highly compartmentalized behavior patterns reflect his fragmented self-narrative" (Horney 284). Herman's relationships are based on the ambiguous principles and conflicting emotions as he exhibits his inner need to move away from the people around him.

Herman's involvement with Yadwiga and Masha leads him to dissociation of mind and loss of self. He doesn't get any solace or peace of mind or tranquility in his behaviour due to his interpersonal relationships. His simultaneous involvement with Yadwiga and Masha fractures his psyche. Before the war, he led the life of a bachelor; he even betrayed Yadwiga who saved his life and sacrificed everything; her

home and parents for the love and comfort of Herman. Yadviga helps him to evade the thorny emotional issues of guilt, shame and remorse. Herman creates his own claustrophobic worlds with his women to escape from the haunting memories of his family. He suffers tremendous amount of pain, sorrow and guile when he remembers his family, killed in the war. Horney opines that a complete erasure of the traumatic past is not possible for the survivors. His encapsulated apartment is like a womb; the apartment is completely severed from the outside world without even a phone. Ironically under the stress of depression he deserts the pregnant Yadviga at the end of the novel recreating paternal negligence and dereliction. Herman experiences tormenting guilt and psychological pain.

Cathy Caruth opines that trauma is an open wound that never heals. Yadviga provides shelter to him from the tragedy of the Holocaust. Masha exposes him to the horror of the Holocaust with her constant diabolic tales about it. Yadviga brings innocence and simplicity in Herman's life but Masha projects the devastation and complication of the Holocaust. Herman is a ghost writer and makes his living by his ghost writing. In his personal life, he makes fake stories and spin lies to sustain his polygamous relationships. He was a scholar immersed in the world of ideas and language

Singer's novel *Shosha* is a pessimistic novel dealing with the hollowness of life; its fears and terrors that grip the psyche of the characters lost in the bog of sexuality and hedonism. Aaron's trouble and trauma begins with his developing relations with many women. He is lost in the world of luxury, he "orders a new suit, and is thrown into the lap of luxury" (Singer 50). Aaron hates the institution of

marriage and avoids matrimonial relations though he is involved with many women. He preaches a dangerous philosophy of hedonism. He doesn't marry anyone and doesn't like to have children: "I don't need children" (79). His hedonism springs from the realization that the world is preparing for another catastrophe. He wants to enjoy every moment of life: "Yes I had to find pleasure before I died and returned to nothing" (Singer 56). Aaron feels the approach of the holocaust; with the other Polish Jews and expresses his fears that the Germans have grown very powerful, fully mobilized and furnished with the latest weapons but the Polish soldiers are no match with the Germans. They are destined to be murdered by the Germans. He dreams of "a band of wild people awaited below with clubs, spears, poles and axes" (53). In his acute depression he uses hedonism as a strategy to overcome his trauma. He is of the firm view that the Jews are helpless in the face of the holocaust. He develops relationship with Morris who is a philosopher and a hedonist believing that success with women is a source of thrilling adventure. Feitelzohn feels insecure and unsettled and has divorced three wives in desperation and depression. He is in the habit of changing women frequently and continues his affairs with servant girls. He even plans to set up an institute for hedonism. He believes that the pursuit of pleasure is man's only goal" (37). Aaron develops relationship with hedonist Hemi Chentshiner who has passion for art, opera and paintings. He loves to visit pastoral landscapes, woods and streams.

The third hedonist in touch with Aaron is Sara Dreiman who is an American millionaire who has migrated from Poland with his actress wife Betty Slonim. The main purpose of Dreiman is "to enjoy himself and to provide her with enjoyment"

(32). He feels delighted when Aaron kisses his wife in his presence. He gives Aaron huge money as an advance to finish play for Betty. Aaron is surrounded by the hedonists for “whom pleasure is the only aim of their lives. Aaron finds himself comfortable to cultivate the philosophy of hedonism. His involvement with women makes the hedonistic tendency of Aaron further distinct. He comes in contact with a woman who realizes that the Jews of Poland have no future as they are caught between Hitler and Stalin; the catastrophe of the Jews is inescapable. Aaron’s third woman is Betty who is interested in the Yiddish theatre of Poland. Her husband encourages her to develop intimacy with Aaron and gradually he is “drawn to Betty Slonim and together they visit the river Swiderek” (Singer 52). Her obsession is to “enjoy life” (67). Aaron seduces his servant Tekla who has “muscular legs and firm breasts.” He bribes her and she succumbs to his passions “I kissed her long. She kissed back and her breasts pressed against me” (83). In one of his dreams he finds Celia and Betty mating with this “plural couple” (53). The journey of Aaron is to seek redemption through sin and sexuality. He thinks that life is uncertain and death is certain; he has seen the Holocaust and feels that he must enjoy life and hedonism is the only strategy to overcome trauma of life. He reads modern science but he does remember the pages of Gemara and chapters of Mishna. He contemplates on “God, providence, time, space and infinity” (9). In his early life he came to the conclusion that there are two Gods, a good one and a bad one.

Sarah Blucher Cohen observes that “In *Shosha* Singer again creates many women, to charm his protagonist....They satisfy both Greidinger healthy appetite for sexual diversity and his unhealthy Don, Judaism preventing his attachment, to any

women” (Cohen 178). He has ambiguous attitude towards God as he says: “I believe in God, but I don’t believe that He revealed Himself and told the rabbis all the little laws that they added through generations” (205). In *Shosha* Singer writes: “From the day they were exiled from their land, they had lived in anticipation of death or the coming of Messiah” (239). When death itself becomes the Messiah, they lost all hopes and faith in the future. All the characters in *Shosha* are waiting for their dawn of their doom being cut off from their roots and God. Caruth proves that trauma doesn’t lie in the first traumatic event but in the repetitive occurrence of identical upsetting events. The author records, “Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature . . . the way it was precisely not known in the first instance . . . returns to haunt the survivor later on” (4). Aaron repeats his actions and goes on changing women expressing his emptiness of life and lack of direction.

Bashevis Singer’s novel *Shosha* gives an insight into the themes of trauma; depression and death of the Holocaust survivors. The main narrator is Aaron Greidinger who is the son of a rabbi alluding to the life of the writer Bashevis Singer who speaks of the dead in the Yiddish language. *Shosha* is a haunting novel depicting the plight of the Jews who survived the concentration camps of the Nazis. He was born in the Jewish quarters of Warsaw and loved a neighbor’s daughter Shosha. Time passes and Aaron forgets as he abandons Hassidic philosophy for the life of the neurotic urban intelligentsia. He embraces alienation as he embraces women to overcome the harrowing experiences of the Holocaust. He develops in him a nihilistic and pessimistic attitude towards life and departs from Jewish traditions and

rituals. Hitler is in power in Germany and he has decided to decimate the Jews from Europe. The Jews of Poland are facing the threat to their life as many of them migrate to America for survival. Stalin in Russia is threatening; Singer has depicted the forces of chaos; death and destruction.

Singer has depicted the moral conflict and traumatic existence of Aaron who suffers from dilemma for his inconsistency with the faith of his ancestors and his hedonistic attitude to escape from the mental stress. Aaron becomes an outsider in his own community; he remains a total stranger to his religion as his hedonistic activities alienate him from his past. Aaron suffers from a big blow when his play fails on the stage because of non-seriousness of Betty and this failure symbolizes the failure of the evil forces and the victory of moral consciousness. This victory saves Aaron from literary suicide and anticipates his abandonment of hedonism. The real moral crisis begins in Aaron's life over the question of marriage with Betty or Shosha. He is almost on the rack and like Hamlet of Shakespeare he cannot decide whether to marry Betty or Shosha. In this part of the novels, Aaron's appears a psychic wreck who has weak mind and poor sense of reasoning.

He meets Shosha after a long time and finds her in the same condition while walking in the Kochmanla Street: "Shosha looks almost exactly as she did twenty years ago, both physically and in her behaviour. Aaron decides to marry Shosha as a part of the fulfillment of his childhood commitment to take her for a wife" (15). He frequents the house of Shosha and becomes the paying guest of her house and gets time to stay with her family at night. Bashale; the mother of Shosha is very kind to him and treats him as her son and her sister treats him like her brother. Aaron swears

to Shosha: “Shoshale, I have sworn by God and by the soul of my father that I will never abandon you. it’s about time that you must trust me” (117). Celia invites Aaron on dinner and tries to comfort him. She tempts him to marry her as there is no future in Poland and he can join her and both would migrate to America. Her husband also tells Aaron that in Poland there are no book publishers “the Yiddish newspapers are in trouble, the Jews are under threat of Nazi invasion and the Yiddish newspaper is outdated. She has sold herself to Sam Dreiman and calls “him her lover” (146). Aaron broods over his future and concludes that he would sink deeper if he married Betty. He listens to the inner voice of his father and seeks guidance for the future course of action. He sees the dead face of his father who warns him: “Don’t shame me, your mother, and your holy ancestors: All your deeds are noted in heaven” (Singer 146). His father abuses him as “Heathen: Betrayer of Israel: he complains that Betty is a cursed thing” (146). Aaron’s is bewildered by the sudden appearance of his father from the grave to guide him. He understands the significance of his revelations which has come to him at the height of his distress and wounded mood. He cries out in desperation: Father, save me” (146). He contemplates over the advantages of marrying Betty seriously under the stress of trauma. If he rejects Betty it would mean to stay in Poland and being killed by the Nazis. Marriage with Betty will give him an opportunity to migrate to America and save himself. He is sure to get the visa as he says: “It’s visa not the money. I justified myself-the fear of falling into the hands of the Nazis” (149). In the saloon, a barber gives an information that Hitler would smoke out the Jews “like bed bugs” (150). Aaron thinks “No, I wouldn’t stay in Poland, I’d leave, at any price” (152). Aaron is a wounded self as he is unable to take a wise and rational decision. He fails to stick to keep his promise

and is drawn to Shosha for her virtues. In her “he finds the reflection of his own childhood” (87). Aaron feared that Betty was right as he notes that he is not “elated, as those in love usually are” (180). And on his wedding night he observes the childish behaviour of Shosha and he observes that “the tremendous urge for Shosha that had seized him on the train had dissipated” (228).

Shosha has retained her beauty and simplicity and innocence and in a way has denied death. She has even preserved her old text books with familiar pictures; her old play things...the poems and notes in which Aaron has started his career as a writer. She is “devoid of seriousness with other women. She dismissed it as of no importance” (95). Aaron is fascinated by the simplicity and innocence of Shosha. She shouts at her mother giving the real information: “Mommy, Aaron is going to marry me after Succoth” (154). P Gray observes that Shosha is a simple girl. Aaron has “the conviction that Shosha is the only woman in the world who would never betray him” (81).

Singer’s novel *Satan in Goray* is set in the 17th century to the period just after the massacre of 1648 in which the Jews were mercilessly killed by the followers of Chmielnicki in Poland. The Jews witnessed a trail of death and devastation; the innocent Jews were killed, plundered and their houses were burnt. Thousands of women and children were displaced and the Jews were forced to flee to survive. Goray is a small town of Poland which was ruined by Chmielnicki men: “Goray, which once had been known for its scholars and men of accomplishment, was completely deserted....It seemed as though Goray had been erased forever” Michael Fixler observes that “The Jews had been in exile for several hundred years and

suffered various tribulations as they were subjected to various forms of discrimination and oppression” (364). Sabbatai Zevi is called by the Sultan and he is offered a choice between death or conversion to Islam. The followers of Zavi are punished in Goray; the Jews of the city are tortured and forced to embrace Islam. After the genocide, the Jews returned to Goray and struggled to survive picking up the threads of life. They opened their shops and began their business once again. Rabbi Benish devoted himself to rebuild Goray.

Rechele is the central character of the novel *Satan in Goray* as she is introduced at the outset of the novel. She is the daughter of Reb Eleazar Babad who lost everything and turned an insane because of the murder of the members of his family. Rechele is only his surviving daughter who is also an abnormal girl of seventeen years. She is good looking but deformed and displays her abnormal behaviour; she is indifferent even towards her friends. She remains aloof but possesses a strange element of sexuality. Singer presents her thus: “Rechele who was seventeen years old, had a lame left foot and seldom showed herself outside, preferring to remain hidden in her room” (16). Rechele’s abnormal condition and her melancholy is the product of her victimization. She is haughty and apathetic; moody and despondent; lonely and desperate. She feels upset if someone visits her. She remains aloof and inhospitable and can’t even remember the names of her friends. Her father’s is also a neurotic person; thinking of the loss of the family all the time. He is cold and unresponsive like his daughter. Rechele suffers from physical and mental abnormality; she doesn’t eat or sleep and has other psychological ailments. She can never forget the death of her mother at the age of five; she was given to Reb

Zeydel Bar who was a ritual slaughterer by profession. His ugly appearance terrified Rechele. Her earlier memories are of dead and dying animals, of blood and mute suffering. Her childhood is full of sufferings; loneliness and chaotic. Her uncle was a widower without children; his house was kept by his mother-in law who was an ugly woman. She looked like a witch and she narrated the horrifying tales of the ghosts, demons and imps. The old woman “took to terrifying the child” (46). The childhood of Rechele passed in an atmosphere of decay and horror. Rechele became a mentally retarded child because of the ghostly atmosphere of her uncle’s house. Singer observes thus: “The slaughterer would come into the room, a knife in a corner of his mouth. His blood-stiff coat covered with feathers would creak as he bent to go through the low door” (47). Rechele was brought up on stories of beast, goblins and witches and monsters. She often cried: “Granny, I’m afraid I” (48). It is a strange childhood devoid of happiness and all these images of gloom turned Rechele a neurotic woman. “But here, in this lonely street, inside the thick walls, Rechele heard only an echo. She stood there, ears cooked and eyes wide. This was her first time alone on Yom Kippur eve” (57). Singer has given plenty images to describe her horrible existence and her gradual growth in becoming a neurotic woman. “Alone in a house of death, she can experience nothing but terror. It reaches a climax when her desperate attempt to shut out all sights and sounds by closing her eyes and ears fail” (48). Rechele experiences nightmarish existence as Singer writes: “ Everything seethed, burst, crackled, as though the whole house were aflame...Late that night, when uncle came home, he found Rechele lying with her knees pulled to her chest, her eyes glazed and her teeth clenched” (52). She has to pass through a series of psychological ailments; even her left leg is paralyzed. She is no longer a normal

person. Rechele becomes moody with melancholy disposition and after the death of her uncle she comes back to her father's house. Both live like strangers because of a long separation. Singer has given a suitable parallel to the town of Goray itself. The life of Rechele has symbolical significance; she is experiencing trauma the way people experience death and destruction and the city itself was turned into a ruin. The life of Rechele is also desolate and devastated like Goray. Both Goray and Rechele are suffering endless miseries; death and destruction; poverty and alienation. There is no hope in the life of Rechele and in Goray. The Jews of Goray have no future as the dark shadows of the Chmielnicki terror is deeply rooted in their psyche." It seemed as though the few Jews who had come back to Goray were all indoors, their ears alerted for news of the enemy's vengeful return" (19). Singer has given the comparative picture of the past and the present Goray: "the present condition appears hopeless; whereas living had been strictly adhered to, now there is want, discontentment and apprehension. Even the rabbi's household is split over small issues, and there is a constant state of war between different groups" (34). She is leading a life in death. She shrinks from meeting Rabbi Benish and Singer's description of her nose, red with the cold symbolizes her inner demons and pressures on her psyche. The appearance of Itche Mates in the novel brings a turning point in the life of Rechele. The encounter between Rechele and Itche Mates is unusual. Rechele surprises him by her answers and so long as she is protected by God evil cannot touch Rechele. Singer describes her presence before Itche Mates thus: " She was barefoot, and wore a torn dress, through which parts of her body shone....Through her disheveled hair a pair of frantic eyes smiled madly at him" (57). Rechele expresses her deep anguish thus in her conversation with Itche Mates:

“Nobody wants me! Unless Satan will have me! (58). Rechele bursts into tears as Itche Mates try to find the meaning of his encounter with Rechele. But he decides to marry Rechele as he says: “It must be ordained by Heaven” Rechele also agrees to marry him. She tells him of her abject poverty and loneliness and her bleak future.

Rechele doesn't enjoy peace of mind as she remains a restless person being disturbed by her nightmarish dreams. She is sick and given to sudden bouts of crying; she is deprived from the comfort of sleep because of her frequent nightmares. Chinklele thinks that after marriage her life will be smooth and happy but something in Itche Mates terrifies her: “Chinkle darling, I'm so afraid of him” (62). Singer depicts her anguish thus: “Alone and defenseless, about to plunge into an unwelcome marriage, she feels so lost and unhappy that she can only pray for death” (63). Reb Gedaliya makes best efforts to cheer her up but she remains restless and a neurotic person. Singer says: “She suffers from inexplicable attacks of cold although her room is heated regularly. Her heart palpitates violently, as she feels terribly weak. Even sleep brings her little relief” (139).

Singer's novel *The Manor* continues the theme of alienation and depression. His novel is a new encounter with the shifting world of disorder and chaos, with a new hero, a new dilemma, and a new milieu and new culture. The novel is set in the latter half of the nineteenth century; a time period of industrial growth and radical social change. Gerald Jonas in his review of the novel *The Manor* published in *The New York Times Book Review* observes thus “If Singer's work can be said to have a single unifying theme, it may be. Don't understand the world, or yourself, or anyone else too quickly. No Matter how much you think you know there is more, always

more” (Jonas 2). Like *The Family Moskat*, *The Manor* is also a sprawling history chronicling the fates of Calman Jacoby who is a rural businessman having four daughters. The oldest daughter Jochebed marries a stuffy man and begins controlling the business of Calman. His other daughter Shaindel marries a doctor who takes a mistress because Shaindel becomes fat. His other daughter Miriam Lieba elopes with a worthless Gentile. She suffers because of her wrong choice and suffers acute poverty. His fourth daughter Tsipele gets married with a young serious man who becomes a Hassidic leader. The real understanding of the characters of Singer is possible only if we understand their ability to settle in a new place. Singer was forced to flee Poland, immigrated to America in 1935 and this historical event is depicted in his most of the characters that are tormented by loneliness and depression in a new country. The hero Ezriel Baddad is portrayed as a typical Jewish merchant confronting with the forces of chaos and disorder. He struggles to revive the Jewish faith. Singer uses the historical period of tension between 1863, the year of the Polish insurrection against Russian oppression. Singer has depicted the loss of the identity of the Jewish characters tormented by the Jewish Holocaust. Singer has depicted the time of backwardness of the Jewish community, the erratic politics and the conflict of old Jewish life and modern thought. Singer is the last survivor and there is no one left but him to write an epitaph for the Polish Jews who were butchered. Singer is haunted by a moment frozen in time and branded on the mind. Singer wrote novels to articulate his discontentment against the Jewish oppression and massacre. In all his novels Singer is always a boy and Warsaw is always on the verge of destruction. Singer writes thus:

It was an era of gas lamps, the time when the Poles had finally become resigned to their loss of independence and turned to a kind of national positivism. Poland now began to emerge as an industrial country; railroads were built, factories were opened and the cities grew rapidly. The Jews, who until 1863 for the most part still lived in a ghetto atmosphere, now began to play an important role in Polish industry, commerce, the arts and sciences. All the spiritual and intellectual ideas that triumphed in the modern era had their roots in the world of that time socialism and nationalism, Zionism and assimilationism, nihilism and anarchism, suffragetteism, atheism, the weakening of the family bond, free love, and even the beginnings of Fascism. (81)

The crisis in the life of the Jews put them in a state of dilemma in which choices must be made and the consequences must be suffered. Alexander observes thus: "Jewish culture had even more at stake than most cultures. A Frenchman who rejected his father's religion and dress and manners would still remain, however transformed or diminished, a Frenchman...For the Jews of Europe, however, the loss of unity in religion meant the loss of Jewish identity itself" (Alexander 84). The characters of *The Manor* are involved in the transition of the time as well as the individual patterns of their lives. In other words the characters of *The Manor* must make choices that constitute moral or immoral responses to the period of crisis in which they live. Two important characters Calman Jacoby and Ezriel Babad are

involved in such a situation. Singer depicts the alienation and sufferings of Calman and his daughters who are the victims of the Jewish Holocaust.

The first objective of the research project is “to trace the socio – political forces of the contemporary era and their impact on the psyche of the characters of Isaac Bashevis Singer.” In this chapter the forces of Jewish Holocaust are explored investigating the impact of these forces on the life of the Jewish characters. They were forced to suffer social and cultural displacement and all the novels are discussed to highlight the psychological anguish of the characters of Singer. Singer’s novels *Enemies: A Love Story* and *Shosha*. *The Magician of Lublin*, *The Family Moskat* and *Satan in Goray* and *The Manor* depict the traumatic characters that live under constant menace of the Nazis. A large number of the Jews migrate to America to escape the killings of Hitler. The Jews like Herman and Aaron lose their identity; they struggle to escape and alienate from society and Judaism. They indulge into sexual adventures to overcome the trauma; they are convinced that the Jews in Poland are not safe. Herman and Aaron are sick characters; Herman disappears at the end of the novel and Aaron turns hedonistic to forget the traumatic experiences of the Holocaust. His novels have historical and cultural relevance as they chronicle the turbulent period of the history of the Jewish community. The life and struggle of the Jewish characters is an interesting study; the Jews struggle for their redemption because they believe that all their sufferings are because of their loss of faith in their God. The evil forces of the Holocaust ruined their peaceful life; they lost their connection with their community as they were forced to flee from Europe.

This chapter explores the social and psychological predicaments of the Jews who were physically tortured and psychologically persecuted by the Nazis. It is observed that physical wounds can be healed but the psychic wounds are incurable and the psychological anguish is transmitted to the next generation. The physical wounds can be cured by the medical treatment but psychological ailments such as stress, anxiety, and trauma give eternal anguish to the victims and the Jews of the world experienced this. The novels of Bashevis Singer throw a light on the ferocious enormity of Nazis on European Jews. The Holocaust was the systematic and premeditated effort to eliminate European Jews before and during World War II. Victims were rounded up and transported like animals to concentration camps, where if they did not die in transit, they lived to endure continuous threats to life, depersonalization, abuse and other significant loss. More than half a century after the war, the Holocaust continues to make its presence felt on survivor families and others in a variety of ways. Like an atom bomb that disperses its radioactive fallout in distant places, often a long time after the actual explosion, the Holocaust continues to contaminate everyone who was exposed to it in one way or another. Traces of Holocaust associations may even be found in the third generation who, in their quest for past roots, discover the prematurely broken branches of their family trees. The trauma of the holocaust survivors was so tremendous and illogical, that as a result they stayed in a state of internal dissonance. The hellish journey of the characters of Singer was indeed traumatic. They suffered the traumas of Holocaust as they experienced the loss of memory and became the victims of neurosis and depression. The wounds of the Holocaust catastrophe were slow to heal. Survivors of the camps found it impossible to return home as they had lost their families and homes. There

was dispossession, terror, degradation, humiliation, starvation and systematic annihilation. The victims were tortured in the most vicious way before they were killed, they were experimented on; they were forced to cooperate in the killing factory. The long-term after-effects of Holocaust traumatization are far-reaching. Singer observes that more than half a century after the war, the Holocaust continues to make its presence felt on survivor families and others in a variety of ways. Like an atom bomb that disperses its radioactive fallout in distant places, often a long time after the actual explosion, the Holocaust continues to contaminate everyone who was exposed to it in one way or another. It is concluded that the wounds of the Holocaust were deep as the memories of the scenes of death and destruction haunted them day and night. The characters of Singer found life nihilistic, absurd and meaningless. The Jewish characters such as Jacob, Herman and Yasha make every possible effort to forget the past and struggled to continue their lives like normal citizens but they became fear-ridden. They were constantly reminded of the terrible events of the Holocaust. They turned pessimistic and nihilistic for God was a silent spectator when they were tortured by the SS Guards.

To conclude, Singer's novels *Enemies: A Love Story* and *Shosha*. *The Magician of Lublin*, *The Family Moskat*, *The slave and Satan in Goray* and *The Manor* depict the traumatic characters that live under constant menace of the Nazis. A large number of the Jews migrate to America to escape the killings of Hitler. The Jews like Herman and Aaron lose their identity; they struggle to escape and alienate from society and Judaism. They indulge into sexual adventures to overcome the trauma; they are convinced that the Jews in Poland are not safe. Herman and Aaron are sick characters; Herman disappears at the end of the novel and Aaron turns

hedonistic to forget the traumatic experiences of the Holocaust. His novels have historical and cultural relevance as they chronicle the turbulent period of the history of the Jewish community. The life and struggle of the Jewish characters is an interesting study; the Jews struggle for their redemption because they believe that all their sufferings are because of their loss of faith in their God. The evil forces of the Holocaust ruined their peaceful life; they lost their connection with their community as they were forced to flee from Europe.

Chapter 3

Politics of Survival and Hysterical Outbursts

Marc Adele's, the famous modern anthropologist in his book *The Politics of Survival* argues that in an era of global uncertainty people are concerned about the survival. The Jews were treated like animals by the Germans; millions of them were butchered and killed. Grippled by the feeling of insecurity many of them migrated to other countries. Singer himself migrated to America to save his life. Singer has depicted the theme of the consciousness of survival of his characters who struggle against the forces of chaos and uncertainty unleashed by the Holocaust. Singer has depicted the cries of the Jews and their hysterical outbursts in his novels. The Jews realized that life was futile as the Holocaust brought displacement and homelessness. The scenes of violence and barbarity were common and the Jews suffered humiliation, starvation and psychic depression. The Jews experienced displacement and alienation and their main concern was to survive in harsh and cruel society. The historians depict the human degradation of the Jews and the environment of death and destruction. The Nazis used every possible method to decimate and dehumanize the Jews. They were at the bottom of life; at the end of the road to civilization. Bashevis Singer has traced the process of loss of identity and dehumanization of the Jews in his novels and their struggle to survive.

Being the victim of the forces of the Holocaust, the Jews cried and even cursed God who was a silent spectator when their houses were burnt and their families were butchered and small children were tossed into the burning chimneys of

the concentration camps of Auschwitz. The decadence of faith is a conspicuous cultural feature of the literature of the Holocaust dealing with the traumatic life of the Jews. The SS Guards used violence on the Jews who didn't understand German language and couldn't obey the orders. The Jews were also coerced into making decisions at the cost of their fellow prisoners. They were reduced to commodities by the SS Squads in the larger context. Singer's perception of being a survivor is of guilt and nausea. No wonder Primo Levi categorically stated that "If there is an Auschwitz, then there cannot be a God" (*Survival* 86). The Jews experienced the psychological ailments such as depression, alienation, nausea and dementia and Singer has depicted the emotional outbursts of his Jewish characters in simple and lyrical language.

The epical novel *The Family Moskat* of Singer dramatizes the quest for survival of the Jews who were fear-ridden. The world of *The Family Moskat* is of chaos, uncertainty and decay of the Jewish culture and religion. The novel begins with the note of uncertainty and dark future. The return of Reb Meshulam Moskat with his third wife Rosa and her daughter Adele to Warsaw symbolizes dark future for the Jews; he hoped "a quite wedding but it turned to be a noisy affair" (Singer 21). Singer has presented the character of Reb as the representative of the entire Jew community; his new marriage symbolizes the downfall of the Jewish community; his sexual adventures with various women are realistically described. Singer has pointed out the loss of faith among the Jews and the paralysis of the mind and the spirit of the Jews as they are deviating from their traditional religion embracing Christianity to survive in the alien lands. Reb is guilt-ridden as he broods over the future of his married life with Rosa: "He regrets it for the very good reason that the masculine

ripple that had awakened in him during his courtship masculine soon flickered and died. In their bedchamber his bride revealed herself to be a broken shell” (Singer 63). Reb is confronted with the problem of survival; he is not comfortable as he is in dilemma to continue the relationship with Rosa or to divorce her because he is haunted by the guilt of sexual passions. There is a conflict in his soul and this is the main cause of his psychological stress. He is so helpless that he fails to take a decisive action and says that “the best thing to do is to do nothing” (Singer). Judaism for Singer is basically a living faith that has managed to survive despite innumerable obstacles. The Jews were infected by the virus of pride, hares, violence and skepticism after the Jewish Holocaust, they rejected all the old Jewish traditions and rituals in frustration. Singer’s novels are an expression of poignant experiences in the context of his living faith. Singer is a modern Jew who struggles to connect the past with the present and chronicles the poignant experiences of the Jews who lost faith in Talmud and Kabala. His ardent faith is based on survival, but its heart lies in the concept of recreation. No wonder each of his characters is confronted with the problem of re-creating Judaism in the void

In the novel *The Family Moskat*, the main focus of Singer is on the Jewish family as a single unit of social microcosm. The novel is a fine example of the politics of survival of the characters. The Jews live in a society and are forced to come in conflict with old and the modern; the conflicts raging in society. The characters of Singer are not great heroes as they don’t perform great deeds but are distressed people since the world has crushed them. Most of them experience suffering, trauma and discontentment in their love and life. Singer has given the images of darkness in the novel. They struggle in their life to survive and exist as

they feel threatened by the forces of violence. Being fear-ridden and haunted by death Jekuthiel expresses his emotional outbursts before the rabbi thus: “Where is your Lord of the Universe now? Where are the miracles? Where is your faith in Torah and prayer? (Singer 259). The Polish Jews live in fear of losing their cultural and religious identity. They penetrate into the psyche and minds of the survivors. The psychological wounds are too deep to be cured. The Holocaust survivors were in the grip of powerful and acute trauma resulting into their internal dissonance. Singer does not simply glorify the characters but depicts their follies and foibles. Singer's feelings about his fellow Jews have something in common with those expressed by Asa Heshel is a young boy ambitious to rise in the ladder of success and believes in free will.

The main protagonists in the novel are Hadassah, Asa Heshel and Adele who lead a desperate life. They struggle to survive in harsh environment through love. The triangular love affair of Hadassah, Asa Heshel and Adele forms the core of the novel. Their love adventures turn misadventures as all suffer psychological anguish and express their emotional volcano. Bashevis Singer describes the modern beauty of Hadassah thus: “She appeared to about eighteen, tall and slender...her light blue eyes charmed Asa Heshel” (34). He also comes in contact with Adele who plays great role in his life. Singer holds Hadassah's mother responsible for her sufferings: “Her mother sent her to those modern schools; the books they read are full of adulteries and abominations” (Singer 103). Both Asa Heshel and Hadassah know that Hadassah is going to marry Fischel and the wedding was to take place before “Passover.” Hadassah didn't like to marry Fischel as she was burning in the romantic fire ignited

by Asa Heshel. She was having sleepless nights and looked pale and sullen. Singer describes the inner turbulent world of Hadassah thus:

On a chair lay her dress, her petticoat, and her jacket. Her shoes stood on top of the table-although she did not remember having put them there. Her stockings lay on the floor. She put both hands up to her head. Had it really happened? Could it be that she had fallen in love?

(Singer 113)

Hadassah summons up all her courage to revolt against the society. She commits the sin of moral transgression and elopes with Asa disturbing the moral order of the Jewish community. Shafira also condemned the rebellious step of Hadassah. Hadassah is arrested and her romantic adventure turns tragic misadventure. The psychic disintegration of Hadassah begins with her unfortunate art by soldiers” “Her dreams had a nightmarish quality. She “imagined herself flying like a bat and then falling precipitately through space like a stone” (227). Being burdened with guilt, Hadassah is psychologically battered since she feels lonely and cut off from her community and God. Freud in his essay *Our Attitude Towards Death* observes thus:

Our habit is to lay stress on the fortuitous causation of the death-accident, disease, infection, advanced age; in this way we betray an effort to reduce from a necessity to a chance event. (Freud 290)

Hadassah believes in god and in mankind and in romantic love but Asa “had nothing but doubt about everything” (399). Asa couldn’t understand the deep layers of love of Hadassah; he only used her body and gave her heart-rending psychological

ailments. Asa uses another option to enjoy sexual pleasures; he is not committed to Hadassah in spite of her supreme sacrifice and genuine love for him. He betrayed her in marrying Adele who has been in love with him ever since he undertook to edit her father's manuscript. Hadassah has no romantic fire in her bosom; she has become a statue. She kills all her ambitions and marries Fischel Kutner knowing full well that he is an unwilling partner. Adele had "known the very day she dragged him to the canopy, that he loved Hadassah, not her" (232). Fischel also knows that Hadassah is devoted to Asa in spite of what happened to her. Asa and Hadassah's relationship is adulterous and this is why Singer punishes both of them. Adele's devotion to Asa is mysterious and unconventional though she expresses her sincerity to Asa thus: "I'm not one of those women who love one man today and another tomorrow. I'm like those insects that can love only once" (255).

In desperation Asa writes a letter to Hadassah telling her that his only mission in life is to be united with her for he had passionately and sincerely loved her. This letter reminds all the furtive moments of love that she enjoyed with Asa and all the traumatic experiences of her eventual elopement; her loss of reputation and the psychological pain that he inflicted on her. But his longing for Hadassah causes him to inflict endless pain on his wife Adele. He forces Adele into two abortions. In a letter to her mother she expresses her indescribable anguish: "Mother you may well know that your daughter has fallen into a living grave because Asa Heshel is "cold – hearted and cruel and a crazy person" (272). She tells her mother that "if I should sit down to write you all his madness it would fill an entire book" (272). The oppressive attitude of Asa towards his wife is a testimony of a psychic wreck. He does all this out of frustration because Hadassah has married another person and all the time he is

haunted by the old memories of Hadassah. In unconscious mind she is a victim of psychological hallucinations. For Freud ‘the unconscious’ is the “object of a meta-psychological codification, a double point of view, at once *topical* and *dynamic*” (114). For Freud, ‘the unconscious’ is a systematic part of mind like the other “psychic co-systems” (114) namely ‘the conscious’ and ‘the preconscious’. The unconscious mind holds repressed feelings, hidden perceptions, concealed phobias, automatic reactions, blocked memories, thoughts, and desires that impact human behavior.

Adele expresses her emotional outburst thus: “Right after the wedding he began to be ashamed of me, as though I was a leper” (273). Adele highlights the facts that Asa is on the verge of madness thus: “In the last couple of weeks he seems to be out of his mind entirely, and wanders around as though he’s on some strange planet” (273). Adele herself is fear-ridden because she knows he meets Hadassah regularly: “But I know at the same time that Hadassah is waiting for him to come back to Poland and that sooner or later matters between us will come to a divorce” (275). Adele is on the verge of madness because she is too fragile to confront the forces of oppression. She had a rosy dream when she fell in love with Asa; she had a opinion of Asa who was a learned person and a philosopher. But all her dreams were shattered and the house of cards that she had built collapsed. Adele knew that Asa was in love with Hadassah; she knew the entire story of his elopement with Hadassah but in spite of all she married Asa rejected Fischel opposing her parents. The problem with Asa Heshel is that he wants to sail on two boats; he has married Adele but he cannot get away from Hadassah: “he had fallen in love with one woman and had married another” and this is the main cause of his sufferings and the psychological

ailments. He is a slave to the whimsical demands of lust flouting all the good norms of Talmud. He writes a letter to Hadassah knowing full well that she is a married woman and it is a sin to develop sexual relations with a married woman. Asa is a slave to passions and is unpredictable and enigmatic. He is passing through a period of crisis as he feels unsettled: “My personal life is senseless from beginning to end, I blame no one. The thought that you have a husband is strange to me” (271). Hadassah is also passing through the traumatic phase as she gives vent to her agony in her historical letter written to Asa betraying her husband. She writes about her psychological ailments to Asa: “I was sick for weeks; “I looked forward to death, to an end to all this pain. But you remained silent and it was your silence that drove me to despair” (269).

Freud in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* observes that the death is just an opposite of Eros that is man’s struggle to survive in the world. Man wants to enjoy sex and other pleasures of life and death’s consciousness emerges out of fear such as abandonment. There are many unresolved conflicts which urge man to end his life; often death may be the outcome of guile consciousness. The letter of Hadassah revives the passions in Asa who longs to meet her flouting all the norms of Torah and Talmud and the Jewish traditions. Hadassah is also behaving like a “wanton” developing intimacy with a married man. In the Jewish religion such things are taboos. No wonder her mother Rosa Frumetl calls her: “Wanton! Prostitute!.” She screams in a hysterical manner heaping curses on Hadassah. Freud observes that if a patient is not convinced to release his/her repressed emotions or he/she is not hypnotized, hysteria turns into the psychological trauma. The term ‘hysteria’ denotes an extreme fear or anxiety that can’t be controlled. In his essay entitled *On the*

Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: A Preliminary Communication—A lecture, Freud considers hysteria as a branch of psychological trauma (Freud, *The Standard Edition* 365). Freud further adds that “every case of hysteria can be looked upon as traumatic hysteria in the sense of implying a psychical trauma” (Freud, *Freud – Complete Works* 34).

Hadassah had decided to spend her remaining life with Asa and she would soon divorce her husband for the love of Asa. This was a revolutionary decision but she was mad in love with Asa and was ready to face all the consequences. Freud observes that sexual repression is the main cause of depression and frustration of a human being. Hadassah never enjoyed domestic happiness in her married life because she gave only her body to her husband Fischel but her mind and soul was with Asa. She confesses this for the first time thus:

Now we will be together. For always.

Yes. For always.

No one will separate us.

No One. (303)

Hadassah takes full sexual liberties to escape from her sexual repression like the heroines of Congreve’s *Comedy of Manners*. She emerges very bold and beautiful and takes Asa in her bedchamber without bothering the consequences. Asa is stunned as he says: “She is taking me to her husband, I don’t care. I’ll tell him openly that she belongs to me” (310). Hadassah is in high spirits and gives the blunt answer when Asa asks her: “What room is this?” She tells him boldly: “Our room” (311). This

love meeting was not the end but a new beginning; a new adventure of Hadassah. Asa commits the sin of moral transgression; tortures Adele and punctures the traditional morality of the Jews by his adultery and illicit relations with Hadassah. He is confronted with the truth for the first time when Adele warns him frankly: "If a man wants to commit suicide there's no way of stopping him" (390). For the first time Adele summons the courage to speak openly with Asa Heshel who is her husband:

Do you want a divorce?

I don't know any more what I want.

You've finished life for me. Even if I go on living.

It's too late for that kind of talk. (390)

Asa Heshel knows the end of the story of his love has come. He cannot afford to cheat his wife Adele anymore because he knows the truth and will not believe in his stories. He must tell her the truth with a view to win her sympathy and save her from eternal torture. She must know everything and she must be ready to face the reality of their intimate relationship. Adele wants him to put an "end to this madness" and begin his life again expressing her wish to support him. She is ready to give him a chance to mend his ways in case he is serious to leave Hadassah but Asa comes out with the truth:

Adele, I love her

Is that your last word?

It's the truth. (280)

Adele is passing through a traumatic phase; she is pregnant and her husband is ready to divorce her for the sake of Hadassah who brought all the problems in his life. She tells him that “he is not capable of any kind of love” and tries her best to shatter his illusions but Asa is a tragic figure who cannot understand the truth and sanctity of relationships. He is in frenzy and is a divided self. R.D. Laing in his *The Divided Self* observes that when a man is leading a double life he becomes irrational. However Adele tries to persuade him for the last time making him to confront the reality:

I’m speaking the truth. It’s this woman who brought you all this misery. It’s because of her that we came to Poland on the eve of the war. You’d have been studying, you’d have accomplished something.
(390)

The story of unlawful-affair of Asa and Hadassah had spread in the entire town; Dacha was seriously concerned about the humiliating and disgraceful sex adventures of Hadassah. She made her to confront the reality:

What will be your end” I know all your wicked deeds.

Mamma!

Be silent! You’re unclean. Your lips are unclean

Mamusha!

Whore! Get out of my sight!. (425)

Her husband Fischel also came to know about her sex adventures with Asa as he says: “Hadassah, I know everything. It is forbidden for us to live together” (426). Hadassah

had made up her mind to risk divorce from her husband and without any preface she bluntly retorted:

What do you want to do? Her husband Fischel demanded.

We'll have to get divorced. I'll raise no objections.

All right! Fischel answered in a mechanical manner. (Singer 426)

To conclude, in the novel *The Family Moskat*, Singer dramatizes the struggle of Hadassah, Asa and Adele who desperately struggle to survive in the chaotic world of the Jewish community. The triangular love of Hadassah, Adele and Asa forms the backbone of the plot of *The Family Moskat* and this triangular pattern of the novel becomes the root cause of the deflation of the self of Asa, Hadassah and Adele. Hadassah had prepared the background of divorcing her husband who is under acute stress and in desperation he abuses Hadassah and hurled on her the derogatory remarks: "Whore! Unclean woman! Leave this house! A thousand curses upon you!" (507). Hadassah is mystified and is mentally disturbed like Adele; she is an embodiment to selflessness but she suffers because of her error of judgment about the character of Asa Hadassah who is unpredictable "As Adele spoke she had a strange feeling that it was someone else speaking through her lips. It was her dead mother saying these words, her voice and her intonation" (545).

Bashevis Singer *the Magician of Lublin* is another significant discourse on the struggle of the Jewish people to survive in the harsh Jewish community. The main focus of Singer in this novel was to depict the struggle for survival of the protagonist Yasha Mazur, his passionate hysterical outbursts and emptiness of life. The basic

ingredients of Singer's vision of life are his concern for the Jews who are displaced and victimized by the political and social forces. The Holocaust ruined the life of the Jews who were forced to flee from their home town to save their families. Many of them were killed and sent to the concentration camps of Buna and Auschwitz. They lost their faith in God because they believed that they couldn't have suffered if God had supported them. The main conflict between the discipline of dogma and necessity of free will and the man woman relationships which Singer sees crucial to the human development. Singer has structured the plot around the themes of love, marriage and extra-marital relationships and the loss of faith in God. *The Magician of Lublin* is a very typical novel of Singer as in this novel Singer has created a memorable character of Yasha Mazur who is an acrobat, magician, lock-picker, psychic, womanizer, mystic and a philosopher. Hailing from Lublin, Yasha's life is full of struggles and full of dangers as he walks on the tight rope to earn bread. He has no regular employment and he has to move from town to town in his routine life to make money. He is a professional entertainer sick at heart and burdened by many responsibilities. Wylie Sypher in his famous *Loss of the Self in Modern Literature and Art* talks about the conflict of the soul. The life of Yasha is that of a dangling man as he lives in two worlds. He has many fans but his personal life is chaotic. His dual personality is the main source of his depression and alienation. He is all the time surrounded by the crowd but in reality he is very anxious and lonely and a fragmented self. Singer has portrayed him as a representative of the Jews who were unemployed and moved from city to city like gypsies in search of money. Irving Malin in his book *Isaac Bashevis Singer* comments thus: "The magician is also caught by passion. Singer's *The Magician of Lublin* is full of the images of Holocaust

and the exodus of the Jews of Warsaw depicting the mood of melancholy and psychic trauma” (Malin 52). Yasha is trapped in the new cultural transformation of Europe during the days of Hitler’s Holocaust when Warsaw was burnt and genocide of the Jews took place. Yasha has his own way of leading life and fighting with the forces of chaos and uncertainty. He believes in freedom and he has severed his relations with the Jewish community. He is fired with the ambition to make money, to enjoy power and to be famous in the world. He is a passionate adventurer and Singer has depicted the inner turbulent world of Yasha; Singer portrays his personality thus:

He was a short man, broad-shouldered and lean-hipped he had unruly flaxen hair and watery blue eyes, thin lips, a narrow chin and a short Slavic nose. His right eye was somewhat larger than his left, and because of this he always seemed to be blinking with insolent mockery. He was now forty but looked ten year younger. (Singer 3)

Yasha has no moral scruples as he behaves like an outcast; his sexual adventures in pursuing women reveal his liberalism. He is married to Esther but is not bound to her as he shuns formal commitment. Marriage or any lasting relationship inhibits his freedom. Singer comments thus: “He could not be watched over like other husbands; he spent more time on the road than at home, met all sorts of women, wandered further than a gypsy. Yes he was as free as the wind...” (5). The focus of the plot of the novel is not on the future of the Jewish community but on the issue of the survival Yasha Mazur. Singer gives him full liberty and allows him to develop in the changed political set up of Lublin after the Nazi Holocaust. For the first time Singer

is concerned with the problems of the individual; his challenges; his ambitions; his sexual adventures and the failures that grip his psyche. Singer's magician protagonist is well cast. Yasha is multidimensional personality; religious, heretical, good and evil, false and sincere. Yasha is walking "the tightrope merely inches from disaster." Singer gives the image of a falling rope to describe the uncertainty of life and the existential challenges faced by modern Jew. The choices of Yasha are important in the novel as they determine the journey of his life. Yasha's journey is his long day's journey into darkness; depression and despair. Yasha's journey is of painful self – discovery, Singer has given the powerful image of "tight rope" to describe the nature of his journey. In his life, he is always juggling, balancing; his relations with four women turning somersaults for them upon high wire. His journey also reflects the tensions of his soul and the growth of his restlessness. The dark reaches of his soul are described by Singer thus:

He constantly felt that only the thinnest of barriers separated him from those dark ones who swarmed around him, aiding him and thwarting him, playing all sorts of tricks on him. Yasha had to fight them constantly or else fall from the tightrope, lose the power of speech. Grow infirm and impotent. (Singer 425)

Yasha is always disturbed by the inner demons threatening his destruction. Guilt-ridden, he always fearful of his own capacity for evil and of the fear of losing the precarious balance he maintain on the tightrope. He is so much stressed that he is on the verge of madness, landing smack in the middle of the demonic part of the self. Yasha's fragmentation of life, evident in his drifting from one woman to another and

from one family to another, is indicative of a more profound fragmentation within himself. Singer has created dreamlike atmosphere in which the protagonist is overwhelmed by the chaotic or irrational nature of his environment. Singer has described the conflict in Yasha's soul thus: "One moment he crowd elatedly like a rooster, squealed like a pig, whinnied like a horse and the next was inexplicably melancholy" (Singer 6). Yasha was an unpredictable character; he lived in the company of monkey, horse and parrot and he had developed the animalistic disposition. His wife Esther had observed his strange behavior. To her "he was all sorcery. Even at night in bed she would hear him clicking his tongue or snapping his toes" (6). Esther could not understand the dilemmas of Yasha. Singer describes the whole situation thus:

He was a maze of personalities; religious and heretical, good and evil, false and sincere. He could love many women at once. Here he was ready to renounce his religion, yet when he found a torn page from a holy book he always picked it up and put it to his lips. (Singer 372)

Yasha is a master of illusions; he camouflages himself adopting protective coloration which makes him comfortable in any environment. He lives in an eternal present bewildered and confused not knowing himself "if he was telling the truth or lying" (378). Edward Alexander in his book *Isaac Bashevis Singer* observes that Yasha is as mystified by the dark passions that storm in his soul as others are awed by his ability to unravel what to them seem mysterious of import" (Alexander 61). Yasha is alone on his tightrope, "merely inches from disaster" (351), he is in exile himself. His exile from himself and exile from his family is the root cause of his psychological

depression and mental anguish. He is alive physically but mentally remains upset and restless; he is always finding a new way to escape the guilt and sins. In *The Magician Lublin*, the images of God and the magician are conflated so that the ontological search of Yasha for redemption leads him to awareness. He can perform “even finer tricks” (400). He is a debased form of the traditional magician. He is a cheap performer and not a prophet, entertaining people with his tricks rather than performing miracles. However, Esther thinks of him in the terms often reserved for God: “She had long since come to the conclusion that she would never be able to understand all his complexities. He possessed hidden powers...(324). But in reality there is darkness inside Yasha; he is lost in the world of trickery and romance; he uses the power of magic for his sexual pleasures and to save the people from perdition. Yasha is not satisfied with his life while he shows “a conflict between his libidinal wishes and the part of his personality we call his ego, which is the expression of his instinct of self-preservation and which also includes his ideals of his personality” (Freud 316). J.S. Wolkenfeld observes that “the main theme of the novel is an act of stealing of Yasha whose life is chaotic and disorderly” (Wolkenfeld 95).

Yasha Mazur is a complex person, vital, exuberant, and intense and an intricate personality. It engages him constantly in a struggle of opposing forces and this created psychological problems for him. He is often restless; depressed and expresses his emotional outbursts to dominate others. In *Satan in Goray*, the opposing forces are presented as two distinct elements within the community. Yasha Mazur’s entire life is a battle. He can never conquer the sexual drive. He can only negotiate with it, appease it, or in some other way deal with it, so that it remains dormant. He never knows when it will awaken to begin another round.

The novel *The Magician of Lublin* is a brilliant piece of art; modern, inclusive and a fine portrayal of the hero Yasha torn within and the victim of internal forces. Yasha carries “freedom” to its most death-defying limits. He refuses to compromise with his smaller-minded, prying neighbors or even with God. “When were you in heaven, and what did God look like?” he asks his would be reformers” (315). He lives in the world of possibility, avoids the restrictions and has multiple identities. He performs many roles to suit his mood and situation and often emerges as a chameleon in the novel. He is an expert charmer and has the power to hypnotize women for his sexual pleasures. Yasha suffers from “the psychic disorder, they “mirror the chaos, disintegration, and sexual confusion of an increasingly violent and perverse world” (Pelzer 103). Singer calls him as an “open man” given absolute freedom to follow any road in his life. Singer depicts the real dilemma of Yasha in the novel which eventually leads to his disintegration of self and gives him depression:

Can a man soar in the air? Can he cross and re-cross his tightrope between warring dualities with grace? Can he, with his wisdom and sleight of hand, come to be regarded as a minor deity in his own right? Yasha hovers in the nebulous realm between man and God, weaving his way unsteadily between heaven and earth. (Singer 374)

Herein lies the real germs of the psychic wreck of Yasha; his over ambitiousness gives him psychological tremors. Like Macbeth and Dr. Faustus he wants to touch the sky and makes futile efforts transcending time and space. He wants to become a demigod and this is the main cause of his disassociation of mind. He love miracles and miracles are his bread and butter in his life. He believes that there is a higher

power which controls and directs the activities of man on earth. Even a snow flake is a sign of God for him:

Each flake that fell on the window sill was hexagonal, complete with stems and horns, with designs and appendages, formed by that hidden hand which is everywhere...in the earth and in the clouds, in gold and in carrion, in the most distant star and in the heart of man. What can one call this force, if not God? (Singer 554)

Esther knows that Yasha's profession as a travelling magician brings him into contact with many women and she often questions him about his affairs: "I wish I had twenty silver pieces of for every girl you have had" (13). Yasha loves his wife dearly. In spite of his escapades, he always returns to her and resumes the threads of life at home. He never conceals the fact that he is married, and can never really think of deserting his wife for another woman. But Yasha is not orthodox he breaks the marriage vows repeatedly. Yasha is not a faithful husband and he had suffered long years of separation, he is, despite twenty year of marriage, "still as playful with her as he had been on the first days after their wedding" (14). She is certain that he has illicit relations with other women; but the eagerness and passion he shows to her make her believe that he had been living the life of a saint during his absence" (13). She observes that Yasha is an unsatisfied and discontented personality; he can never be happy in any company because he is living with a void. According to Freud, when a subject is attacked externally, it becomes unconscious, but "it also remains unconsciously active" (Freud, *The Unconscious* 47). Freud further states that the "repressed does not constitute the whole of the unconscious. The unconscious is the

more extensive; the repressed is part of the unconscious” (47). As an artist or magician, he moves in various worlds, assumes various guises or personalities, and has a different mistress in each world. Yasha is a sort of archetypal Houdini, a famous magician and has the hypnotizing power to entrap women. Love is hypnotism to him; it is all a result of his charismatic, mesmerizing eyes and will; the women must bend. He is like a magnet, drawing men, women and children into his circle, speaking in a wordless “language in which one soul communicates directly with another” (157). Despite his constant awareness of dark forces and hidden truths, he delights in love, knowing how to make a woman respond exactly as he wishes.

Yasha often becomes restless and directionless and with a view to escape from the guilt consciousness he indulges into sex adventures. Yasha is a man of many worlds so he is held in low esteem by the Jewish community of Lublin. Being possessed of a quick mind and an even quicker tongue, he answers the prodding of ‘the earnest moralists of the community with,’ “When were you in heaven, and what did God look like? (8). Yasha is an enigma, a dilemma and a trick-maker with multiple masks. He is “half Jew, half Gentile; neither Jew nor Gentile: (11). He works out his own religion: “There was a Creator, but He revealed himself to no one, gave no indication of what was permitted or forbidden, those who spoke in his name were liars (11). Yasha suffers from schizophrenia because all his choices are contradictory and uncertain; he doesn’t know what he is doing and what he is planning. His lack of belief in any particular revelations or dogma frees his extremely bright mind to explore the world about him. The journey of Yasha is adventurous, romantic, tragic and traumatic.

To conclude, Yasha suffers from alienation and this puts heavy pressure on his psychic behavior. He has alienated himself completely from his Jewish community. Yasha is typical character because his conscious mind works contrary to the unconscious mind. For Freud, 'the unconscious' is the "object of a meta-psychological codification, a double point of view, at once *topical* and *dynamic*" (114). For Freud, 'the unconscious' is a systematic part of mind like the other "psychic co-systems" (114) namely 'the conscious' and 'the preconscious'. The unconscious mind holds repressed feelings, hidden perceptions, concealed phobias, automatic reactions, blocked memories, thoughts, and desires that impact human behavior.

Singer has given the historical setting of the novel *The Slave*; the aftermath of Chmielnicki massacre is clearly referred in the beginning of the plot. Jacob is presented as a reprehensive of the Jewish people who were forced to struggle for survival after the massacre. The novel is concerned with the problem of free will as the title of the novel suggests. Singer also takes up the theme of lust and human degradation. Jacob struggles in his life to learn the significance of free will. Jacob realizes "that how deep were the wounds" (106). Singer puts forward the problems and tension of the deserted wives, Cossack brides were forced conversions; they witnessed the horrors of genocide and Singer depicts the traumatic experiences of the Jews in the novel *The Slave*.

Singer has depicted the heart-rending journey of Jacob who loses his freedom and becomes a slave because of the cruelties of the Cossacks. Jacob is a young and highly learned man who was made a slave in 17th century Poland. Jacob is seen

trapped in two major religious communities, one Christian and the other Jewish. Jacob passes through various stages of the growth of soul. He had lost his faith in God when his wife was killed and he was separated from his family. His search for love and God is the main focus of Singer as Nili Wachtel says “Jacob breaks a wrong, naïve passive slavery, in order to choose for himself a right, sober and active slavery” (186). He is conscious of being a slave and this feeling tortures him day and night; torments his soul as he cannot even pray to God: “Thou hast not mad me a slave” (Singer 10). Ironically, Jacob is not only a slave to God and his master, but also a slave to his emotions and passions. Jacob’s hometown was burnt by Cossacks and his family was killed in a brutal manner. Jacob lives alone in the abject circumstances of slavery; he lives alone on top of mountain next to a Christian village. He is always haunted by the old memories of his wife and children. Herman opines in her book *Trauma and Recovery* that the “typical phenomena of hyperarousal and intrusion cause trauma survivors to lose authority over their memory” (Herman 33). Jacob is a social outcast and herds only cow only. He has to go downtown everyday to get food and he observes the rituals and traditions of Christianity. Root further observes that alienation is a “threat to psychological safety, security, or survival” (241).

Jacob lives on the top of a mountain where the semblance of civilization is completely lost. The local priest is a corrupt drunkard who has grown anti-Christian. Incest is a common practice here and morality is non-existent. Jacob with his Judaism struggles to survive in a world whose goal is their obliteration. Jacob is a prisoner in exile and even in his traumatic situation he is committed to his Judaism

craving the Jewish laws onto a rock. He inscribes them in his mind and in the granite. His love for Wanda becomes a source of psychological pain and anguish. Irving Buchen (1968) observes that in *The Slave*, “Singer has stripped Jacob of all the complexities of society and history so that we may experience directly the divinity of original creation” (Buchen 155). Jacob does not doubt the existence of God but at the same time he refuses to grant God the quality of mercy: “It was different to believe in God’s mercy when murderers buried children alive. But God’s wisdom was evident everywhere” (Singer 19). As Judith Herman pointed out in her book *Trauma and Recovery*; that “atrocities refuse to be buried” (Herman 1). They penetrate into the conscious and unconscious minds of the survivors. The psychological wounds are too deep to be cured. The Holocaust survivors were in the grip of powerful and acute trauma resulting into their internal dissonance. Sigmund Freud discusses the theory of displacement of self in *Interpretation of Dreams*. R.D Laing wrote *The Divided Self* giving an account of schizoid and symptoms of schizophrenia. Singer has portrayed a barbarous world. Jacob is surrounded by savages living in a state of degradation. Sex for them is simply copulation and the corpse of baby is like garbage. The Christianity thrives on sexual morality, chastity and sanctity of religion. Among savages, Jacob is more thoughtful, sensible and hardworking than his fellow cowherds. The main conflict in the life of Jacob is to lift himself from obscenity and to open his mind to higher ideals. Elie Wiesel once wrote that when God created man, he gave him a secret...and that secret was not how to begin again” (Wiesel 32). Jacob is confronted with a baffling problem to reconstruct his life and the world for his survival. Jacob feels his moral responsibility to resurrect a world that is torn by the Holocaust. Jacob’s wife and children were killed by the Cossacks and he was sold

to Gazdas, a tribe living in the mountains of Poland. Singer has depicted the tribal society of the mountains where Jacob lived, Night and day the girls bothered him. Attracted by his tall figure, they sought him out and talked and laughed and behaved little better than beasts. (Singer 7)

He is a slave of Jan Bzik and whose daughter Wanda falls in love with him. Wanda is the widow of a drunken farmer and is known as “The Lady” in the tribe because of her good manners. Wanda is a beautiful girl, at the age of twenty she was “taller than most of the other women. She had blond hair, blue eyes, fair skin, and well-modeled features” (Singer 16). The real conflict begins when there is psychological pressure on his soul to forsake Judaism and to get freedom from slavery. Ronnie Janoff-Bulman in his book *Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma* asserts that trauma radically destroys people’s fundamental beliefs in the benevolence and meaningfulness of the world, and the worthiness of the self” (Ronnie 5). But Jacob refuses to leave his God and remains faithful to the Jewish God. In the last section of the novel Jacob gives in succumbs to the sexual passions for Wanda. Finally Jacob sexually consummates his love for Wanda. Singer has used the images from the Bible and Genesis to describe the ritual of their sexual consummation. Both of them immerse themselves in the stream ritually undergoing a symbolic union of souls. Jacob, however, is a victim of guilt though nature seems to sanction their sexual consummation next morning: “Dew covered the grass, and each droplet gleamed. Birds were singing, and in the distance a cow lowed” (70). He exhorts her to embrace Judaism, though he feels sinful. He realizes that Wanda’s desire to accept his faith is not natural and truthful but is the result of impure motives. Their union is a moral transgression of the Jewish and the Polish laws.

Singer presents men in terms of their traumatic experience and psychological aberrations. Women are presented as a class; subservient to men.

A Jew co-habiting was an act of damnation and a gentile marrying a Jew was a penal offence under the Polish law. Jacob spends most of his time in convincing Wanda to become a Jew. Jacob suffers from alienation and according to Patrick Colin Hogan “alienation is not itself an experience one chooses to have, it is, rather, an inability, as we shall see, frequently associated with emotional and mental disintegration” (Hogan 88). Hogan further suggests that alienation is a kind of “cultural disintegration involving a sense of alienation from all cultures, being no longer at ease in any cultures, finding a home neither in indigenous tradition nor in Europeanization” (88). Jacob’s dilemma is that he cannot forget his wife and children and he remains restless and depressed. He becomes a guilty of murder through his forgetfulness. He had witnessed horror of Chmielnicki genocide and in such a case his memory becomes a source of poignant torture. Robert Jay Lifton in his book *The Life of the Self: Toward a New Psychology* observes that “the survivor undergoes a radical but temporary diminution in his sense of actuality in order to avoid losing his sense completely and temporarily; he undergoes a reversible form of psychic death in order to avoid a permanent or psychic death” (Lifton 144). Jacob struggles to forget his wife and children in his exercise of scratching forty-three commandments and sixty nine interdictions into a rock but all these spiritual efforts prove futile as memory of death intensifies his trauma. He keeps an ultimate faith in God as he realizes: “The leaves drop from the tree, but the branch remains; the trunk still has its roots” (268). He seeks the help of God believing that he may get peace of mind and freedom from the present dilemma and depression.

Jacob is a teacher and he knows Jewish law and the meaning of sinful transgression very well. He becomes a slave to his passions and keeps on making love to a gentile. In his loneliness, he thinks of Wanda in his quest for anima. He knows that he is a married man and Wanda doesn't belong to his faith and cohabiting with her amounts to adultery with her. But it is extremely difficult for him to control his emotion and passions. The wrestling match of love and religion begin in the mind of Jacob. His resolve to live with God flounders: "His yearning stayed with him praying and studying, sleeping and waking. He knew the bitter truth: compared to his passion for Wanda, his mourning for his wife and children and his love for God were weak. If the desire of the flesh came from Satan, then he was in the Devils's net. (47).

They fall in love with each other but Jacob struggles to escape and resist the temptation of Satan. Jacob interprets his powerful sense of lust and longing for sexual pleasures. He becomes slave to passions urging him to sacrifice the eternal for the temporal: "Remember this world is only a corridor; the true palace lies beyond. Don't let yourself be barred from it the sake of a moment's pleasure" (16). He even dreams of Wanda in his sleep and feels sleepless and restless. Freud says that the "dreams are the royal road to the unconscious" and no wonder, Wanda is the center of his unconscious mind. She has become a part of his existence and he is ready to make sacrifice his life for her. He waits for Wanda like a bridegroom waiting for his bride and visualizes her thus: "her eyes which were sometimes blue, sometimes green, her full lips, here long slim neck, her womanly bosom. Like any other peasant she worked in the fields, but her hands remained feminine" (17).

Wanda has seen Jacob in her dreams and visions. Jacob's refusal to respond to her love intensifies her emotions. Her repressed passions come on the surface: "She was even ready to leave her village, her parents, her family and follow Jacob naked and empty handed" (26). She is in conflict as she has to fight with Jacob's asceticism and her dormant sexuality. Like Wanda Jacob is also on the rack as he is trapped in moral consciousness: In the mercy of the nations' sin, he tried to strangle the love he felt for her" (19). Singer has depicted the conflict in Jacob's soul between his religious commitment and instincts. He subdues his sexual urge towards Wanda but when he looks at her in silence, he is fired with sexual passions but restraining himself. The blood in his veins boiled and cold fire gripped his psyche but his Judaism dampens his spirits as he broods: "Remember this world is only a corridor. The true palace lies beyond. Don't let yourself be barred from it for the sake of a moment's pleasure" (22). Wanda excites his repressed instincts and he knows that he is the victim of a split between his repression and passion. Like Dimesdale of *The Scarlet Letter* of Hawthorne, Jacob wants to establish his relations with Wanda and is not psychologically under pressure to commit adultery. His desire for Wanda is intensified by the inactivity during the rainy season. When Jacob sees her coming up on the mountain, "tears come to his eyes. Someone remembered him and cared" (53). When he looks at Wanda sleeping in the barn he raises the queries: "Had she not been created in God's image?" (53). He takes her in his arms and enjoys the sexual pleasures for the first time. He sees Wanda in rain and darkness of the barn. He enjoys the body of Wanda but in his heart he remains restless and guilty. Singer depicts the fall of Jacob into the pit of darkness and lust:

Husband and wife had driven each other into an insane labyrinth of vice. He procured for her and she procured for him. She watched him corrupt peasant girls and he eavesdropped money for the building of churches and religious monuments. (130)

Freud argues that “an instinct for mastery” is more primordial and elementary than the general “pleasure principle” of avoiding unpleasurable experiences and seeking pleasurable experiences (147). He asks Wanda to bath in the stream because “God’s law requires it” (55). Wanda says: “I have done this for you” but Jacob says: “No, not for me, for God” (56). He is fully under the fire of passions; he lifts her in his arms and is lost in his love. He understands that just as death has its total power over human beings, of carrying them to a new world so it is with love. He realizes that to be totally consumed by love man has to recognize the mysteries of body. On the next morning: “he was no longer ashamed before God, but feared the ridicule of men” (57). Freud observes that the “first sexual act of a man and a woman may bring about guilt, remorse and even feelings of damnation” (350). After the sexual experience, Jacob is haunted by the terrifying metaphors of hell, miracle, love and death, guilt and damnation. Wanda is completely committed to Jacob as she declares: “Where thou goest, I go. Thy people are my people. Thy God is my God” (58). In these moments of love and sexual passions, Jacob compares Wanda with his wife Zelda who “had been a woman, but frigid and cold, forever distracted. She had been a constant stream of complaints: headaches, toothaches, cramps in stomach, and always fearful of breaking the law” (58). He was just twelve years old when he was engaged with Zelda. He was interested in the big library of Zelda’s father and his

passion for books motivated him to marry Zelda who avoided him and as always weeping and complaining.

Singer uses evocative imagery to portray the sexual body of Wanda: "Her body exuded the warmth of the sun, the breezes of summer, the fragrance of wood, field, flower, leaf, just as milk gave off the odor of the grass the cattle fed on" (58). Wanda awakens the passions lying buried in his being and gives a new life and guilt to Jacob. He experiences a constant state of burning with passions and the voice within his soul cried for Wanda day and night: "He returned home but his spirit remained restless" (84). The burning fire of passions remains active in him even when he is far away from her. When he tries to forget her the death wish grips his wounded psyche: "The instant his desire for her left him, he wanted to die" (94). He is away and during his stay in Josefov, he is trapped in two dimensions; one the love for Wanda and the other his religion. He tries to punish himself to atone for the sin that he had committed: "every time he thought of Wanda he would fast until sunset. He drew up lists of torments: pebbles in his shoes, a stone beneath his pillow, bolting his food without chewing it, going without sleep" (58). Despite all these efforts he failed to forget Wanda; he longs to go back to meet her and even thinks of converting her to Judaism. His faith in Judaism is shaken. He feels that it is useless to follow Torah blindly; he criticizes people who follow the code of Judaism blindly. This attitude and lack of faith symbolizes his disintegration of self and trauma.

The weakness of Sarah in communication is a source of threat to Jacob. Being mute, she is not able to explain her position very well to the Jews and this intensifies

the anxiety and fears of Jacob. Sarah is pregnant and in labor pain she will scream and will not be able to maintain her silence. Jacob is worried about her exposure. He is sure that she would give herself away crating the troubles for him. He imagines that he had danced to the tune of Satan: “Transgression draws transgression in its train; his lust for a forbidden woman had involved him in deception” (139). He goes out in search of a mid-wife but unable to find one returns to see that behind the anguish in the eyes of Sarah. He tried to console her: “Don’t worry so” (170). He looks at her with compassion love and sympathy in a helpless manner.

When the time of delivery comes Wanda is in great pain. Her body becomes wet with perspiration but she remains silent and says nothing. She cries out: “Don’t bury me yet, I’m not dead” shocks all the Jewish women. She is speaking in Polish language of the gentiles; women around her begin gossiping that she is possessed by a dybbuks. She is exposed as women complain that she had been cheating them and playing the role of a mute woman. People want to know the truth but Jacob remains silent. Prayers cannot help him and his lips for prayers don’t move. Wanda is revealed as an imposter; a liar and a cheat who assumed a false identify to cheat the Jews. Jacob is fully exposed as he had committed a forbidden act of marrying a Christian violating the law of Talmud.

To conclude, the journey of Sarah from Wanda to the wife of Jacob and her new identify of a mother of a Jew raises so many questions to the Jewish community. Her feigned muteness sends shock waves to the Jews and her gentile background is a matter of concern for them. Jacob and Sarah are found in the strange situation. They put up a strong case as Sarah says: “I was born when Jacob found me” (179)

advocating seriously that they belong to the same religion. Jacob learns so many things about his religion and love and the value of freedom in this world. He understands that Torah and the law are important: “But behind the law there is mercy. Without mercy, there would be no law” (202). At the end of the second chapter Jacob lifts his eyes and says: “Lead God, lead. It is thy world” (212). Like the Biblical Jacob he crosses the forests and the river carrying his child Benjamin expectant and confident that Redemption will soon fall. When Jacob escapes to the Holy land with his son, he thinks of God and confesses: “he must atone for his sins...for the rest of his life and until his last breath he must repent and ask forgiveness of God and Sarah’s sacred soul” (207). Jacob’s religious pilgrim progress doesn’t lead to his salvation but it becomes a source of eternal torture and trauma. He is at war with himself; he is conscious of his horrendous guilt; his sexuality and the temptations of satanic forces that engulfed him to suffer eternal perdition. Jacob represents the Jews who lead a turbulent life suffering from alienation, uncertainty and threat to life and exile. He is in the pursuit of love and sex to breaking the conventions of Orthodox Judaism. He is a victim of society as he struggles to shape his destiny in a world characterized by horror and fear. Jacob’s son Benjamin becomes a teacher and a father of three children. Jacob returns to Piitz after twenty years alone. He has the dream of discovering the bones and ashes of Sarah. He wants to bring them to Jerusalem so that he can build a grave for his wife and himself. Jacob’s life is a woeful tale of tragedy of his life. He suffered acute anguish and psychological pain because of the loss of his wife Zelda and children killed by the Cossacks of Poland. Jacob lost everything, his house, wife, family and children and above all his Jewish identity as he was enslaved and forced to live at the top of

mountain with animals. His alienation and intrusive memories haunted him day and night. His struggle is for love, identity and for God and all his dream and hopes are shattered leaving him dead in body and in spirit. Jacob has all the symptoms of trauma; depression; anxiety, frustration, alienation and intrusive memories of the loss of his wife, family and children and Jewish identity.

Bashevis Singer's novel *Enemies: A Love Story* is about the Jews of Eastern Europe who were bound together by a strong religious commitment. The communities of Poland were entrenched in their religious laws but these firm ties were disrupted after World War I. The novel is about Herman Broder; his doubts about the existence of God and his relationships with his three wives and his problems to assimilate in the new American culture. Herman, Yadwiga, Masha and Tamara are the main characters of the novel who struggle and fight against the terrorism of the Nazi occupation of Poland. Yadwiga is a gentile Polish servant who worked for the family of Herman. Masha and Tamara are survivors of Auschwitz and Buna; the famous concentration camps of the Germans. Herman hid in the hayloft during the war on the farm of Yadwiga to save himself and Yadwiga risked her life to save Herman. In fact all the characters of the novel are traumatized by the occupation of their homeland..

All the main characters of Bashevis Singer's novel *Enemies: A Love Story* are immigrant survivors of the Jewish Holocaust. They are settled in America but they are always haunted by the intrusive memories of the past trauma as the past repeats itself in the life of each character. Singer has poignantly depicted the psychological pain and anguish of the major characters in the plot of the novel. Emmanuel Levinas

observes that the Holocaust is the real model “of gratuitous suffering which left a hole in the personal and collective life of the Jews” (Levinas 162). Herman Broder is a neurotic character; his traumatic journey is the chief interest of the novel. Herman Broder is a Polish intellectual who escaped the persecution of Nazi by hiding in a hayloft for three years. Yadviga who is his family servant helps him to save his life. Herman marries Yadviga and migrates to New York for safety and survival. He is jobless there and penniless but he earns his living by ghostly sermons writing for a rabbi. His sexual relations with several women land him in problems and as a professional he emerges as a pack of lies. Herman believes that “survival is based on guiles; he is devious and enmeshed in lies.” Herman lives in constant fear that his deceptions may not be revealed and exposed.

Jean -Francois Lyotard has investigated the plight of the victims of the Holocaust who died dehumanized deaths. Their dying was deprived of “the reason of die” and in Auschwitz one’s death is legitimate because one’s life is illegitimate” (Lyotard 101). Herman is a survivor of the Holocaust and the event has shattered his life and expectations of life. Singer has depicted the psychological landscape of the survivor. Habermas argues that “common to all traumatic experiences is the destruction of what I call the basic fundamental elements of the “psychological landscape” (qtd in Kirmayer). The psychological landscape consists of beliefs, values and aspirations of the people. Dissociation is often considered as an important element of trauma. The Holocaust suffered from dissociation of self and in this situation their psychological landscape collapses.

The setting of the novel is idyllic and peaceful Brooklyn home he lives with his wife Yadviga. She is indirectly supporting the passionate affair of Herman with Masha who is another Holocaust survivor Masha. Herman is trapped in a taxing situation with the sudden return of his former wife Tamara from the open grave during the Nazi mass murder and visits Herman who is passing from the crisis of his life. She was presumed to be dead for several years Tamara's unexpected visit shatters all the dreams and plans of Herman. Her return brings to life all the suppressed memories and emotions and conflicts of his past life. The novel *Enemies* is complex novel dealing with the love triangle of an-antihero Herman and his peculiar relationships and his involvement in the truncated emotional lives. The novel is a serious interpretation of the traumatic life of the Holocaust survivor immigrants. The Holocaust is a life-altering ordeal that marks his alienation from the world.

Herman Broder is a ghostwriter for an American rabbi; he describes his ghastly existence to his wife Tamara: "When a man hides in an attic for years, he ceases to be a part of society. The truth is that I'm still hiding I an attic right here in America" (101). Herman was raised as a traditional religious Jew but the Holocaust events transformed him into a nihilist. In Poland, Herman would have enjoyed respect and honor but ironically in America he calls himself as "a fraud, a transgressor; a hypocrite too. The sermons he wrote for Rabbi Lampert were a disgrace and a mockery" (Singer 15). Chandler believes that "Herman's writings therefore are both a betrayal of Jewish tradition and a betrayal of himself" (Chandler 141). Herman joined the University of Warsaw and entered into the school of

philosophy. He met Tamara in the university; he fell in love with her and married her against the wishes of her parents. She was a student of biology and active in the leftist movements raising the cries of the working people in her protest demonstrations. He impregnated her before marriage; she refused abortion and forced her parents to marry her with Herman. His relationships after marriage with Tamara were not cordial as he was a neglectful, absentee father and wanted to divorce Tamara. Herman expresses his dissatisfaction thus: "Tamara talked incessantly of redemption of humanity, the plight of Jews, the role of woman in society" (63). But Herman differed from the ideas of Tamara because his philosophical background developed in him the nihilistic attitude.

Herman is an intellectual snob who takes pride in being an independent thinker. He rejects the radical views of Tamara as Singer points out: "She seemed to Herman to be the incarnation of the masse, always following some leader, hypnotized by slogans, never really having an opinion of her own" (64). Dorothy Bilik in her article "Singer's Diasporan Novel: *Enemies A Love Story*" argues that "Herman Broder is typically Singerian in that he is craven, lecherous, inconsistent; at times he retreats toward orthodoxy, only to be drawn again to his customary hedonism" (Bilik 90).

Herman is involved with three women and all these women; Yawwiga, Masha and Tamara fill a vital need in Herman's lonely life. Chandler comments thus: "The three women in this novel represent three modes of existence: action, speech and simple being. Each function as a catalyst in Herman's tragic odyssey" (Chandler 147). The novel begins in New York with the dream of Herman. The scene provides

the inner turbulent world of Herman; his nightmare of the Nazi occupation of Poland and the loss of his home, family and children. Singer describes Herman's dependence on Yadviga who saved and protected her: "For three years Herman had depended on her utterly. She had brought food and water to him in the oft and carried out his waste" (6). Herman's first wife Tamara is lost and is rumored to have been killed by the Nazis. Herman marries Yadviga out of obligation with belief in his religion: "Yadviga had been ready to adopt the Jewish faith, but it seemed senseless to burden her with a religion that he himself no longer observed" (5). Herman and Yadviga are living in Coney Island near the seashore in Brooklyn *shtetl* existence for immigrant Jews.

In the Coney Island most of the migrant Jews lived there: "Jews were allowed to live freely here! On the main avenue and on the side streets, Hebrew schools displayed their signs. There was even a Yiddish school" (17). Herman married Yadviga but from the start of his married life the cracks appeared because of the differences of opinions and religious ideas. Yadviga was a Christian and Herman as a Jew; she was innocent and Herman as a pack of lies. However he is unwilling to leave Yadviga because of his guilt. Singer comments thus: "She had the freshness and shyness of a Polish village girl. She used no cosmetics. She had learned only a few English words. It seemed to Herman that she carried with her the odors of Lipsk" (4). Herman's life is chaotic and deceptive; his life is built on lies which adversely affects Yadviga life. He lies about his vocation and behaves he is a travelling salesman. He tells Yadviga that he is a travelling salesman; however he travels to the Bronx where he has a mistress, Masha. He even tells lies to Rabbi Lampert about his married life.

Masha is Herman's Lilith, his object of chaos. Chandler observes that his association with Masha is the main source of his psychological ailments and become the main cause of his downfall: "Herman is drawn into Masha's world of unreality, succumbing to the seductions of ungrounded intellect and imagination and passion detached from life-giving love, which in the end destroys both" (Chandler 147). Yadviga lives in a cozy world but Masha lives in a world of decay haunted by the harrowing memories of the Holocaust. Singer writes about the neighborhood of Masha: "It only had a few houses separated by empty lots of overgrown with weeds. There was an old warehouse bricked-up windows and a gate that was always shut. In one dilapidated house a carpenter was making furniture that he sold unfinished" (32). Masha lives with her mother in the third floor "of a house with a broken porch and a vacant ground, the window of which were covered with boards and tin" (32).

Masha has strong influence on the life and ideas of Herman. She is a tortured personality and a victim of the Holocaust. She narrates her wild stories from the ghettos, the concentration camps and her walking through the destruction of Poland after the war. Singer has given an effective image of "retreat" and "withdrawal" to depict the traumatic experiences of Herman; he breaks from the active life of society and reenacts his previous retreat from life. The war is over. Herman continues employing the strategies of exile, secrecy, disguise for his survival. He continues living in the old style and distrusts everyone around him suspecting all the loving bonds with others. His misanthropic detachment and pathological lies trap him in his own isolated world. Interestingly, Herman's disconnection from others reinforces the stasis in his life. He carefully crafted his re-enactment of the past in his present life to

dramatize his traumatic experiences. The Holocaust becomes the main cause of his disconnection, fragmentation and stasis. Herman's morbidity and neurotic fantasies are realistically portrayed by Singer. His progression of life is blocked by the traumatic war experiences. Herman returns of the frequent fantasies reveal his fears and wishes and particularly his frequent fantasy about the fears and the wishes take on "the character of obsessions" (10).

Like other Holocaust survivors, Herman repeats the past and is often overwhelmed by the events of the killings of his family and friends. His repetitive fantasizing reveals that he is alive. He tests his foothold in reality to claim his survival. His close encounter with death leaves permanent marks on his life. His parallel existence of the past and the present confounds his disordered and disoriented life. The negative impacts of his past trauma make him sick and mentally disturbed. He moves like a shuttlecock between "intrusion and constriction exhibiting the symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder" (Herman 47). Past memories haunt him day and night intruding his daily life making him a prisoner of the past. After the Holocaust events Herman has become a neurotic who constantly feels persecuted and tortured by impending threats and doom created by his own imagination.

Herman confesses to Tamara right after he has deserted Yadwiga who is pregnant and plans to elope with Masha. He expresses his desire to commit suicide if Masha deserts him. He openly says that he can't live without Masha. Karen Horney explains the nature of the neurotic people; Herman also suffers from neurosis. He has all the symptoms of a neurotic as outlined by Karen Horney; he is sexually

passionate and avoidance, resignation and detachment are beyond his behavior. He leads a life “at a constant detachment to avoid any kind of inner conflict. He is ready to live a life at a constantly low ebb” (Horney 260)

Herman is a case study in this novel as the ultimate purpose of “preserving his inner life unsoiled and untarnished is to achieve compliance and to accommodate others to avoid friction and conflict” (Horney 284). He “develops a morbid attitude in his social life; he emerges as a subdued rebel who simply chooses to fight against any kind of pressure and retain his noncommittal, nonchalant attitude” (Horney 284). Herman embodies all the symptoms of a neurotic as Horney comments, “he has the detachment and longing for freedom of resigned hermits, the morbid dependency of self-effacing love addicts, and the arrogant hostility and resistance of subdued rebels. These incoherent and highly compartmentalized behavior patterns reflect his fragmented self-narrative” (Horney 284). Herman’s relationships are based on the ambiguous principles and conflicting emotions as he exhibits his inner needs to move away from the people around him.

To conclude, Herman’s psyche is fractured by his uncertain traumatic behavior towards people. His involvement with Yadviga and Masha leads him to dissociation of mind and loss of self. He doesn’t get any solace or peace of mind or tranquility in his behavior in his interpersonal relationships. His simultaneous involvement with Yadviga and Masha fractures his psyche. Before the war, he led the life of a bachelor; he even betrayed Yadviga who saved his life and sacrificed everything; her home and parents for the love and comfort of Herman. Yadviga helps him to evade the thorny emotional issues of guilt, shame and remorse. Herman

creates his own claustrophobic worlds with his women to escape from the haunting memories of his family. He suffers tremendous amount of pain, sorrow and guilt when he remembers his family killed in the war. Horney opines that a complete erasure of the traumatic past is not possible for the survivors. His marriage to Yadviga is driven by his dire need for safety and protection. His Brooklyn apartment is his sanctified comfort zone where he lives like an innocent child for he is cared and protected by Yadviga. Her apartment is filled with the aroma of home cooked meals as Yadviga is expert in cooking. Her apartment recreates the pre-war situation as the “the twittering of parakeets, their pets also gives the place with Edenic qualities. Yadviga is a simple Gentile polish peasant loyal and committed to the love of Herman. He doesn't allow her to mix with the neighbors and looks upon the developing bonds between them with suspicion. Herman's complete retreat to his isolated life with Yadviga in the Brooklyn apartment is his American version of the Lipsk hayloft. His encapsulated apartment is like a womb; the apartment is completely severed from the outside world without even a phone. The apartment is maintained by Yadviga with passion and loyalty. Being plagued, defeated and exhausted Herman longs for warmth for protection and warmth from the outside world. His relations with Yadviga are dramatized as a mother son relationship by Singer creating an idyllic atmosphere in his apartment. She takes special care of Herman and feeds, bathes and cleans his body in her Brooklyn apartment. Singer portrays the bizarre scene of bathing thus: “Yadviga started to soap his back, his arms, his loins. He had frustrated her longing to hear her children and so had taken the place of child for her. She fondled him played with him” (11). Herman travels back in time to his Lipsik years and to his childhood. His regression serves another

function closely related to his sense of guilt and his poignant wish to bring his dead children back to life. He exhibits many symptoms indicative of his guilt and remorse about failing his children. Even when he heard people talking about children who were alive and healthy, he felt something akin to panic. Every time Yadviga or Masha expressed the wish to have a child by him, he would change the subject. Somewhere “among his papers there were photographs of little Yochevd and David, but he never dared to look at them. Herman had not behaved toward them as a father should” (71). Herman expresses his longing to bring to life his murdered children. Ironically under the stress of depression he deserts the pregnant Yadviga at the end of the novel recreating paternal negligence and dereliction. Herman experiences tormenting guilt and psychological pain. Cathy Caruth opines that trauma is an open wound that never heals. Yadviga provides shelter to him from the tragedy of the Holocaust. Masha exposes him to the horror of the Holocaust with her constant diabolic tales about it. Yadviga brings innocence and simplicity in Herman’s life but Masha projects the devastation and complication of the Holocaust. Herman is a ghost writer and makes his living by his ghost writing. In his personal life, he makes fake stories and spin lies to sustain his polygamous relationships. He was a scholar immersed in the world of ideas and language.

The novel *Shosha* was originally published in Yiddish and the original title of the novel was *Soul Expedition*. Singer takes up the theme of hedonism and traumatic vision of suicide and death in this novel. Most of his characters such as Jacob, Herman, Ezriel Babad and Yasha are hedonists. Aaron Greidinger is also a hedonist in *Shosha* and he is an auto-biographical character. Alexander further observes that

self-destructive quality of hedonism is also present in this novel. Sex becomes an obsession with the hero Aaron Greidinger. He is a hedonist from his childhood despite the warnings of his mother he frequents and eats in the house of his neighbors considered heretics according to the Jewish traditions. A Jewish boy is prohibited to develop sexual contact with any girl but Aaron exchanges kisses with Shosha while playing: “Once I played the role of a blind man and Shosha let me touch her forehead, cheeks, mouth. She kissed the palm of my head and said: “Don’t tell Mama” (Bashevis Singer, *Shosha* 12). The traumatic journey of Aaron begins from here as he calls himself a heretic and a mad man. His father is an orthodox Jew who teaches the world that the world is a corridor in which one ought to read Torah and execute good deeds to get reward in the next life after death.

Singer’s novel *Shosha* is a pessimistic novel dealing with the hollowness of life; is fears and terrors that grip the psyche of the characters lost in the bog of sexuality and hedonism. Aaron reads scientific discoveries of Archimedes, Copernicus Newton and the philosophy of Aristotle, Descartes and Leibnitz to justify his hedonistic pleasures of life. He is a cheap writer and can scarcely afford a cheap room but he feels jealous of Sam Dreiman who is the American millionaire. Aaron’s trouble and trauma begins with his developing relations with many women. He is lost in the world of luxury, he “orders a new suit, and is thrown into the lap of luxury” (50). Aaron hates the institution of marriage and avoids matrimonial relations though he is involved with many women. He preaches a dangerous philosophy of hedonism. He doesn’t marry anyone and doesn’t like to have children: “I don’t need children” (79). His hedonism springs from the realization that the world

is preparing for another catastrophe. He wants to enjoy every moment of life: “Yes I had to find pleasure before I died and returned to nothing” (56). Aaron feels the approach of the holocaust; with the other Polish Jews and expresses his fears that the German has grown very powerful, fully mobilized and furnished with the latest weapons but the Polish soldiers are no match with the Germans. They are destined to be murdered by the Germans. He dreams of “a band of wild people awaited below with clubs, spears, poles and axes” (53). In his acute depression he uses hedonism as a strategy to overcome his trauma. He is of the firm view that the Jews are helpless in the face of the holocaust. He develops relationship with Morris Feitelzohn who is a philosopher and a hedonist believing that success with women is a source of thrilling adventure. Feitelzohn feels insecure and unsettled and has divorced three wives in desperation and depression. He is in the habit of changing women frequently and continues his affairs with servant girls. He even plans to set up an institute for hedonism. He believes that “the pursuit of pleasure is man’s only goal” (37). Aaron develops relationship with hedonist Hemi Chentshiner who has passion for art, opera and paintings. He loves to visit pastoral landscapes, woods and streams.

He gives Aaron huge money as an advance to finish play for Betty. Aaron is surrounded by the hedonists for “whom pleasure is the only aim of their lives. Aaron finds himself comfortable to cultivate the philosophy of hedonism. His involvement with women makes the hedonistic tendency of Aaron distinct. He comes in contact with a woman V. Dora Stolnitz who is a communist insisting on his marrying her. But Aaron didn’t want to marry her, yet was willing to let go” (28). She goes to Russia and joins the revolutionaries and suffers a lot. Celia is another woman who is hedonist and the wife of Hemi. She has developed relations with many men as she

confesses and believes that “we must grab some pleasure before we vanish forever” (59). She realizes that the Jews of Poland have no future as they are caught between Hitler and Stalin; the catastrophe of the Jews is inescapable. Aaron’s third woman is Betty who is interested in the Yiddish theatre of Poland. Her husband encourages her to develop intimacy with Aaron and gradually he is “drawn to Betty Slonim and together they visit the river Swiderek” (52). Her obsession is to “enjoy life” (67). Aaron seduces his servant Tekla who has “muscular legs and firm breasts.” He bribes her and she succumbs to his passions “I kissed her long. She kissed back and her breasts pressed against me” (83). In one of his dreams he finds Celia and Betty matting with this “plural couple” (53). The journey of Aaron is to seek redemption through sin and sexuality. He thinks that life is uncertain and death is certain; he has seen the Holocaust and feels that he must enjoy life and hedonism is the only strategy to overcome trauma of life. He reads modern science but he does remember the pages of Gemara and chapters of Mishna. He contemplates on “God, providence, time, space and infinity” (9). In his early life he came to the conclusion that there are two Gods, a good one and a bad one. However Aaron is not fully a hedonist he is conscious of the shortcomings of his habits from his very childhood.

Bashevis Singer’s novel *Shosha* (1974) gives an insight into the themes of trauma; depression and death of the Holocaust survivors. The main narrator is Aaron Greidinger who is the son of a rabbi alluding to the life of the writer Bashevis Singer who speaks of the dead in the Yiddish language. *Shosha* is a haunting novel depicting the plight of the Jews who survived the concentration camps of the Nazis. He was born in the Jewish quarters of Warsaw and loved a neighbor’s daughter Shosha. Time passes and Aaron forgets and abandons Hassidic philosophy for the life of the

neurotic urban intelligentsia. He embraces alienation as he embraces women to overcome the harrowing experiences of the Holocaust. He develops in him a nihilistic and pessimistic attitude towards life and departs from Jewish traditions and rituals. Hitler is in power in Germany and he has decided to decimate the Jews from Europe. The Jews of Poland are facing the threat to their life as many of them migrate to America for survival. Stalin in Russia is threatening; Singer has depicted the forces of chaos; death and destruction. Aaron has learnt three languages Hebrew Yiddish and Aramaic but in frustration and being haunted by the death and killing by the Nazis he has lost faith in God like Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi. He has turned hedonist to forget the worries and cares of life. Singer dramatizes his confrontation with Shosha for whose love he rejects the opportunity to escape the threat of death. He turns down the chance to escape for Shosha. He has met several women but the love for Shosha gives him new spirit. There is a moral conflict in his life because it is very difficult for him to choose Betty or Shosha; his childhood playmate.

Aaron decides to marry Shosha as a part of the fulfillment of his childhood commitment; he takes her for a wife” (15). He frequents the house of Shosha and becomes the paying guest of her house and gets time to stay with her family at night. Bashele; the mother of Shosha is very kind to him and treats him as her son and her sister treats him like her brother. Aaron swears to Shosha: “Shoshale, I have sworn by God and by the soul of my father that I will never abandon you. its’s about time that you must trust me” (117). In the meantime he also continues his sexual relations with Batty who is anxious to marry him and she uses all strategies to seduce him. Betty tells Aaron that she is an idiot. In order to turn his attention but you are in love with her. The moment “you saw her, your eyes lit up in a strange way. I’m beginning

to think you aren't in your right mind yourself" (78). The majority of the characters in the novel are sick physically and mentally. Betty tells that Shosha is sick both physically and mentally, warns him that a girl like Shosha is not capable of living with a man and producing children. Betty warns him not to be in the trap of Shosha otherwise he will be ruined. She invites Aaron on dinner and tries to comfort him. She tempts him to marry her as there is no future in Poland and he can join her and both would migrate to America. Her husband also tells Aaron that in Poland there are no book publishers "the Yiddish newspapers are in trouble, the Jews are under threat of Nazi invasion. He suggests the Yiddish newspaper is outdated and the Jews are under the threat of the Nazis. Betty invites him to Gertner's restaurant and expresses her regret that the play was flopped because of her own carelessness. She tempts him to marry her and they will be able to stay in America. He shouldn't go back to Poland where his life is under threat of the Nazis. Sam Dreiman offers him many allurements; he commits to become an agent if he writes a book and he can bring Shosha also in America. She can get her treatment there. He has to agree to allow him to be the friend of Betty. He also makes it clear that after marriage with Betty he can keep sexual relations with Shosha. Betty also gives her consent and this proposal of Sam Dreiman creates moral conflict in the mind of Aaron. Aaron has decided to marry a girl who is like his own mother: "a decent chaste Jewish daughter" (142). He has been feeling pity for men with unchaste wives who are never sure that their children are their own. He has investigated the ugly past of Betty who told her adventures in Russia and America. She had illicit relations with a Red Army man; she developed sexual relations with a sailor and the director of a travelling actor's troupe. She has sold herself to Sam Dreiman and calls "him her lover" (146).

Aaron broods over his future and concludes that he would sink deeper if he married Betty. He listens to the inner voice of his father and seeks guidance for the future course of action. He sees the dead face of his father who warns him: "Don't shame me, your mother, and your holy ancestors: All your deeds are noted in heaven" (146). His father abuses him as "Heathen: Betrayer of Israel: he complains that Betty is a cursed thing" (146). Aaron's is bewildered by the sudden appearance of his father from the grave to guide him. He understands the significance of his revelations which has come to him at the height of his distress and wounded mood. He cries out in desperation: "Father, save me" (146). He contemplates over the advantages of marrying Betty seriously under the stress of trauma. If he rejects Betty it would mean to stay in Poland and being killed by the Nazis. Marriage with Betty will give him an opportunity to migrate to America and save himself. He is sure to get the visa as he says: "It's visa not the money. I justified myself-the fear of falling into the hands of the Nazis" (149). In the saloon, a barber gives information that Hitler would smoke out the Jews "like bed bugs" (150). Aaron thinks "No, I wouldn't stay in Poland, I'd leave, at any price" (152). Aaron is a wounded self as he is unable to take a wise and rational decision. He fails to stick to keep his promise and is drawn to Shosha for her virtues. In her "he finds the reflection of his own childhood" (87). Aaron feared that Betty was right as he notes that he is not "elated, as those in love usually are" (180). And on his wedding night he observes the childish behavior of Shosha and he observes that "the tremendous urge for Shosha that had seized him on the train had dissipated" (228).

The novel *Satan in Goray*, describes the scenes of death and destruction and the ruins of the city Goray. Michael Fixler (1964) observes that *Satan in Goray*

depicts “the great massacres that mark off from its glimmerings to its collapse the 300 years of the Jewish adventures” (379). The elders of the Jew community realized that the Jews are suffering because they lost faith in God. The Jews were getting restless and impatient waiting for the Messiah to appear to save the Jews. Sabbatai Zevi a scholar of Talmudic study declared himself to be the Messiah in the period of crisis. The majority of the Jews accepted him as their Messiah. The Jews realized that the Messiah would take birth out of destruction. Soon Zavi’s true identity is soon unmasked when he is humiliated by the Sultan offering the choice either to embrace Islam or face the death penalty. Zevi emerges as an ordinary mortal who would sooner give up his faith than his life. The Jews begin to return to Goray to begin life from the scratch. They find the city Goray in ruins and begin to pick up the threads of life in their native place. They repair their houses, open their shops and begin their business. Rabbi Benish Ashkenazi, the old rabbi also returned. Reb Eleazar Baddad, the leader of the Jewish community also appeared in Goray. Rabbi Benish took up the task to continue the task of rehabilitation. Sabbatai Zevi, Rabbi Benish Ashkenazi and Rabbi Benish play the politics of survival in the ruined city of Goray. They play all forms of roles to survive in the society and Singer has used the simple and lyrical language to unmask them.

Rechele is the main protagonist in the novel; deformed and crippled and leading a desperate life. Her struggle to survive in the harsh environment of Goray excites great interest. She represents all the Jewish women of Goray who lost home and family. She is indifferent to her friends and relatives and lives in her own cocoon to avoid the company of people around her. She possesses a strange element of

sexuality in spite of her loneliness. Singer describes her strange attitude of Rechele thus: "Rechele was seventeen years old, had a lame left foot and seldom showed herself outside, preferring to remain hidden in her room" (Singer 16). Singer points out that not only men but women were also the victims of the atrocities. Rechele becomes an abnormal woman because of the shocks that she received due to the Jewish genocide and her strangeness and melancholy is depicted in realistic language. She is a scholar in Latin and Hebrew and spends most of her time in reading the books to escape from the psychological trauma. She has lost her memory and even don't remember the names of her friends and the neighbors. She feels tortured to know that her father is no longer the richest man of Goray. Her unusual behavior is the result of the scenes of carnage that she witnessed, Her father is also stressed because of the loss of business and property in Goray. His daughter is in the marriageable age but there is no proposal for her and she sits alone at home doing nothing. Rechele is a sick character mentally disturbed as she doesn't eat or sleeps well. The main cause of her psychological stress can be traced back to the abnormal setting of her childhood. She was born shortly before the massacre of 1648. Her life was in danger; her mother carried her to Lublin in search of survival. At the age of five, her mother expired and Rechele was given to her uncle Reb Zeydel who was a slaughterer by profession. Singer has given the details of the bloody environment; the dark and dingy room where Rechele is forced to live and all these negative factors brought depression to Rechele. She was horrified by the ghastly look of her uncle and her killing profession terrified her. She lived in terror as Reb had stern and threatening appearance. He was a widower without children and his house was kept by his mother-in-law who looked like a terrifying witch. All these details and the

images led to the lonely and desperate life of Rechele. His uncle's mother –in –law narrates horrible tales of ghosts and imps to intimidate her and to keep Rechele under her control. She feels that all the ghosts are around her and she can be gulped by them at any time. All these small events bring depression in Rechele's mind as she feels that she will lose her life at any time. Singer writes thus: "Rechele was a stubborn and contrary child....To persuade Rechele to remain at home and not to go wandering off, the old woman took to terrifying the child" (46).

She even beats her mercilessly and curses her and Rechele feels miserable. She has no friend but her cruel mother and all these experiences of childhood result into her psychological trauma. Edward Balke in his scholarly articles "Trauma and Conflict Prevention" asserts, "Traumatic event is a major stressor, which suddenly overwhelms a person, threatens his or her life or a personal integrity, leaves no escape, and triggers accompanying horror that overwhelms the individual's ability to understand and cope with the situation" (Balke 8). Her uncle was a moody person; he would spend his leisure time either in sharpening his butcher's knives or reading the holy texts. Singer has given the images of darkness and ghastly environment tracing the gradual development of Rechele's depression and psychic sickness:

The house itself is old-fashioned, dark, ill-ventilated and located near the graveyard. Dirty and old mouse-ridden, it holds little attraction for the child. In fact the perpetual darkness and association with evil spirits gives her childhood home an infernal setting. (47)

Singer has created an atmosphere of decay and horror and even an ordinary girl child will suffer the loss of self. The macabre significance of the terrifying events give

psychological stress to Rechele who doesn't want to live and expects death at any time. Singer describes vividly the emotional chaos of Rechele thus:

Rechele would hide under the bed when the chimney sweep came, burying herself under a pile of clothing. She feared the broom he pulled out of an iron bucket, was terrified of the heavy smoke-covered ropes he uncoiled, would pale when she heard the stranger stumble over the oven. (47)

The childhood experiences of Rechele are extremely terrifying as she had to listen to the gruesome stories of goblins, man-eaters and witches. She was shy and fragile; emotionally and psychologically a wreck. She could hardly sleep as all the time she feared the appearance of a ghost or a goblin who would gulp her down. All these macabre experiences made her sick and decadent; a victim of haunting fears and trauma. The deep seated fear in Rechele's mind makes her see things while she sits up the whole night with the dying woman:

Apprehensively she kept the wick burning all night and sat until dawn on the bench enveloped in a shawl....Rechele was well aware that the room was crowded with evil things. The brooms and mops stirred; long shadows swept along the walls like apparitions from another world. (49)

After the funeral of her mother she is sent to a relation's house and soon she is turned into a woman as she is given the charge of the house. She is unable to comprehend this new role and looks unhappy. She is rendered speechless as she stands in the middle of the room, perplexed and sullen. Freud in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*

observes “the experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will” (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 131). She lives alone and experiences nothing but terror. She is so much horrified that she shuts out all sights and sounds by closing her eyes:

Terrified she threw herself on the bench bed, rolled like a ball, shut her eyes and covered herself with the comforter. From somewhere a low mutter reached her ears. The sound seemed to come from beneath the earth. (52)

Singer has depicted the neurotic and insane condition of Rechele giving a flood of images of death and decay. She finds the pots, pans and the candle moving and dancing through the air. Rechele’s nightmarish experiences are the result of her acute neurosis. Singer describes her borderline state thus: “Everything seethed, burst, crackled, as though the whole house were aflame...Late that night, when uncle came home, he found Rechele lying with her knees pulled to her chest” (52). She experienced a mid attack of paralysis as her leg became motionless. Trauma is a major stressor which overwhelms a person, threatens his life and leaves no escape” (Herman, 1992; Joseph, Williams and Yule 1997). Reb Zeydel marries her; looks after her and she is given all forms of medical assistance but she remains a psychic case suffering physically and mentally. She remains strange and withdrawn given to changes of mood and after the death of her uncle she returns to her father’s house. Here also she faces the problem as she had lived away from her father for a long time it was not easy for her to enjoy the company of her father. The orthodox Jews in Goray take every step to bring normalcy in the town and urge people to begin the

rehabilitation project but the condition of women is miserable as they are living in poverty and abandonment. Rechele has no future and the Polish Jews feel that they had been punished by God for their wrong actions. The Jews are leading disintegrated life as Singer observes: "For he perceived that divine providence willed otherwise; as he did not know what Heaven wished, he humbly acquiesced...More and more, Jews divided into sects" (27). Singer has given the comparative analysis of Goray; before the carnage Goray was known for prosperity and peace and now Goray gives a shabby look and the Jews are leading a miserable life. There is constant war between the groups and even the house of rabbi is split over small issues.

Being depressed and lonely Rechele is restless and apprehensive. She is given to bouts of crying and is deprived of the comfort of sleep because of frequent nightmares. The moonlight coming through the windows scares her. She is always disturbed by various sounds and sights. Her husband Itche Mates makes best efforts to bring Rechele into normalcy but she continues behaving like a borderline. She is terrified even by the presence of her husband as she says: "Chinkele darling, I'm so afraid of him...He has dead eyes" (62). Singer describes the borderline self of Rechele thus:

Raising herself, Rechele rested her head on her knees, waiting for the cock's crow. Her arms and legs ached, the brains in her skull crumbled like grains of sand, and thoughts buzzed about in her head like flies. Lifting her gaze, she stared into the dazzling snowy landscape and shuddering, as from many pinpricks, murmured: "I've no strength left! Merciful God! Take me. (63)

Singer's novel *The Manor* depicts the struggles of the characters to survive in Jewish society in which people have lost faith in Talmud and Kabala. They cannot forget the scenes of destruction of Poland. The main focus is on Calman Jacoby and his family who are the victims of the Holocaust. Although Calman represents the pious type of God fearing Jew, he is involved in the transition of his time through his increasing wealth. After the failure of Polish revolution, the lands are handed over to Calman for his management. In the beginning of the novel, Calman is a younger man than Meshulam Moskat. Calman like King Lear of Shakespeare is overburdened with daughters that he must married off. In the early part of the novel, Calman goes into the city and Singer has each daughter ask for a present. Singer gives a blending of the elements of the fairytale and realism depicting the politics of survival of Calman and his four daughters. The Jewish daughters of Calman are symbol of beauty, innocence and loyalty and piousness. The plot of the novel unfolds the tale of struggle of Calman and his daughters. The span of the novel is forty years. Jochebed is the oldest; blond like her mother, "with the same narrow face, pointed chin, prominent nose, and freckles down her neck" (10). She doesn't ask for a present but wishes her father "Godspeed...Later in the novel she becomes a steadfast Jewish matron, allegorically one of the Faithful. A survivor, she will live to bury both her mother and father. Shaindel, a year younger is described as The Gypsy who loved costume jewelry, earrings, bracelets and flowers twined in her hair" (11). When Calman departs for Warsaw; she asks for a "handsome bridegroom" (11). Singer has depicted the acute depression of Shaindel who becomes insane and dies at the end of the novel Singer observes that "She was the most beautiful in the family" (242). Jochebed decades later mourns thus: "She shone like the sun. Why did it happen?" (242).

Singer invokes Kafka in his portrayal of Shaindel who gives her life to Ezriel and her children and is subjected to psychological tortures and anguish. Calman's third daughter Miriam Lieba struggles to survive in the harsh Jewish society. She marries the mad Polish count Lucian Jampolski and at the end dies an alcoholic.

This chapter explores the struggle for survival of the Jewish characters of Bashevis Singer. The novelist argues that survival instinct is a natural phenomenon in human beings. The Jews were forced to leave their countries to escape from the terror and horror of the genocide committed by the Nazis. The Jews suffered displacement, cultural disruption and economic collapse as their business establishments were burnt down and the properties confiscated. The Jews were business men and money lenders; they thrived on banking business. But the Holocaust events ruined their business and this brought psychological anguish to them. The protagonists of Singer experience trauma in their life in one way or the other and a detailed investigation of their abnormal behavior and attitude is depicted in this chapter. Jacob lost his business and families and became a slave. Herman was leading a respectable life but he was forced to hide in the hayloft and was forced to migrate to America to survive. Yasha moved from one place to another to earn money and had to take up the magic profession risking his life all the time. In frustration he resorted to hedonistic pleasures like Aaron and suffered acute depression and loneliness in his life. . Singer is not interested in the ordinary life of a common Jew who struggles for survival. Singer's focus is on the values and realities of life but on the aberrations of human psychology. Singer gives the Jewish background constantly and his characters change their places of residence and struggle to assimilate in new culture. This struggle also becomes a cause of their psychological anguish.

Singer argues that the Jews not only suffered the physical wounds and the psychological wounds but they suffered the economic collapse also in their life. Life was very hard for them as they had to move from place to place for survival. Their journey reveals their emotional and psychological outbursts and their continuous and endless miseries in the alien lands. They lost their homes, native places and the business establishments. Diane Marcotte in her article *Irrational Beliefs and Depression in Adolescence* (1996) argues that the loss of business and bankruptcy is the main cause of depression. Human beings give great importance to money and the loss of dollars shatter all the dreams of the people and eventually they suffer depression. The Jewish characters of Singer become the victims of trauma and neurosis when they become poor and wretched; displaced and migrants. The theories of Freud and Cathy Caruth are applied to investigate the behavior of protagonists. Cathy Caruth has discussed in detail the psychological ailments in her book *Unexplained Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996). She contends that the horrifying old memories can occur as a nightmare, flashback or intrusive memory. The difference between a flashback and an intrusive memory is simple. In a flashback man is actually reliving the memory; in such a situation man loses his touch with his current situation. The Jewish characters such as Yasha, Herman and Jacob suffer because of intrusive memories. They are haunted by the horrifying events of the Holocaust; Jacob can never forget his wife and children who were butchered by the Nazis. His old memories keep intruding and disturbing his mind. Herman is always haunted by the nightmarish memories of the hayloft where he spent his days and nights to escape from the torture of the Nazis. Herman's fear of death is universal in nature. His fear symbolizes the fear of millions of people who

were trapped in the inhuman Holocaust situation. Jacob and Herman represent all Jews of the world who suffered death; destruction of homes and endless humiliations and the loss of identity. They cried in deep despair believing that there existed no God. They were hungry; they were being tortured but God was a silent. The Jews were killed in millions; small babies were tossed into the burning chimney of Auschwitz but God was silent. This psychological anguish is faithfully depicted by Singer in his novels

To conclude, the second objective of the research project is “to foreground Holocaust and its deep rooted psycho-social implications” and in this chapter the main focus is to explore and to investigate the struggle of the survival of the Jewish characters of Singer. Each novel is analyzed from this perspective and it is concluded that Bashevis Singer has depicted the traumatic experiences of his characters as they struggle to survive in the harsh society. Bashevis Singer has depicted the traumatic experiences of his characters as they struggle to survive in the harsh society. Singer’s novels *The Family Moskat*, *Enemies: A Love Story*, *The Magician of Lublin*, *The Slave*, *Shosha* and *Satan in Goray and The Manor* depict the traumatic characters that live under constant menace of the Nazis. A large number of the Jews migrate to America to escape the killings of Hitler. The Jews like Herman and Aaron lose their identity; they struggle to escape and alienate from society and Judaism. They indulge into sexual adventures to overcome the trauma; they are convinced that the Jews in Poland are not safe. Herman and Aaron are sick characters; Herman disappears at the end of the novel and Aaron turns hedonistic to forget the traumatic experiences of the Holocaust. The interesting part of all these novels is their politics of survival and their emotional and psychological disintegration. The Jews lost their faith in God and

believed that God is angry with them; they struggles to revive faith in Judaism and struggle to recover from the Holocaust trauma. The life of the characters of Singer is full of miseries and restlessness. They suffer from emotional and psychological breakdown because of inner turmoil.

Chapter 4

Psychological Expressions of the Social and Economic Implications

The Holocaust of Hitler brought about the reign of terror in Europe, and this led to the recession of the economy and the loss of business. The Jews were basically businessmen, and they were worst hit as the forces of chaos and disorder brought about uncertainty and huge financial loss. The shops of the Jews were burnt by the Nazis, and they were forced to flee from Europe to escape death and destruction. The economic disaster of the Jews was a major factor that brought psychological anguish. During the year 1929, Germany emerged as the leading industrial power on the continent. But the political policies of the government of Hitler brought about economic chaos and instability and the ruin of a business. The crash of the New York Stock Exchange in October 1929 virtually led to the economic disaster of Germany. Many jobless Jews were provoked and arrested, seeking shelter and food in the concentration camps. The Jews were money lenders, and with the collapse of the industry and business houses and banks, the Jews suffered immensely. The huge loss of money shattered their life; their families were disrupted, and they lost faith in God too. The economic stagnation and massive unemployment gave huge financial setback to the Jews as their recovery rate of the loans lent by them to the bankers and industry reduced to zero. The Jews struggled to survive and in order to escape the horrors of the Holocaust they migrated to other countries. The displacement and homelessness brought about in their psychological ailments. No wonder their psyche was wounded by the economic forces unleashed by the Weimer government. The

economic chaos of Germany was a major factor in bringing the turmoil in the life of the Jews. The Fascists government wanted complete domination as they confiscated the valuable properties of the Jews; their establishments were closed and their houses were ravaged and they were transported to the concentration camps. Germany's slump was aggravated by a severe banking crisis in the summer of 1931. Output had contracted before, but the banking crisis helped to turn an ordinary recession into the Great Depression. The banking crisis of 1931 in Germany gave unprecedented setback to the Jewish community. This led to the collapse of German economy and Hitler claimed that "the Jews are our [Germany's] misfortune" (Adorno 5). The Danat bank was owned by Jacob Goldschmidt who was a Jew and the effects of the collapse of banking system virtually ruined the lives of the Jews. The Jews were attacked and they were singled out and worst treatment was given to them. Hannah Arendt comments thus: The Jews were thus seen as having "happiness without power, wages without work, a home without frontiers, religion without myth" (Arendt 10). Adorno thus believes that "the projection of power and otherness onto the Jew is not mere appearance, but historically connected to the perceptual system of civilization" (Adorno 123). The hellish life of Jews brought disintegration and loss of self. They experienced acute trauma, depression, loss of self and even human degradation as they lost connection with God. The Jews indulged into sexual adventures to overcome the depression of life. According to Freud, "the more intense the repression of primary erotic drives in a society, the greater a mobilization of surplus aggressiveness against the repression. Again, according to Freud, repression is bound to increase with the progress of civilization, and at the same time, aggressive energy is going to be released" (Freud 90).

In each novel Bashevis Singer's prime focus is on the portrayal of pre-war Polish Jewry and the economic crisis experienced of the Jews. They were subjected to all forms of oppression; killings and displacement. Their business was ruined and they lost everything. There are two major factors responsible to give trauma to the Jews in his novels' the loss of life in the concentration camps and the loss of faith in God. Singer is not interested in the ordinary life of a common Jew who struggles for survival. Singer's focus is on the values and realities of life but on the aberrations of human psychology. Singer gives the Jewish background constantly and his characters change their places of residence and struggle to assimilate in new culture. This struggle also becomes a cause of their psychological anguish.

Bashevis Singer published his first novel *The Family Moskat* in English in 1950 focusing on the historical events from 1911 to 1939. Saul Bellow once said that "as Mr. Singer grows older, his writing becomes increasingly unconventional and original" Milton Hindus reviewed Singer's *The Family Moskat* in *The New York Times* and observed that the novel is a "monument to the millions of Jews in Poland who had been slaughtered and scattered over the face of the earth in the decade before" (Hindus 2). Buchen avers thus:

The Jewish God is an unfinished God- a God not of finality but of duration. He has thus burdened the Jew with history-with the arena for fulfilling the original impulses of creation...Accepting these burdens, Singer has sought in *The Family Moskat* a Jewish saga which is simultaneously modern and ancient. His story is essentially a creation story flashed with modern events. (Buchen 34)

In the novel *The Family Moskat*, Bashevis Singer deals with the themes of social and economic worries of the Jews who were displaced and migrated to other countries for safety and survival. The policies of Hitler were anti-Jews who lost their homes, business and stability of life. They were treated as the “Other” in the alien lands but they were helpless. The critics of Singer hailed the novel as a novel of “the distressed history of the Jews.” The plot reveals the process of disintegration as the unity of the family is shattered by the individuals. Singer has been an important episode from history of World War 11 when Hitler took a vow to decimate all the Jews from the world. The German Soldiers had entered Warsaw and the scenes of death and destruction brought untold miseries to the Jews. Singer has used the symbolical language in the novel to depict the inner tensions and the anxieties of the Jews resulting into the disintegration and the lack of unity of *The Family Moskat*. The Jews lost their faith in Talmud and Kabala as they started believing that God had vanished from the universe and there was none who could save the Jews. Hadassah Moskat is disappointed to note the grandchildren turning to Christianity being alienated from the Jewish God:

If she was opposed to apostasy, it was for one reason only; it was the Jews who were persecuted, not the Christians. If what the Evangelist said was true, that the meek would inherit the earth, then the Jews were the real Christians. (Singer 420)

Masha revolts against the cultural and religious norms of the Jewish ethics and does convert to Catholicism to wed Yanek who is a Polish painter. Asa Heshel Benet is another interesting character, the victim of Nazism. He is a “scion of the root of King

David. But he comes to Warsaw to emulate Spinoza by seeking enlightenment and happiness through secular learning. Shortly after arrival he discards his Chassidic garments and is welcomed by the enlightened friends who congratulate him” (144). But a few hours later he enters a restaurant whose owner tells him to “to go back to Palestine” (147). Adele Landau justifies anti-Semitism as she calls the Jews backward who brought China into Poland. Bashevis Singer points out that the Jews are living in different parts of Europe and America with fractured identity. Singer has given the metaphor of a “wide-branching tree” whose roots have spread all the corners of the city. The diagram of the family tree given at the outset of the novel and the appearance of Ben as a supreme patriarch symbolizes the forces of patriarchy. Bennet family and the family of Koppel give the cosmic dimension to the plot. Singer observes thus: “Dan had a genealogical chart of his own inscribed on parchment with gold-ink in the form of a many branched hidden tree. The root was King David, and the branches bore the names of other illustrious forbears” (25). Bashevis Singer gives the images of decay and destruction symbolizing the decay of Jewish culture:

It was lined with great trees, chestnut and oak. Some of them had gashes torn in their sides by bolts of lightning. The holes looked dark and mysterious, like the caves of robbers. Some of the older trees inclined their tops down toward the ground as though they were ready to tumble over, tearing up with them the tangled of their centuries-old roots. (240)

The young Moskat's and their spouses observe the decay of the traditional Jewish culture; Asa Heshel Benet and other members of the family feel upset to find the mass defection of young people from Judaism and shifting to other religions. The plot begins with the third marriage of Reb Meshulam Moskat who is a wealthy patriarch of the Moskat family with the widow Rosa Frumetl Landau. But soon he regrets and says that "The masculine ripple that had awakened in him during the courtship soon flickered and died. In their bed chamber his bride revealed herself to be a broken a shell.' The marriage is soon dissolved and Reb finally decides; "to follow the wisdom of the stages; the first to do is to nothing' (19).

Isaac Bashevis Singer is rooted in Yiddish culture as he took the noble responsibility to recreate the vanished world of the shtetls and the ghettos of people of Poland. In all his novels the Jews of Poland do the normal routine things as if nothing had happened to them in the past. They are presented as ghosts that walk, talk and even marry, unaware that they are dead. Singer lived in America for more than half of his life and led a cozy and comfortable life but he was never happy as the traumatic memories of the death and destruction of the Polish Jews haunted him day and night. He couldn't forget the Polish misery, poverty and persecution: "the American dream gradually dissolves and harsh Polish reality returns" (Séance 65). The Jewish consciousness is a part of all his characters; and the Jewish God is always laughing as He watches their futile struggles of life. In the novels of Singer God is invoked, shouted at and wrestled with on every page of Singer. Singer believes that the Jews survive today because of God and God exists because of the Jews; it is a complex and exciting relationship depicted in the novels of Bashevis Singer. The famous novel of Singer, *The Family Moskat* is rendered with a sense of mimetic

richness. David Seed observes that the characters of Singer are “types” as his characters recur again and again with the same struggles and whims and oddities of life. Singer has depicted the reality of the Jews; their struggles and confrontations; failings and depression and nihilism. Hertz Yanovar is dispirited in the midst of the bombardment of Warsaw. He tries to console the hero Asa Heshel “The Messiah will come soon”. Asa is shocked to observe the deceptive hope and he gazes at him blankly giving the sarcastic and cynical reply: “Death is the Messiah. That’s the real truth” This spiritual vacuum is the main cause of depression and disintegration of most of the characters in the world of *The Family Moskat*. On the surface level the novel is a chronicle novel exemplified by Galsworthy and Martin du Gare but beneath the surface Singer has depicted the inner turbulent world of his characters trapped in the abyss of darkness. Like Leo Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* and Joshua singer’s *The Brothers Ashkenazi*, Singer’s *The Family Moskat* is a novel about a dynasty.

Many have misread *The Family Moskat* as a bitter indictment of Poland’s prewar Jews. Singer omits none of their flaws, tragic or pathetic; on the other hand he unfailingly endows his embattled spirits with compensatory flashes of generosity and courage” (Siegel 12).The main cause of the loss of self and depression of the characters of Bashevis Singer is the oppression and cruelty that they experienced in this world. The characters of Singer are not great heroes as they don’t perform great deeds but are distressed people since the world has crushed them. Freud conducted many experiments and came to the conclusion that the events of childhood of man greatly impact his psyche and the main cause of anxiety and trauma is the memory of the past that haunt him in his adulthood. Freud became the father of “unconscious”

opening the way for other psychologists to explore the human psyche for the treatment of the patients suffering from the multiple psychological ailments. He was a great scientist of neuropathology as he sets-up his psychoanalytical clinic in Vienna where he conducted many experiments and explored the ailments of many patients. He evolved and propounded many psychoanalytical theories to find the cure of many patients who suffered from many multiple psychological diseases such as hysteria and trauma. Sigmund Freud became an international celebrity and his theory about libido, depression and hysteria became very popular among the critics. Most of the characters experience suffering, trauma and discontentment in their love and life. They don't enjoy domestic happiness at all. The Jews were persecuted; humiliated, butchered like animals; their women were raped and millions of them were sent to the gas chambers of Auschwitz and Buna. Jekuthiel raises a serious question to the rabbi: "Where is your Lord of the Universe now? Where are the miracles? Where is your faith in Torah and prayer? (259). The Polish Jews live in fear of losing their cultural and religious identity. They try to hold on to their Hasidic ways but find themselves incapable because of the forces of transformation and Enlightenment. Murray Baumgarten observes that the Jewish characters of Singer feel that "to have a self and be an individual and thereby have the capacity to choose, is the great scandal and secret of their expulsion from the communal garden" (Baumgarten 97). The reviewers spoke of the first edition of *"The Family Moskat"* as a monument to the millions of Jews in Poland who had been slaughtered and scattered over the face of the earth in the decade before. If the book is a monument, it is a monument with a difference. It does not simply extol or glorify its subject as monuments so often do. Singer's feelings about his fellow Jews have something in common with those

expressed by Mark Twain: "The Jews are human; that is the worst that anyone can say about them." All the peasants of the town envy him; a woman expresses her contempt thus: "As I live the old goat's got himself married again" (7). The main cause of the alienation of Moskat is the separation from his family and community. All children, Joel, Nathan, Pinnie, Nyunie, Pearl, Hama ad Leah depend on him for support. The dilemma of the Jewish characters is that their individual will is inimical to the group and it is an irony that they express their free will to the detriment of their own lives. Asa Heshel is a young boy ambitious to rise in the ladder of success. Singer introduces him thus:

The youth was tall and thin, with a long, pale face, a high prematurely creased forehead, and keen blue eyes. Thin lips and a sharp chin covered with a sprouting beard. His blond, almost colorless ear-locks were combed back from his ears. He was wearing a gabardine and a velvet cap. A scrap was wrapped around the throat. (24)

Consider for example the case of Asa Heshel Bannet who bungles the affair with Hadassah. Adele warns that she is marrying a man who doesn't love her. She willingly falls in the tragic trap and consents to an arranged marriage inviting anguish acting in an abnormal manner. Irving Howe observes that Bashevis Singer depicts the tragic fate of his Jewish characters that look lost and bewildered because of the basic conflict between the personal liberty and destiny. They feel guilty in renouncing their Hasidic identity and guile according to Freud the main source of depression. Freud gives his theory of guilt in the final section of *Civilization and Discontents* stating that "the sense of guilt is the most important problem in the development of

civilization; the price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt” (Freud 134). The decline of the Moskat begins when Meshulam marries for the third time impacting the lives of other members of the tribe. Singer introduces Hadassah thus: “Hadassah appeared to be about eighteen, tall and slender, with blond hair coiled in braids. Her face was pale, her nose slightly snub, the throat long, the forehead high and with a blush tint at the temples” (53).

The novel takes a tragic turn with the love relationship of Hadassah and Asa Heshel Bannet threatening the very existence of the Jewish culture. Large number of characters suffers in the novels of Bashevis Singer because of their sins of moral transgression. In *The Family Moskat* the main cause of depression and frustration is the romantic love of Hadassah and Asa Heshel. Hadassah is the modern girl; she is the granddaughter of Meshulam. Her mother Dacha has educated her to be a modern girl; she was educated in non-Jews schools. She is a rebel in the family as she refuses the match arranged for her with Fischel Kutner who is a devout Jew and is the heir to a fortune. Her grandfather is extremely disturbed by her individual choice supported by her mother Dacha as he expresses his anguish thus: “In his long career he had overcome more formidable opponents than Dacha and Hadassah...If he were to lose a single struggle, it would be the signal for his death” (85). The Jewish rabbi opposes the love marriages because in their view “love marriage denies the true purpose of marriage, and epitomizes the futile pursuit of happiness apart from religion” Asa Heshel is an enigmatic personality who is always uncertain and unpredictable and this is a major tragic flaw in his personality this is why he suffers deflation of self

and neurotic disorder: “He began courses of study but never completed them. He was reading without system, browsing here and there. The eternal questions never gave him rest...” (33). Asa Heshel was haunted by the illness of his mother. He was always in dilemma: “Each day he would make up his mind anew to leave the town, and each day he stayed. He had neither money for travel nor any idea how might earn his keep out in the great world” (33). His sister Dinah “complained that because of him she could not find a husband” (33). There was a psychological pressure on his mind; “his grandmother Tamur was no longer alive; his father had disappeared” (34). Whenever he decided to start a new career in a new city, his mother “would tremble and red spots would flare up on her cheeks” (34) as she would cry: “You too will leave me” (34). Intellectually he was very strong as “learned men had mouth –filling praise “for him. Inwardly he was living with a void as he always felt lonely and restless haunted by the memories of his father and sick mother and unmarried sister. He was devoted to Spinoza and ironically when he saw Hadassah he fell in love with her.

Hadassah has no money but her aspirations to marry a gentile brought all the sufferings to her. She expresses her death wish in depressing tone: “I’m not living. I’m dead. They’re going to wash the corpse” She lets her mother pull her clothes off her, the dress, the petticoat, the shirt and the drawers and stockings (225). She blames Judaism for not giving the solace she requires after the abortive affair with Asa: “Why don’t we have the kind of religion were a Jewish girl can go into a synagogue and kneel in prayer before God? ...Please, Father in heaven, give me back my faith” (210). Her desperate need for religious faith urged Asa to come closer to Hadassah.

Before elopement he asks himself: "How can I aspire to her? She does all believe and I'm all doubt. I will only do her harm (150). Hadassah believe in god and in mankind and in romantic love but Asa" had nothing but doubt about everything" (399). Asa couldn't understand the deep layers of love of Hadassah; he only used her body and gave her heart-rending psychological ailments.

Singer has given the historical setting of the novel *The Slave*, the aftermath of Chmielnicki massacre is clearly referred in the beginning of the plot. Singer traces the roots of the novel from the Genesis as Jacob is a biblical character and Singer uses allegorical technique to amplify the realistic elements of the Bible. Jacob is presented as a symbol of the Jewish people and his psychological trauma is the outcome of moral and spiritual disconnection from God. The cultural values of the 1920s were subverted by death, trauma and fear and this subversion of values is the main focus of Bashevis Singer. Cathy Caruth asserts that trauma is experienced and witnessed through "a response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, or other repetitive phenomena" (Caruth 91). Kali Tai also observes in her book *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma* that textual representations of trauma are "written from the need to tell and retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it "real" both to the victim and to the community" (Tai 21). Judith Lewis Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery* contends that "the ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness" (Herman1). She finds a dialectical relationship between the trauma and the desire to reconnect trauma and often trauma is enacted outside the bounds of normal human beings. Buchen

compares enslavement of Jacob with the Jews' slavery in Egypt. Buchen remarks that the novel is distinguished from most reworking's of biblical or mythical material in that the focus is no so much on a hero as a people, yet he neglects the realism with which Singer presents Jacob" (Buchen 150). Siegel also opines "that a parallel exists"(28). Malin states that Jacob "recognizes the timelessness of his name" (Malin 66). Singer's novel *The Slave* depicts the traumatic experiences of the Jews who lost families and homes because of the atrocities of the Chmielnicki massacre. The loss of home and business was a great setback for the Jews. Singer gives the metaphor of slavery to depict the poignant condition of the Jews. Judith Herman in his *Trauma and Recovery the Aftermath of Violence: from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* observes thus:

One of the many casualties of the war's devastation was the illusion of manly honor and glory in battle. Under conditions of unremitting exposure to the horrors of trench warfare, men began to break down in shocking numbers. Confined and rendered helpless, subjected to constant threat of annihilation, and forced to witness the mutilation and death of their comrades without any hope of reprieve, many soldiers began to act like hysterical women. They screamed and wept uncontrollably. They froze and could not move. They became mute and unresponsive. (Herman, 20)

The novel is concerned with the problem of free will as the title of the novel suggests. Singer also takes up the theme of lust and human degradation. Singer uses the natural word as a source of inspiration and inner knowledge. Jacob struggles in

his life to learn the significance of free will. But Yasha of *The Magician of Lublin* rejects the free will as she expresses his desire to fly in desperation of life. Singer employs a broader theme describing the implications of evil. Jacob realizes “that how deep were the wounds” (106). Singer puts forward the problems and tension of the deserted wives, Cossack brides forced conversions; they witnessed the horrors of genocide and Singer depicts the traumatic experiences of the Jews

Singer’s novel *The Slave* is a story of a displaced and homeless Jew and the plot analyzes the internal and external pressures of Jacob as he struggles with his faith. Jacob is a young and highly leaned man who has been made a slave in 17th century Poland. Jacob is seen trapped in two major religious communities, one Christian and the other Jewish. The main focus of Singer in this novel is to depict the fate of a Jew who gets involved in endless misfortunes to save a gentle soul. Jacob passes through various stages of freedom and slavery. His journey of life is dominated by his committed slavery to God. His search for love and God is the main focus of Singer as Nili Wachtel says: “Jacob breaks a wrong, naïve passive slavery, in order to choose for himself a right, sober and active slavery” (186). He is conscious of being a slave and the consciousness of loss of home and family tortures him day and night; torments his soul as he cannot even pray to God: “Thou hast not mad me a slave” (Singer 10). In this study Freudian theory has been relied to explore the neurotic traits of the protagonists of Hemingway. In “On the Psychological Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication”, Breuer and Freud point out that “any experience which calls up distressing affects, such as those of fright, anxiety, shame or physical pain may operate as a trauma of this kind” (Breuer and Freud, 6). Furthermore, in “*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*”, Freud

suggests that “traumatic neurosis” is a kind of “repetition of compulsion” of unpleasant and traumatic events. Ironically, Jacob is not only a slave to God and his master, but also a slave to his emotions and passions. Maria P.P. Root observes that insidious trauma is “usually associated with the social status of an individual being devalued because a characteristic intrinsic to their identity is different from what is valued by those powers” (Root 240). Jacob’s hometown was burnt by Cossacks and his family was killed in a brutal manner. Jacob lives alone in the abject circumstances of slavery; he lives alone on top of mountain next to a Christian village. He is always haunted by the old memories of his wife and children. Herman opines in her book *Trauma and Recovery* that the “typical phenomena of hyperarousal and intrusion cause trauma survivors to lose authority over their memory” (Herman 33). Jacob is a social outcast and herds only cow only. He has to go downtown every day to get food and he observes the rituals and traditions of Christianity. Root further observes that alienation is a “threat to psychological safety, security, or survival” (241). Jacob is a social outcast and herds only cow only. He has to go downtown every day to get food and he observes the rituals and traditions of Christianity. Root further observes that alienation is a “threat to psychological safety, security, or survival” (241).

The Holocaust survivors were in the grip of powerful and acute trauma resulting into their internal dissonance. Sigmund Freud discusses the theory of displacement of self in *Interpretation of Dreams*. Jacques Lacan’s *Mirror Stage* examined psychic pressures and tensions resulting into neurosis. Eric Fromm’s *Escape from Freedom* explored the suppression of individual freedom leading to degeneration of sensibility. R.D Laing wrote *The Divided Self* giving an account of schizoid and symptoms of schizophrenia. Dr. Karen Horney focused on human

psychology and explored the causes of neurosis in *Our Inner Conflicts*. Ihab Hassan's *In Quest of Nothing: Selected Essays, 1998-2008* and *Radical Innocence* discuss the growth of trauma and the impact of fractured identities on the mind and sensibility of the individuals. Syster Wylie propounded the theories of neurosis and trauma to investigate and explore the mental icebergs of human mind. Erik Erikson and Stryker in his *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version*, and Goffman in his *Human Behavior and Social Processes* made observations on the abnormal human behavior. Diane Marcotte in her article *Irrational Beliefs and Depression in Adolescence* discusses the nature of depression. All the latest theories on trauma and neurosis are applied to investigate the behavior of protagonists of *A Slave of Singer*. The novelist has portrayed a barbarous world. Jacob is surrounded by savages living in a state of degradation. Sex for them is simply copulation and the corpse of baby is like garbage. The Christianity thrives on sexual morality, chastity and sanctity of religion. Among savages, Jacob is more thoughtful, sensible and hard working than his fellow cowherds. The main conflict in the life of Jacob is to lift himself from obscenity and to open his mind to higher ideals. Singer writes:

An awful stench rose from that mob; the odors of sweat and urine mingled with something for which there is no name, as if these bodies were putrefying while still alive....The men hee-hawed and whinnied, supported themselves on each other's shoulders and barked like dogs. Some collapsed on the path, but their companions did not pause to assist them, but stepped over the recumbent bodies. Jacob was perplexed. (Singer 42)

Elie Wiesel once wrote that when God created man, he gave him a secret...and that secret was not how to begin again” (Wiesel 32). Jacob is confronted with a baffling problem to reconstruct his life and the world for his survival. Jacob feels his moral responsibility to resurrect a world that is torn by the Holocaust. Jacob’s wife and children were killed by the Cossacks and he was sold to Gazdas, a tribe living in the mountains of Poland. Singer has depicted the tribal society of the mountains where Jacob lived:

Night and day the girls bothered him. Attracted by his tall figure, they sought him out and talked and laughed and behaved little better than beasts. In his presence they relieved themselves, and they were perpetually pulling up their skirts to show him insect bites on their hips and thighs. “Lay me”, a girl would shamelessly demand, but Jacob acted as if he were deaf and blind. (Singer 7-8)

He is a slave of Jan Bzik and whose daughter Wanda falls in love with him. Wanda is the widow of a drunken farmer and is known as “The Lady” in the tribe because of her good manners. Wanda is a beautiful girl, at the age of twenty she was “taller than most of the other women. She had blond hair, blue eyes, a fair skin, and well-modeled features: (Singer 16). The real conflict begins when there is a psychological pressure on his soul to forsake Judaism and to get freedom from slavery. Ronnie Janoff-Bulman in his book *Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma* asserts that trauma radically destroys people’s fundamental beliefs in the benevolence and meaningfulness of the world, and the worthiness of the self” (Ronnie 5). But Jacob refuses to leave his God and remains faithful to the Jewish

God. In the last section of the novel Jacob gives in succumbs to the sexual passions for Wanda. Finally Jacob sexually consummates his love for Wanda. Singer has used the images from the Bible and Genesis to describe the ritual of their sexual consummation. Both of them immerse themselves in the stream ritually undergoing a symbolic union of souls. Jacob, however, is a victim of guilt though nature seems to sanction their sexual consummation next morning: “Dew covered the grass, and each droplet gleamed. Birds were singing, and in the distance a cow lowed” (70). He exhorts her to embrace Judaism, though he feels sinful. He realizes that Wanda’s desire to accept his faith is not natural and truthful but is the result of impure motives. Their union is a moral transgression of the Jewish and the Polish laws. Singer presents men in terms of their traumatic experience and psychological aberrations. Women are presented as a class; subservient to men. While Singer presents men in terms of their individual psychological aberrations, he treats women as a class, making far more frequent use of clichés and stereotypes in depicting them than in depicting men. Singer's vision combining the traditional Jewish image of woman as subservient and inferior with the misogynistic view of woman's nature in the philosophies of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud and Weininger—represents a powerful assault on the Jewish woman. A Jew co-habiting was an act of damnation and a gentile marrying a Jew was a penal offence under the Polish law. Michael Foucault in his seminal book *The History of Sexuality* observes that a gilded era of sexual liberty started in the beginning of the twentieth century. He argues that society has constructed specific rules to prohibit sexuality from the public sphere with regards to women:

A hysterization of women's bodies: a threefold process whereby the feminine body was analyzed, qualified and disqualified; as being thoroughly saturated with sexuality; whereby it was integrated into the sphere of medical practices, by reason of a pathology intrinsic to it. (Foucault 104)

A disorder is defined as "a mental or bodily condition marked condition marked primarily by the disorganization of the body and mind." The physical impotency of Jake is caused because of the wound of his genital but Brett's emotional bankruptcy is because of her contraceptive approach to life. Jacob spends most of his time in convincing Wanda to become a Jew as the Jewish Law doesn't demand anything performe. Wanda tells him about her relationship with her former husband Stach and Jacob tells her that: "The Torah tells how a man should conduct himself" (20). He even tells stories convincing her that even a prostitute can embrace Judaism. Jacob tries his best to control his passions and remains isolated from Wanda. His alienation becomes a major cause of his frustration and depression. He is always haunted by the question: "Did the creator require the assistance of Cossacks to reveal His nature? Was this a sufficient cause to bury infants alive?" (100). Jacob suffers from alienation and according to Patrick Colin Hogan "alienation is not itself an experience one chooses to have, it is, rather, an inability, as we shall see, frequently associated with emotional and mental disintegration" (Hogan 88). Hogan further suggests that alienation is a kind of "cultural disintegration involving a sense of alienation from all cultures, being no longer at ease in any cultures, finding a home neither in indigenous tradition nor in Europeanization" (88). Jacob's dilemma is that

he cannot forget his wife and children and he remains restless and depressed. He becomes a guilty of murder through his forgetfulness. Robert Jay Lifton in his book *The Life of the Self: Toward a New Psychology* observes that “the survivor undergoes a radical but temporary diminution in his sense of actuality in order to avoid losing his sense completely and temporarily; he undergoes a reversible form of psychic death in order to avoid a permanent or psychic death” (Lifton 144). Jacob struggles to forget his wife and children in his exercise of scratching forty-three commandments and sixty nine interdictions into a rock but all these spiritual efforts prove futile as memory of death intensifies his trauma. He keeps an ultimate faith in God as he realizes: “The leaves drop from the tree, but the branch remains; the trunk still has its roots” (268).

They fall in love with each other but Jacob struggles to escape and resist the temptation of Satan. Jacob interprets his powerful sense of lust and longing for sexual pleasures. He becomes slave to passions urging him to sacrifice the eternal for the temporal: “Remember this world is only a corridor; the true palace lies beyond. Don’t let yourself be barred from it the sake of a moment’s pleasure” (16). He even dreams of Wanda in his sleep and feels sleepless and restless. Freud says that the “dreams are the royal road to the unconscious” and no wonder, Wanda is the center of his unconscious mind. She has become a part of his existence and he is ready to make sacrifice his life for her. He waits for Wanda like a bridegroom waiting for his bride and visualizes her thus: “her eyes which were sometimes blue, sometimes green, her full lips, here long slim neck, her womanly bosom. Like any other peasant she worked in the fields, but her hands remained feminine” (17). Wanda is a slave to

her animus; she proposed Jacob but he is afraid of committing sin of adultery. Wanda is perplexed to know the ambiguous attitude of Jacob. She is bold and beautiful; she offers her body to him and expresses her free will to offer him cohabitation without marriage. Singer has depicted the conflict in Jacob's soul between his religious commitment and instincts. He subdues his sexual urge towards Wanda but when he looks at her in silence, he is fired with sexual passions but restraining himself. The blood in his veins boiled and cold fire gripped his psyche but his Judaism dampens his spirits as he broods: "Remember this world is only a corridor. The true palace lies beyond. Don't let yourself be barred from it for the sake of a moment's pleasure" (22). Wanda excites his repressed instincts and he knows that he is the victim of a split between his repression and passion. Laing comments thus:

Man's whole life has been between his desire to reveal himself and his desire to conceal himself. We all share this problem with him and we have all arrived at a more or less satisfactory solution. We have our secrets and our needs to confess. (Laing 39)

Dissolution of self is considered as a mental process of disconnection from thoughts and feelings of an individual. Dissociative disorders lead to amnesia and identity disorder leading to the loss of self of the individuals. The main symptoms of dissociation of self is the loss of identity; child abuse, rape and depression and anxiety disorders. Physical injury and the war memories also lead to the dissociation of self. Wanda troubles him and makes him sleepless day and night; passions overwhelm him and many unknown ideas leap into his brain. He wakes up in the middle of night with tensions gripping his psyche." He had become a man at war

with himself. One half of him prayed to God to save him from temptation and the other sought some way to surrender to the flesh” (33). Wanda is portrayed as a ritualistic temptress who says: “I must have you” (25). Jacob tries to repress his instincts but in this struggle he becomes a psychic case as he loses his balance of mind. Freud gave the theory of repression that is a normal part in the growth of human beings. In “normal life our secret desires continue to find outlet in perfectly well-adjusted individuals. But the problems arise when an individual is faced with the obstacles to satisfy his libido and experience trauma and pressure on his psyche” (Freud 350).

Jacob knows that Wanda is an outsider but she transcends the savage existence of the Gazdas in her true love for Jacob. His effort to suppress the demands of Eros and to follow an ideal of Judaism results into his schism of self. The suppression of Eros leads to his mental disturbance and loss of reason. He suffers from a strong desire for suicide: “Ceaselessly he had prayed for death, he had even contemplated self-destruction” (15). His asceticism is dampened and sexual desires become powerful. He reflects on the teachings of Tohra which are in favor of man-woman relationship: “Had not King Moses married a woman from Ethiopia? Did not king Solomon take as his wife Pharaoh’s daughter? Of course these women had become Jewesses. But so could Wanda” (34). But most of his time he is seen battling with his own fears and sexual drives:” A man must be clever in battling the evil one. He must anticipate all of the Devil’s stratagems” (35). In his depression he would go to the fields and chant the songs of Sabbath service, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kapur but even in these moments he was haunted by the memories of Wanda who joined him as a temptress. All his efforts to forget Wanda ended in despair:

His yearning stayed with him praying and studying, sleeping and walking. He knew the bitter truth: compared to his passions for Wanda, his mourning for his wife and children and his love for God were weak. If the desire of the flesh came from the Satan, then he was in the Devil's net. "Well, I have lost both worlds, he muttered, and through half shut eyes he maintained his watch. (53)

In desperation Jacob searches for the loopholes in the scriptures to justify his desire for Wanda. In the Talmudic Law: "The Talmudic law stating that a man who cohabits with a gentile could be put to death by anyone in the community was only valid if there had first a warning and the adultery was seen by witness" (34). Like Dimmedale of *The Scarlet Letter* of Hawthorne, Jacob wants to establish his relations with Wanda and is not psychologically under pressure to commit adultery. His desire for Wanda is intensified by the inactivity during the rainy season. When Jacob sees her coming up on the mountain, "tears come to his eyes. Someone remembered him and cared" (53). When he looks at Wanda sleeping in the barn he raises the queries: "Had she not been created in God's image?" (53). He takes her in his arms and enjoy the sexual pleasures for the first time. He sees Wanda in rain and darkness of the barn. He enjoys the body of Wanda but in his heart he remains restless and guilty. Singer depicts the fall of Jacob into the pit of darkness and lust:

Husband and wife had driven each other into an insane labyrinth of vice. He procured for her and she procured for him. She watched him corrupt peasant girls and he eavesdropped money for the building of churches and religious monuments. (130)

Freud (1914) argues that “an instinct for mastery” is more primordial and elementary than the general “pleasure principle” of avoiding unpleasurable experiences and seeking pleasurable experiences (147). He asks Wanda to bath in the stream because “God’s law requires it” (55). Wanda says: “I have done this for you” but Jacob says: “No, not for me, for God” (56). He is fully under the fire of passions; he lifts her in his arms and is lost in his love. He feels the power of eros to be as strong as that of Thanatos. He utters the words to himself: “For love is as strong as death, the Song of Songs and at least he understood” (57). He understands that just as death has its total power over human beings, of carrying them to a new world so it is with love. He realizes that to be totally consumed by love man has to recognize the mysteries of body. On the next morning: “he was no longer ashamed before God, but feared the ridicule of men” (57). Freud observes that the “first sexual act of a man and a woman may bring about guilt, remorse and even feelings of damnation” (350). After the sexual experience, Jacob is haunted by the terrifying metaphors of hell, miracle, love and death, guilt and damnation. Wanda is completely committed to Jacob as she declares: “Where thou goest, I go. Thy people are my people. They God is my God” (58). In these moments of love and sexual passions, Jacob compares Wanda with his wife Zelda who “had been a woman, but frigid and cold, forever distracted. She had been a constant stream of complaints: headaches, toothaches, cramps in stomach, and always fearful of breaking the law” (58). He was just twelve years old when he was engaged with Zelda. He was interested in the big library of Zelda’s father and his passion for books motivated him to marry Zelda who avoided him and as always weeping and complaining. Singer uses evocative imagery to portray the sexual body of Wanda: “Her body exuded the warmth of the sun, the breezes of summer, the

fragrance of wood, field, flower, leaf, just as milk gave off the odor of the grass the cattle fed on” (58). Wanda awakens the passions lying buried in his being and gives a new life and guilt to Jacob. He experiences a constant state of burning with passions and the voice within his soul cried for Wanda day and night: “He returned home but his spirit remained restless” (84). The burning fire of passions remains active in him even when he is far away from her. When he tries to forget her the death wish grips his wounded psyche: “The instant his desire for her left him, he wanted to die” (94). He is away and during his stay in Josefov, he is trapped in two dimensions; one the love for Wanda and the other his religion. He tries to punish himself to atone for the sin that he had committed: “every time he thought of Wanda he would fast until sunset. He drew up lists of torments: pebbles in his shoes, a stone beneath his pillow, bolting his food without chewing it, going without sleep” (58). Despite all these efforts he failed to forget Wanda; he longs to go back to meet her and even thinks of converting her to Judaism. His faith in Judaism is shaken. He feels that it is useless to follow Torah blindly; he criticizes people who follow the code of Judaism blindly. This attitude and lack of faith symbolizes his disintegration of self and trauma. He is so much stressed that he sees a dream in which Wanda appears:

Wanda came to Jacob one night as he lay sleeping. He saw her in the flesh, her body surrounded by light, her cheeks tear-stained, and knew she was pregnant...Why did you leave me? She asked warmly: “What will happen to your child? It will be brought up among pagans” Because of the child she bore, he had to bend to her and he tasted her lips and the salt of her tears. “It’s yours” She said “Your flesh and blood. (95)

Jacob tries to explore the mystery of religion and God. He thinks of Wanda and religion and these thoughts grip his psyche. He tries to explore the love of man and the love of God. He comes to the conclusion that the distinction between divine and human love is man-made. Jacob gets new awareness in his relationship with Wanda. He has learnt to perceive and analyze the world around him. His pain is intensified when he looks at the people suffering from all forms of tortures; poverty, alienation and segregation. Jacob finds it difficult to assimilate in the savage environment; he finds it difficult even to understand the mystery of God. He said to God:

I have no doubt that you are the Almighty and that whatever you do is for the best, but it is impossible for me to obey the commandment.

Thou shalt Love Thy God. No I cannot. Father, not in this life. (86)

As the plot develops the faith of Jacob begins to decline. His new approach to God is the root cause of his disintegrated self. Jacob is caught between obedience and fixation. His earlier faith before he met Wanda is the result of his obedience but when he meets Wanda his emotional involvement finds a new meaning of faith based on the sexual and practical approach to life.

Erich Fromm in his *Escape from Freedom* observes thus: "Obedience is usually conscious; it is behavior rather than feeling, and it can occur also...when the person obeys without agreeing with the authority's orders. Fixation of love or fear" (123). Jacob's involvement with Wanda leads to his fixation which allows freedom to the people to fulfill his aspirations. His detachment from the traditional Torah is evident from his discontentment with his traditional Judaism:

His years away from Tora had changed his views. Now conscious of much he had not realized, he saw that one law in the Torah generated a dozen in the Mishnah, and five dozen in the Gemara; in the latter commandments laws were as numerous as the sand of the desert. (92)

Jacob enters the village at midnight and arrives at the back of the hut of Wanda. He enters into the hut and finds Wanda sleeping. Wanda gets the few things and goes with Jacob to spend the rest of her life with Jacob. She is true lover and she is fully committed to Jacob. Wanda blindly follow Jacob but she doesn't know the inner turbulent mind of Jacob who suffers from the anguish of sin and guilt and religious transgression. According to *American Psychiatric Association* (1994) the clinical meaning of trauma is when an individual faces an "event or events that involved actual or threatened death of serious injury of self and leads to his helplessness and fear or guilt" (209). Jacob is threatened by his own religious order. Laplanche in his book *The Language of Psycho-Analysis* (1974) rightly points out that trauma is "mainly characterized by its intensity, by the subject's incapacity to respond adequately to it, and by the upheaval and long-lasting effects that it brings about in the psychological organization" (Laplanche 465). No wonder Jacob expresses his psychic agony thus:

Though he remained terrified and shocked at what he had done, there was also a silence in Jacob. His mind seemed frozen. He no longer cared what the outcome of this adventure would be. He had passed beyond freedom, was both himself and another. The still point within him watched as though his actions were those of a stranger. (108)

Jacob is enmeshed between his Jewish self and his inclination towards Wanda. He takes Wanda along with him but his mood is sullen as he is transported into the world of existential despair. He is obsessed with the questions of freedom, decision and responsibility and doesn't find any solid answer for these questions putting heavy pressure on his psyche. In the earlier part of the novel, his world view is a priori as he looks at the world through the glasses of Judaism. But when he comes in contact with Wanda his perceptions about life, religion and sexuality change. He longs for freedom discarding the traditional law of Judaism. He breaks the law of Torah and thinks that he has no moral right to castigate others. Jacob's relationship with Wanda is the beginning of a journey leading him to awareness and enlightenment about liberty and sexuality; he gets awareness about the world. He is a bundle of contradictions; in the earlier life his views about religion and Judaism were different but with his association with Wanda he changed his views and started justifying his elopement with Wanda.

Jacob in the old days would have considered himself ridiculed if anyone had ever suggested to him that a time would come when he would discuss such matters as the freedom of the will, the meaning of existence and the problem of evil with a peasant. (66)

Jacob is caught in the trap of love and religion; Wanda is a Gentile and he is a Jew. She keeps on searching his soul and tormenting him with limitless questions about God, freedom, love and sex. The questions of Wanda mentally disturb him as he finds contradictions in his theory and practice. He is forced to brood over the metaphysical concepts such as God, Sin Talmud and Nature. He ruminates: "What

was the purpose of creation? Free will! Man must choose for himself between good and evil. This was the reason God had sent forth man's soul from the Throne of Glory" (67). Jacob loses his self and becomes a neurotic being because he is caught in the net of two choices like Hamlet; "to be or not to be." On one hand he has an option to be at one with himself or he can lead an estranged life and till the end of the novel Jacob perambulates between these two existential choices and suffers psychological anguish. Sometimes he behaves like a devout Jew and soon he betrays Judaism and aspires for a gentile girl. His last decision to take Wanda with him is the beginning of his real trauma. He moves towards Pihtz situated on the other side of the Vistula where a few Jews live under the protection of their lord Adam Pilitzky. Jacob decides that Wanda will live as dumb Sarah in the village because she is poor in Yiddish. She will play the role of a mute and Jacob will assume the role of a teacher. It is a tough time for Jacob; he assumes introspective and melancholic disposition. He experiences the guilt consciousness as his painful decision amounts to deceiving his Jewish God. He is like and accepted by the Jewish community and Wanda also starts living like a perfect Jewish girl:

Went on to the ritual bath, soaked the meat and salted it, on Friday prepared the Sabbath pudding, burned a piece of dough, blessed the candles on the Sabbath, she stood in the woman's section of the synagogue and moves the lips as though praying. (119)

Jacob had taught her all the important rituals; the prayers and to write Yiddish, the names of the books and of kings and the code of the Jewish law. He had taught the

fundamental teachings of Judaism and while teaching her he found many contradictions in Judaism:

Teaching others, Jacob realized, one also instructed oneself; correcting Sarah's behavior answering her questions, eradicating her errors, many problems about which he would not have otherwise thought clarified for him. Often her questions demanded answers which were not to be found in this world. (122)

His conversation and discussions on the religious matters with Wanda led him to new awareness of Judaism as he found many contradictions in his religion. There were questions of Wanda he couldn't answer and he realized that his knowledge of Judaism is poor and is only on the surface level without knowing its existential intensity. His discussion with Wanda proved fruitful as he started brooding over the practical aspect of Judaism. Jacob told her repeatedly he couldn't solve all the world's riddles, but Sarah kept on insisting "You know everything" (122). Jacob teaches her the spiritual life and Wanda teaches him the world of instincts. Wanda becomes his existential companion and his religious debates with her brought new awareness about the false assumptions of Judaism. Wanda was happy since she found in him a life companion and a learned person inquisitive to explore the mysteries of life. Jacob came to the conclusion that corruption is common and the majority of people are sinners. The spirit of God replied:

Why concern yourself with what others do? Look to yourself, but Jacob had no peace. Everywhere he heard people asserting things that

their eyes denied. Piety was the cloak for envy and avarice. The Jews had learned nothing from their ordeal; suffering had pushed them lower. (87)

She was often upset to find him sullen, depressed and a pack of contradictions. Ted Hughes observes this: “Jacob and Sarah achieve a kind of Alchemical Marriage, a costly precarious condition, but the only truly happy one” (Hughes123). Bing guilty he expresses his wish to be punished by God:

Lying awake at night, Jacob addressed God: “I know that I have forfeited the world to come, but nevertheless you are still God and remain your creation. Castigate me. Father, I will submit to your punishment willingly. (Singer 139)

Kierkegaard observes that man become conscious of his existence through his feeling of guilt and the crime of consciousness. Jacob is appointed as an administrator of Pliitzky's affairs and he gets new identity for the first time after his slavery. The Jews consider him as the husband of “a holy woman.” But Jacob is aware of the reality that everything in this universe is subject to change: “What was man? Today alive, tomorrow in his grave. The Talmud spoke of the world as a wedding” (40). The people of the village venerate Wanda but Jacob is fear-ridden as he knows that her height of sainthood is fraudulent and she will be exposed at any time. This guilt consciousness becomes the main cause of the trauma of Jacob. His conscience pricks him day and night and he feels trapped in a peculiar situation. In the later part of the novel Jacob comes to the conclusion that:

But now at least he understood his religion: the essence was the relation between man and his fellows. Man's obligations toward God were easy to perform...They slandered their fellow men, but demanded meat doubly kosher. They envied, fought, hated their fellow Jews, yet still put on a second pair of phylacteries. Rather than troubling himself to induce a Jew to eat pork or kindle fire on the Sabbath. Satan did easier and more important work, advocating those sins deeply rooted in human nature. (183)

Jacob knows that the Jews would take her to the gallows if the secret of Wanda is revealed. His fears and guilt spring from the polarity between individualism and collectivism. Jacob knows that the society of Plitzky is communal in nature and they will cast away anyone who dares to violate their Jewish commands. Plitzky feels guilty due to his depraved nature and cruelty. He contemplates suicide; remains sleepless and mentally sick for his oppressions. He takes alcohol to relieve from emotional stress and struggles to fight with his impotency:

Adam Plitzky had seen no miracles himself and resented this. The devil subverted and denied the wonders of God in a thousand ways; hidden in every heart was some doubt. Often when Plitzky lay awake thinking of what was going on in the country, Lucifer came and whispered in his ear: "Don't they all speak of miracles? The Greek Orthodox, the Protestants, even the infidel Turks? How does it come about that God sometimes rides with the Protestants bringing them victories? Plitzky listened to Lucifer; at heart, he may have believed

man merely animal who return to dust, and hence condoned his wife's licentiousness. (Singer 130)

Plitzky considers human beings mere animals supporting his depravity. Sex among animals is mere copulation and virtues like chastity and chivalry are meaningless for Plitzky. He accepts the infidelity of his wife and his own perversions based on the idea that human beings are just dust born to die. His morality is incoherent; Jacob has long discussions with Plitzky about matters of faith and morality. Both debate over the issues of Jews and Christianity:

You've been waiting for the Messiah for a thousand years; What am I talking about? ...for more than fifteen hundred, and he doesn't appear. The reason is clear. He has come already and revealed God's truth. But you are a stubborn people. You keep yourself apart. You regard our meat as unclean, our wine as an abomination. You are not permitted to marry our daughters. You believe you are God's chosen people. Well, what has he chosen you for? To live in the dark ghettos and wear yellow patches...."I can convince no one, my lord" Jacob began to stammer. "I inherited my faith from my parents and I followed it to the best of my ability. (Singer 116)

Plitzky begins the history of antagonism between the Jews and the Christians which becomes the root cause of Jacob's trauma. According to Plitzky the Christians converted to Judaism were executed according to the laws of Poland. Plitzky argues with Jacob that people shifting from one group to another created a sense of insecurity and angered people for their betrayal. Durkheim observes that changing

one's religion can be received as betrayal of the traditions, the values that give strength to the society. In the 17th century Poland changing one's religion amounted to joining the enemy. Jacob argues with Plitzky that the Christians destroyed their homes; burnt their houses and killed the Jews. Plitzky rebuts Jacob and tells him that Cossacks are not Christians, but are Greek Orthodox and justifies the killings.

The weakness of Sarah in communication is a source of threat to Jacob. Being mute, she is not able to explain her position very well to the Jews and this intensifies the anxiety and fears of Jacob. Sarah is pregnant and in labor pain she will scream and will not be able to maintain her silence. Jacob is worried about her exposure. He is sure that she would give herself away crating the troubles for him. He imagines that he had danced to the tune of Satan: "Transgression draws transgression in its train; his lust for a forbidden woman had involved him in deception" (139). He goes out in search of a mid-wife but unable to find one returns to see that behind the anguish in the eyes of Sarah. He tried to console her: "Don't worry so" (170). He looks at her with compassion love and sympathy in a helpless manner. He feels guilty although he is not responsible for the plight of Sarah.

This was Wanda, Jan Bzik's daughter, who every afternoon had brought food to him on the mountain. On her head was the kerchief worn by daughters of Israel, and around her throat a talisman....He had wrenched this woman from generation of gentile, robbed her of mother, sister, sister-in-law, all her family. He had even deprived her of her speech. And what had he given in return? Only himself. He had wed her to dangers from which only a miracle could rescue her. (170)

When the time of delivery comes Wanda is in great pain. Her body becomes wet with perspiration but she remains silent and says nothing. When she overhears women discussing whether to save the child or let both die she cannot remain silent and cries out: “Don’t bury me yet, I’m not dead” shocks all the Jewish women. She is speaking in Polish language of the gentiles; women around her begin gossiping that she is possessed by dybbuks. She is exposed as women complain that she had been cheating them and playing the role of a mute woman. People want to know the truth but Jacob remains silent. Prayers cannot help him and his lips for prayers don’t move. Wanda is revealed as an imposter; a liar and a cheat who assumed a false identity to cheat the Jews. Jacob is fully exposed as he had committed a forbidden act of marrying a Christian violating the law of Talmud. Sarah is fervent in her religion and reacts to the existential situation boldly expressing her freedom; speaking of her true love for Jacob and defending her faith and love

I am a daughter of Israel, my lord Jacob’s God is my God...Don’t be so pale Jacob and frightened. I’ll sit with the angels and look down on you. I’ll see that no harm befalls you. I’ll sing with the choring angels and pray to God for you. (179)

The journey of Sarah from Wanda to the wife of Jacob and her new identity of a mother of a Jew raises so many questions to the Jewish community. Her feigned muteness sends shock waves to the Jews and her gentile background is a matter of concern for them. Jacob and Sarah are found in the strange situation. They put up a strong case as Sarah says: “I was born when Jacob found me” (179) advocating seriously that they belong to the same religion. Jacob learns so many things about his

religion and love and the value of freedom in this world. He understands that Torah and the law are important: "But behind the law there is mercy. Without mercy, there would be no law" (202). At the end of the second chapter Jacob lifts his eyes and says: "Lead God, lead. It is thy world" (212). Like the Biblical Jacob he crosses the forests and the river carrying his child Benjamin expectant and confident that Redemption will soon fall. When Jacob escapes to the Holy land with his son, he thinks of God and confesses: "he must atone for his sins...for the rest of his life and until his last breath he must repent and ask forgiveness of God and Sarah's sacred soul" (207). His son was born on the day of Yom Kapur; the holy day of the Jews encouraging him to come out of trauma through penance and repentance. He recollects the past memories; remembers the day of Chmielnicki massacre when he was driven from home, losing his wife and children during the flight and the scenes of his persecution and torture by the fanatics of Christianity. The feudal lords debarred him to be the owner of the land and he was enslaved and forced to live with animals within congregated barn of Jan Bzik. His treasure was his religious teachings of Talmud and Torah and the romantic company of Wanda. All these haunting memories pierce his body and spirit and make him sick and despondent. The frustrating phenomenon of hardship intensifies legalism and rituals without leading to moral improvement. Wanda's conversion from Christianity to Judaism becomes an additional source of his mental torture and unrest. In the last section of the book entitled "The Return" Singer depicts the resolution of Jacob and Wanda. Being excommunicated by his Jewish community, Jacob feels that all the doors for his salvation are closed. He is now once again an outcast with no identity and respect;

honor and status and broken in body and in spirit. He becomes the victim of false traditions and rituals of Judaism and his agony is intensified as he looks for the day of his deliverance which is “The Return” for him. He is on the rack as the burden of his sufferings is too heavy on his heart. Jacob recollects the history of his forefathers in his anguished state of mind and thinks of the search for love of God:

He did not have to search for, behind the barn a large rock protruded from the earth. There it as stood as ready as the ram which father Abraham had sacrificed as a burnt offering instead of Isaac. The stone had been waiting ever since creation. (34)

Jacob’s religious pilgrim progress doesn’t lead to his salvation but it becomes a source of eternal torture and trauma. He is at war with himself; he is conscious of his horrendous guilt; his sexuality and the temptations of satanic forces that engulfed him to suffer eternal perdition. He compares himself with that of the Biblical parallel, the Patriarch Jacob thus:

He had wrestled with God as had Patriarch Jacob, but his defeat had brought more than a dislocated thigh. He, Jacob, the son of Eleazar, had been utterly destroyed by heaven. No longer did he fear anything, not even Gahanna. He deserved no better, having cohabited her. What did he expect? In these day justice ruled untempered by mercy. (178)

The sufferings and psychological anguish of Jacob is intensified by the cruelty, complacency and smugness of Jews to which he belonged. Jacob tries to justify his actions as he quotes the old scriptures:

Moses had taken an Ethiopian woman as a wife....Jehudah who had given his name to the Jews had intercourse with a woman he thought was a harlot. King Solomon himself, the greatest sage had married the daughter of Pharaoh. (183)

Such thoughts and doubts assail the soul of Jacob who remains restless throughout of his journey with Wanda. He develops a critical sensibility and begins questioning the inherent contradictions in Judaism expressing his individualistic attitude. The cycle of his trauma is in full circle with the tragic death of Wanda shakes him completely. She however achieves sainthood: "She is good, he thought, really a saint, a thousand times better than any of the others" (183). Jacob realizes that her face is heavenly: "of good and evil of the Jews and Gentiles" (186). This insight helps him to find out the real essence of religion: "but now he at last understood his religion; its essence was the relation between man and his fellow" (189). His traumatic feelings reached in crescendo when he is arrested for his involvement in the criminal act of converting a Christian to Judaism. He is led away in chains:

Suddenly it occurred to Jacob that sometimes chains could be broken. Nowhere was it written that man must consent to his own destruction. Instantly his mood changed, he was angry. Powers slumbering within him awoke. He now knew what to do. (192)

Jacob openly revolts the religion and its system and breaks the chains and runs away symbolizing his declaration of freedom and existential despair. He takes his baby boy and escapes from all the restrictive and collective forces. With his new born baby he

begins his new journey to a different place to a new unknown world. He becomes a Biblical Jew in a modern guise:

Jacob remembered the words his namesake had spoken on his death bed...His name were Jacob also, he too had lost a beloved wife, the daughter of an idolater, among strangers. Sarah too was buried by the way and had left him a son. Like the Biblical Jacob, he was crossing the river, bearing only a staff, pursued by another Esau...or who knew; perhaps it was always the same Jacob and the same Rachel. Well, but the redemption has to come. All of this can't last forever. (212)

Broken hearted, alienated and depressed Jacob loses interest in life and turns nihilistic and depressed at the end of the novel. He loses the will to live as Singer writes:

Jacob's body died but he was already so busy greeting those who had come to meet him that he did not look back. His dark cabin with its rags and refuse was left behind on the ship. (234)

Jacob represents the Jews who lead a turbulent life suffering from alienation, uncertainty and threat to life and exile. He is in the pursuit of love and sex to breaking the conventions of Orthodox Judaism. He is a victim of society as he struggles to shape his destiny in a world characterized by horror and fear. Jacob's son Benjamin becomes a teacher and a father of three children. Jacob returns to Plitz after twenty years alone. He has the dream of discovering the bones and ashes of Sarah.

He wants to bring them to Jerusalem so that he can build a grave for his wife and himself.

Bashevis Singer's novel *Enemies: A Love Story* is a poignant tale of economic disruption and displacement. The plot focuses on life of the Jews of Eastern Europe who were bound together by a strong religious commitment. The communities of Poland were entrenched in their religious laws but these firm ties were disrupted after World War I. The setting of the novel is in America and the novel is a story of remembrance and trauma of the characters. They are haunted by the sweet memories of family and friends and life they led in Poland bringing in their mind the ambiguous feelings of joy, happiness and loss. The main focus of Bashevis Singer is the tragic tale of Herman Broder; his doubts about the existence of God and his relationships with his three wives and his problems to assimilate in the new American culture. Herman, Yadwiga, Masha and Tamara are the main characters of the novel who experience the terrorism of the Nazi occupation of Poland. Yadwiga is a gentile Polish servant who worked for the family of Herman. Masha and Tamara are survivors of Auschwitz and Buna; the famous concentration camps of the Germans. Herman hid in the hayloft during the war on the farm of Yadwiga to save himself and Yadwiga risked her life and the lives of her family hiding and protecting Herman. In fact all the characters of the novel are traumatized by the occupation of their homeland. They have lost their homes and the native land and are forced to run away to save their lives. All the main characters of Bashevis Singer's novel *Enemies: A Love Story* are immigrant survivors of the Jewish Holocaust. They are settled in America but they are always haunted by the intrusive memories of the past trauma as the past repeats itself in the life of each character. Singer has poignantly depicted the

psychological pain and anguish of the major characters in the plot of the novel. Emmanuel Levin (1988) observes that the Holocaust is the real model “of gratuitous suffering which left a hole in the personal and collective life of the Jews” (Levinas 162). The Jews who had witnessed the inhuman practices of Nazi extermination got awareness of the end of the illusion of “beautiful death.” Herman Broder is the highly neurotic character of Bashevis Singer whose traumatic journey is the chief interest of the novel. Herman Broder is a Polish intellectual who escaped the persecution of Nazi by hiding in a hayloft for three years. Yadwiga who is his family servant helps him to save his life. Herman is homeless and jobless; he marries Yadwiga and migrates to New York for safety and survival. He is jobless there and penniless but he earns his living by ghostly sermons writing for a rabbi. His sexual relations with several women land him in problems and as a professional he emerges as a pack of lies. Herman believes that “survival is based on guiles; he is devious and enmeshed in lies.” Herman lives in constant fear that his deceptions may not be revealed and exposed. Habermas argues that “common to all traumatic experiences is the destruction of what I call the basic fundamental elements of the “psychological landscape” (qtd in Kirmayer). The psychological landscape consists of beliefs, values and aspirations of the people. Dissociation is often considered as an important element of trauma. The Holocaust suffered from dissociation of self and in this situation their psychological landscape collapses. Doris Broder (1995) observes that “in many traumatic incidents the psychic adhesive integrating the self dissolves” (56). The setting of the novel is idyllic and peaceful Brooklyn home he lives with his wife Yadwiga. She is indirectly supporting the passionate affair of Herman with Masha who is another Holocaust survivor Masha. Herman is trapped in a taxing

situation with the sudden return of his former wife Tamara from the open grave during the Nazi mass murder and visits Herman who is passing from the crisis of his life. She was presumed to be dead for several years Tamara's unexpected visit shatters all the dreams and plans of Herman. Her return brings to life all the suppressed memories and emotions and conflicts of his past life. The novel *Enemies* is complex novel dealing with the love triangle of an-antihero Herman and his peculiar relationships and his involvement in the truncated emotional lives. The novel is a serious interpretation of the traumatic life of the Holocaust survivor immigrants. The Holocaust is a life-altering ordeal that marks his alienation from the world:

He had spent almost three years hiding in a hayloft. It was a gap in his life which could never be filled....In his thoughts, Herman had often likened himself to the Talmudic sage, Chon Hanagol, who according to legend slept for seventy years and when he awoke found the world so strange that he prayed for death. (Bashevis Singer, *Enemies: A Love Story* 28)

Judith Herman (1992) in her *Trauma and Recovery* intensively investigated the symptoms of trauma and conducted the clinical study. Herman argues "that disconnection and disempowerment are the core elements of traumatic experience" (Herman 133). Trauma is engulfed in the layers of wounds and pains and Herman leads a life of detachment, deceit and callousness. Herman creates a world of illusions and fantasy; he creates an artificial defensive wall to escape the world of misery, loss and exile. Being depressed Herman confesses: "When a man hides in an

attic for years, he ceases to be a part of society. The truth is that I'm still hiding in an attic right here in America" (101). Herman Broder is a ghostwriter for an American rabbi; he describes his ghastly existence to his wife Tamara: "When a man hides in an attic for years, he ceases to be a part of society. The truth is that I'm still hiding I an attic right here in America" (101). Herman was raised as a traditional religious Jew but the Holocaust events transformed him into a nihilist. In Poland, Herman would have enjoyed respect and honor but ironically in America he calls himself as "a fraud, a transgressor; a hypocrite too. The sermons he wrote for Rabbi Lampert were a disgrace and a mockery" (Singer 15). Marilyn Chandler describes Lampert as a "modern man of the world, and the one character in the novel who seems to have emerged from the war unscathed and to have adapted admirably to secularized postwar American life, had departed radically from the traditional role" (Chandler 140). Chandler further opines that "Herman sees the words he authors as mimicry, pretense and deception" (Chandler 141). Chandler believes that "Herman's writings therefore are both a betrayal of Jewish tradition and a betrayal of himself" (Chandler 141). Herman is the only child of his wealthy father in Tzivkey who educated his son: "He hired a rabbi to instruct his son in Jewishness and a Polish tutor to teach him secular subjects. Reb Shimuel Leib hoped his only son would become a modern rabbi" (Singer 29). Herman's mother wanted Herman to be a doctor but his interest was in philosophy. He joined the University of Warsaw and entered into the school of philosophy. He met Tamara in the university; he fell in love with her and married her against the wishes of her parents. She was a student of biology and active in the leftist movements raising the cries of the working people in her protest demonstrations. He impregnated her before marriage; she refused abortion and forced

her parents to marry her with Herman. His relationships after marriage with Tamara were not cordial as he was a neglectful, absentee father and wanted to divorce Tamara. Herman expresses his dissatisfaction thus: “Tamara talked incessantly of redemption of humanity, the plight of Jews, the role of woman in society” (63). Herman is an intellectual snob who takes pride in being an independent thinker. He rejects the radical views of Tamara as Singer points out: “She seemed to Herman to be the incarnation of the masse, always following some leader, hypnotized by slogans, never really having an opinion of her own” (64).

Singer’s novel *Shosha* is a pessimistic novel dealing with the hollowness of life; the fears and terrors that grip the psyche of the characters lost in the bog of sexuality and hedonism. Aaron reads scientific discoveries of Archimedes, Copernicus, Newton and the philosophy of Aristotle, Descartes and Leibnitz to justify his hedonistic pleasures of life. He is a cheap writer and can scarcely afford a cheap room but he feels jealous of Sam Dreiman who is the American millionaire. Aaron’s trouble and trauma begins with his developing relations with many women. He is lost in the world of luxury, he “orders a new suit, and is thrown into the lap of luxury” (50). Aaron hates the institution of marriage and avoids matrimonial relations though he is involved with many women. He preaches a dangerous philosophy of hedonism. He doesn’t marry anyone and doesn’t like to have children: “I don’t need children” (79). His hedonism springs from the realization that the world is preparing for another catastrophe. He wants to enjoy every moment of life: “Yes I had to find pleasure before I died and returned to nothing” (56). Aaron feels the approach of the holocaust; with the other Polish Jews and expresses his fears that the German has grown very powerful, fully mobilized and furnished with the latest

weapons but the Polish soldiers are no match with the Germans. They are destined to be murdered by the Germans. He dreams of “a band of wild people awaited below with clubs, spears, poles and axes” (53). In his acute depression he uses hedonism as a strategy to overcome his trauma. He is of the firm view that the Jews are helpless in the face of the holocaust. He develops relationship with Morris Feitelzohn who is a philosopher and a hedonist believing that success with women is a source of thrilling adventure. Feitelzohn feels insecure and unsettled and has divorced three wives in desperation and depression. He is in the habit of changing women frequently and continues his affairs with servant girls. He even plans to set up an institute for hedonism. He believes that the pursuit of pleasure is man’s only goal” (37). Aaron develops relationship with hedonist Haimi Chentshiner who has passion for art, opera and paintings. He loves to visit pastoral landscapes, woods and streams. He invites Aaron to dinner and encourages him to develop relations with his wife Celia:

What is there to be bashful, about? Haimi said: “We’re all created from the same protoplasm, we all, feel the same urges. “Don’t you find Celia, attractive? Both attractive and intelligent”

“So what’s the problem? You may kiss her. (27)

The third hedonist in touch with Aaron is Sara Dreiman who is an American millionaire who has migrated from Poland with his actress wife Betty Slonim. The main purpose of Dreiman is “to enjoy himself and to provide her with enjoyment” (32). He feels delighted when Aaron kisses his wife in his presence. He gives Aaron huge money as an advance to finish play for Betty. Aaron is surrounded by the hedonists for “whom pleasure is the only aim of their lives. Aaron finds himself

comfortable to cultivate the philosophy of hedonism. His involvement with women makes the hedonistic tendency of Aaron further distinct. He comes in contact with a woman V. Dora Stolnitz who is a communist insisting on his marrying her. But Aaron didn't want to marry her, yet was willing to let go" (28). She goes to Russia and joins the revolutionaries and suffers a lot. Celia is another woman who is hedonist and the wife of Haimi. She has developed relations with many men as she confesses and believes that "we must grab some pleasure before we vanish forever" (59). She realizes that the Jews of Poland have no future as they are caught between Hitler and Stalin; the catastrophe of the Jews is inescapable. Aaron's third woman is Betty who is interested in the Yiddish theatre of Poland. Her husband encourages her to develop intimacy with Aaron and gradually he is "drawn to Betty Slonim and together they visit the river Swiderek" (52). Her obsession is to "enjoy life" (67). Aaron seduces his servant Tekla who has "muscular legs and firm breasts." He bribes her and she succumbs to his passions "I kissed her long. She kissed back and her breasts pressed against me" (83). In one of his dreams he finds Celia and Betty matting with this "plural couple" (53). The journey of Aaron is to seek redemption through sin and sexuality. He thinks that life is uncertain and death is certain; he has seen the Holocaust and feels that he must enjoy life and hedonism is the only strategy to overcome trauma of life. He reads modern science but he does remember the pages of Gemara and chapters of Mishna. He contemplates on "God, providence, time, space and infinity" (9). In his early life he came to the conclusion that there are two Gods, a good one and a bad one.

However Aaron is not fully a hedonist he is conscious of the shortcomings of his habits from his very childhood. Sarah Blucher Cohen (1982) observes that “In *Shosha* Singer again creates many women, to charm his protagonist....They satisfy both Greidinger healthy appetite for sexual diversity and his unhealthy Don, Judaism preventing his attachment, to any women” (Cohen 178). He has ambiguous attitude towards God as he says: “I believe in God, but I don’t believe that He revealed Himself and told the rabbis all the little laws that they added through generations” (205). In *Shosha* Singer writes: “From the day they were exiled from their land, they had lived in anticipation of death or the coming of Messiah” (239). When death itself becomes the Messiah, they lost all hopes and faith in the future. All the characters in *Shosha* are waiting for their dawn of their doom being cut off from their roots and God. Caruth proves that trauma doesn’t lie in the first traumatic event but in the repetitive occurrence of identical upsetting events. The author records, “Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature ... the way it was precisely not known in the first instance ... returns to haunt the survivor later on” (4). Aaron repeats his actions and goes on changing women expressing his emptiness of life and lack of direction.

Singer’s novel *The Magician of Lublin* (1958) is a heartrending tale of a young man struggling to earn money risking his life on the road. Yasha Mazur is a victim of the Jewish Holocaust since he lost everything and became jobless. The economic worries grip his psyche and he forces him to go on the road and move from place to place to earn his livelihood. Yasha Mazur is an acrobat, magician, lock-

picker, psychic, womanizer, mystic and a philosopher. He belongs to Lublin and he struggles to carve a place of importance for himself in the world of entertainment. He even dreams of executing somersaults on the tightrope but in spite of his multiple achievements, Yasha is sick at heart haunted by the inner demons. Wylie Sypher in his famous *Loss of the Self in Modern Literature and Art* (1954) talks about the dark abyss that separates man's thinking from his feeling in the modern world. Loss of self is linked with the spiritual decadence of man. Yasha of Singer's, *The Magician of Lublin*, lives in two worlds. He is a great performer and a popular magician but in reality he is alone. He is not what he is; he has dual personality. He has a public face and is anxious and a fragmented self. Irving Malin in his book *Isaac Bashevis Singer* (1972) comments thus: "The magician is also caught by passion. Singer's *The Magician of Lublin* is full of the images of Holocaust and the exodus of the Jews of Warsaw depicting the mood of melancholy and psychic trauma" (Malin 52). Yasha is trapped in the new cultural transformation of Europe during the days of Hitler's Holocaust when Warsaw was burnt and genocide of the Jews took place. Yasha has severed his relations with the Jewish community of Lublin. He reveals his craze for money, power and fame. Singer gives total freedom to his protagonist and allows him to take free choices in his life. Singer excavates the interior world of Yasha. He was an exceptional character full of energy and vitality and the strong ambition to rise in the world:

He was a short man, broad-shouldered and lean-hipped he had unruly flaxen hair and watery blue eyes, thin lips, a narrow chin and a short Slavic nose. His right eye was somewhat larger than his left, and

because of this he always seemed to be blinking with insolent mockery. He was now forty but looked ten year younger....He could flex his body in any direction, it was said that he had malleable bones and fluid joints. (Singer 2)

Yasha has the weakness for women and he uses his sexual energy to escape the tensions and anxieties of life. He rejects the social and moral values as he shuns formal commitment. Marriage or any lasting relationship inhibits his freedom. Singer comments thus: "He could not be watched over like other husbands; he spent more time on the road than at home, met all sorts of women, wandered further than a gypsy. Yes he was as free as the wind..." (5). Singer is, as usual, describing the imprisonment of self-love which destroys marriage. The focus of Singer is not on the future of the Jewish community but on the issue of the economic worries of the hero Yasha Mazur. Singer gives him full liberty and allows him to use his skill and talent to overcome the economic crisis. In this novel, Singer takes up the issue of economic crisis confronted by Yasha Mazur after the Nazi Holocaust. For the first time Singer is concerned with the problems of the individual; his challenges; his ambitions; his sexual adventures and the failures to achieve economic security. Yasha is representative of the artist, but in symbolical level every person may be seen as a magician living life. He is multidimensional personality; religious, heretical, good and evil, false and sincere. Yasha is walking "the tightrope merely inches from disaster." Singer gives the image of a falling rope to describe the uncertainty of life and the existential challenges faced by modern Jew. Singer focuses on the psychic ailments of Yasha as the entire plot of the novel revolves around him. Esther could not understand the duality of life of Yasha. Singer describes the whole situation thus:

He was a maze of personalities; religious and heretical, good and evil, false and sincere. He could love many women at once. Here he was ready to renounce his religion, yet when he found a torn page from a holy book he always picked it up and put it to his lips. (Singer 372)

Yasha is alone on his tightrope, “merely inches from disaster” (351), he is in exile himself. His exile from himself and exile from his family is the root cause of his psychological depression and mental anguish. He is alive physically but mentally remains upset and restless; he is always finding a new way to escape the guilt and sins. In *The Magician Lublin*, the images of God and the magician are conflated so that the ontological search of Yasha for redemption leads him to awareness. He can perform “even finer tricks” (400). He is a debased form of the traditional magician. He is a cheap performer and not a prophet, entertaining people with his tricks rather than performing miracles. However, Esther thinks of him in the terms often reserved for God: “She had long since come to the conclusion that she would never be able to understand all his complexities. He possessed hidden powers...(324). But in reality there is darkness inside Yasha; he is lost in the world of trickery and romance; he uses the power of magic for his sexual pleasures and to save the people from perdition. Yasha is not satisfied with his life while he shows “a conflict between his libidinal wishes and the part of his personality we call his ego, which is the expression of his instinct of self-preservation and which also includes his ideals of his personality” (Freud 316).

Singer’s novel *Shosha* is another heartrending tale of pessimism and of economic worries. The plot reveals the hollowness of life; its fears and terrors that

grip the psyche of the characters lost in the bog of sexuality and hedonism. Aaron reads scientific discoveries of Archimedes, Copernicus and Newton to justify his hedonistic pleasures of life. He is a cheap writer and can scarcely afford a cheap room but he feels jealous of Sam Dreiman who is the American millionaire. He is jealous of Sam Dreiman who is a successful business man of America. Aaron's trouble and trauma begins with his developing relations with many women. He is lost in the world of luxury, he "orders a new suit, and is thrown into the lap of luxury" (50). Aaron hates the institution of marriage and avoids matrimonial relations though he is involved with many women. He preaches a dangerous philosophy of hedonism. He doesn't marry anyone and doesn't like to have children: "I don't need children" (79). His hedonism springs from the realization that the world is preparing for another catastrophe. He wants to enjoy every moment of life: "Yes I had to find pleasure before I died and returned to nothing" (56). Aaron feels the approach of the holocaust; with the other Polish Jews and expresses his fears that the German has grown very powerful, fully mobilized and furnished with the latest weapons but the Polish soldiers are no match with the Germans. They are destined to be murdered by the Germans. He dreams of "a band of wild people awaited below with clubs, spears, poles and axes" (53). In his acute depression he uses hedonism as a strategy to overcome his trauma. He is of the firm view that the Jews are helpless in the face of the holocaust. He develops relationship with Morris Feitelzohn who is a philosopher and a hedonist believing that success with women is a source of thrilling adventure. Feitelzohn feels insecure and unsettled and has divorced three wives in desperation and depression. He is in the habit of changing women frequently and continues his affairs with servant girls. He even plans to set up an institute for hedonism. He

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Betty who is interested in the Yiddish theatre of Poland. Her husband encourages her to develop intimacy with Aaron and gradually he is “drawn to Betty Slonim and together they visit the river Swiderek” (52). Her obsession is to “enjoy life” (67). Aaron seduces his servant Tekla who has “muscular legs and firm breasts.” He bribes her and she succumbs to his passions “I kissed her long. She kissed back and her breasts pressed against me” (83). In one of his dreams he finds Celia and Betty matting with this “plural couple” (53). The journey of Aaron is to seek redemption through sin and sexuality. He thinks that life is uncertain and death is certain; he has seen the Holocaust and feels that he must enjoy life and hedonism is the only strategy to overcome trauma of life. He reads modern science but he does remember the pages of Gemara and chapters of Mishnah. He contemplates on “God, providence, time, space and infinity” (9). In his early life he came to the conclusion that there are two Gods, a good one and a bad one.

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threat of death. He turns down the chance to escape for Shosha. He has met several women but the love for Shosha gives him new spirit. There is a moral conflict in his life because it is very difficult for him to choose Betty or Shosha; his childhood playmate. He meets Shosha after a long time and finds her in the same condition while walking in the Kochmanla Street: "Shosha looks almost exactly as she did twenty years ago, both physically and in her behavior. Aaron decides to marry Shosha as a part of the fulfillment of his childhood commitment to take her for a wife" (15). He frequents the house of Shosha and becomes the paying guest of her house and gets time to stay with her family at night. Bashele; the mother of Shosha is very kind to him and treats him as her son and her sister treats him like her brother. Aaron swears to Shosha: "Shoshale, I have sworn by God and by the soul of my father that I will never abandon you. its's about time that you must trust me" (117). In the meantime he also continues his sexual relations with Batty who is anxious to marry him and she uses all strategies to seduce him. Betty tells Aaron that she is an idiot. In order to turn his attention but you are in love with her. The moment you saw her, your eyes lit up in a strange way. I'm beginning to think you aren't in your right mind yourself" (78). The majority of the characters in the novel are sick physically and mentally. Betty tells that Shosha is sick both physically and mentally, warns him that a girl like Shosha is not capable of living with a man and producing children. Betty warns him not to be in the trap of Shosha otherwise he will be ruined. She invites Aaron on dinner and tries to comfort him. She tempts him to marry her as there is no future in Poland and he can join her and both would migrate to America. Her husband also tells Aaron that in Poland there are no book publishers "the Yiddish newspapers are in trouble, the Jews are under threat of Nazi invasion. He

suggests the Yiddish newspaper is outdated and the Jews are under the threat of the Nazis. Betty invites him to Gertner's restaurant and expresses her regret that the play was flopped because of her own carelessness. She tempts him to marry her and they will be able to stay in America. He shouldn't go back to Poland where his life is under threat of the Nazis. Sam Dreiman offers him many allurements; he commits to become an agent if he writes a book and he can bring Shosha also in America. She can get her treatment there. He has to agree to allow him to be the friend of Betty. He also makes it clear that after marriage with Betty he can keep sexual relations with Shosha. Betty also gives her consent and this proposal of Sam Dreiman creates moral conflict in the mind of Aaron. Aaron has decided to marry a girl who is like his own mother: "a decent chaste Jewish daughter" (142). He has been feeling pity for men with unchaste wives who are never sure that their children are their own. He has investigated the ugly past of Betty who told her adventures in Russia and America. She had illicit relations with a Red Army man; she developed sexual relations with a sailor and the director of a travelling actor's troupe. She has sold herself to Sam Dreiman and calls "him her lover" (146). Aaron broods over his future and concludes that he would sink deeper if he married Betty. He listens to the inner voice of his father and seeks guidance for the future course of action. He sees the dead face of his father who warns him: "Don't shame me, your mother, and your holy ancestors: All your deeds are noted in heaven" (146). His father abuses him as "Heathen: Betrayed of Israel: he complains that Betty is a cursed thing" (146).

Aaron is bewildered by the sudden appearance of his father from the grave to guide him. He understands the significance of his revelations which has come to him at the height of his distress and wounded mood. He cries out in desperation: Father,

save me” (146). He contemplates over the advantages of marrying Betty seriously under the stress of trauma. If he rejects Betty it would mean to stay in Poland and being killed by the Nazis. Marriage with Betty will give him an opportunity to migrate to America and save himself. He is sure to get the visa as he says: “It’s visa not the money. I justified myself-the fear of falling into the hands of the Nazis” (149). In the saloon, a barber gives an information that Hitler would smoke out the Jews “like bed bugs” (150). Aaron thinks “No, I wouldn’t stay in Poland, I’d leave, at any price” (152). Aaron is a wounded self as he is unable to take a wise and rational decision. He fails to stick to keep his promise and is drawn to Shosha for her virtues. In her “he finds the reflection of his own childhood” (87). Aaron feared that Betty was right as he notes that he is not “elated, as those in love usually are” (180). And on his wedding night he observes the childish behavior of Shosha and he observes that “the tremendous urge for Shosha that had seized him on the train had dissipated” (228). He fears impotence but the marriage is eventually consummated:

I felt asleep and dreamed. Someone shrieked wildly. Animals with long treats dragged me, tore chunks from me with fang and claw. I was wandering through a cellar that was also a slaughterhouse and a cemetery strewn with unburied corpses. I awoke excites. I grabbed Shosha, and before she could even wake up. I mounted her. She choked and resisted. A stream of hot blood burned my thigh. I tried to pacify her but she broke out in a wall. (228)

Shosha has retained her beauty and simplicity and innocence and in a way has denied death. She has even preserved her old text books with familiar pictures; her old play things...the poems and notes in which Aaron has started his career as a writer. She is

“devoid of seriousness with other women. She dismissed it as of no importance” (95). Aaron is fascinated by the simplicity and innocence of Shosha. She shouts at her mother giving the real information: “Mommy, Aaron is going to marry me after Succoth” (154). P Gray observes that Shosha is a simple girl. Aaron has “the conviction that Shosha is the only woman in the world who would never betray him” (81).

Singer’s novel *Satan in Goray* is a significant novel of Singer as it poses a rare problem of language. Singer imitates Samuel Beckett who wrote in English and French language. The plot of the novel is loaded with the unconventional words and phrases deviating from the tradition. Singer articulates the psychological tensions of the characters trapped in the abyss of darkness. The plot of the novel functions within a distinct ethnos and ethos. Singer uses the elements of folk culture of the Jews. The critics of Singer such as Irving Buchen, Charles Isenberg and Grace Farrell Lee explore the economic bankruptcy of the characters of the novel. The setting of the novel is the post-Khmelnitsky era. The title of the novel is the invasion of one world upon another as Singer gives a blend of the fantastic and the historical. The world view depicted in the novel is a world totally inverted and fragmented. Singer depicts how order passes into disorder and finally evil. Singer fuses content with the intent crafting a wonderful parable of the trauma of characters. Eleazar Baddad’s name is Biblical hinting him as a pious believer but in the text of Singer, he abandons his daughter who is later on forced to accept Isaac as her husband. The main interest in the novel is the character of Rechele who is the daughter of Baddad born in 1648. She represents the orphaned voice of a lost generation. The main interest in the novel

is the character of Rechele depicted as a sacrificial animal to be slaughtered. Her fallen caste reflects the anomie of the community. Her father was once a rich person but now is reduced to the status of a peddler after the Jewish catastrophe. Irving Malin points that Singer has depicted the strange description in the beginning of the novel:

The details are historically accurate, but they seem somehow to the mythic Goray is at the end of the world....The details of the Chmielnicki massacre are so vivid that they create an hallucinatory light. How could such massacres really happen?By forcing us to yield to nightmare, the assumptions about reason, motivation, and reality itself. (Malin 43)

In the exile of several hundred years, the Jews had experienced various trials and tribulations. They were subjected to discrimination and oppression as Michael Fixler comments: "*Satan in Goray* deals with the period of history bounded at either end by the great massacres that mark off from its first glimmerings to its collapse the 300 years of the Jewish adventures with Enlightenment" (Fixler 26). A Talmud scholar Sabbatai Zevi used this opportunity and proclaimed himself as the Messiah for the Jews. The Jewish community accepted him as they had no choice in the period of moral and spiritual crisis. His movement spread like a wild fire and most of the Jewish settlements came under the influence of Sabbatai Zevi. He called upon the Jews to break the Holy commandments and the theory of redemption became very popular. The Jews had sunk into the lowest level. Scholem Gershom in his book *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* observes thus: "The time of appearance of the Messiah

will be a period of transition in Jewish life. The Messiah is supposed to be born out of destruction which is viewed as the birth pangs of the Messiah” (Gershom 8). The novel portrays the asceticism of Itche Mattes and the hedonism of Gedalya Shoykhet. The true identity of Zevi is revealed when he is arrested by the Sultan and is unmasked. He is given the choice between death and conversion to Islam. He is portrayed as an ordinary mortal and not a savior of the Jews. His apostasy discourages the followers and leads to the wave of reprisals in its wake. In the town of Goray his followers are punished and persecuted for misleading the poor and innocent people. The people of Goray are reduced to poverty and humiliation. Singer has taken special pains to dramatize the forces of chaos and disorder engulfing the poor masses of Goray. The process of rehabilitation begins in Goray and survivors return in small groups to start their life again from the scratch. They have changed a lot as they feel disgusted to observe the scenes of death, destruction and annihilation. The Jews repair their houses, open their shops and begin business as the normalcy returns in Goray. Rabbi Benish Ashkenazi is the last Jew to return. Reb Eleazar was the richest man of Goray once and the leader of the Jewish community. Both have lost the families and had suffered excruciating psychological anguish. Rabi Benish takes up the moral responsibility to assume his original duties to rebuild Goray. Babad lost his money, family, health and everything. It is rumored that he has lost his balance of mind and had become a neurotic man. The novel moves around Rechele; a seventeen years young girl having strange nature. She is an eccentric and loves to live alone. She is good looking but is deformed physically. She is indifferent to her good friends and in her sullen mood humiliates even to his visitors. She is sexual, loves sexual liberty and is a center of attraction: “Rechele who was seventeen years

old, had a lame left foot and seldom showed herself outside, preferring to remain hidden in her room. She was tall, with a greenish complexion, but handsome, with long hair that hung down to her waist” (16). Singer takes special pains to portray the abnormal state of Rechele; her strangeness and melancholy. She is presented as haughty and apathetic as she stays most of the time in her room cut off from the Jewish community in frustration. She spends her time in reading books that she brought from the city. She is well versed in Hebrew and Latin. She appears depressed and arrogant because of her psychological pain. She pays scant attention to her neighbors and feels upset when someone visits her. The young women come to play with her; to show her their jewels but she shows her indifference and remains lonely and depressed. There was a time when her father was the richest man of Goray and this consciousness is the main cause of her depression and alienation. Her father is also indifferent; he gives no answer to the Jews when the marriage proposal of Rechele is brought up. Reb Eleazar Babad never gives a satisfactory reply to them. This deters them from making further efforts. Rechele is forced to sit alone at home, idle and depressed. She is physically and mentally sick; she neither eats nor sleeps and suffers from other psychological ailments. She was left at the age of five in the care of an uncle, Reb Zeydel after the death of her mother. He is a slaughterer by profession and his ugly and terrifying appearance gives horrifying shock to Rechele. The childhood memories of dying animals; of blood and mute suffering is shocking to Rechele. His uncle’s house was kept by his mother who looked like a witch. The environment of her childhood was quite disturbing and nightmarish. Reb Zeydel mother used each method to control Rechele: “She is deaf and irritable, and has little patience to cope with the child’s boisterousness. So she tries to keep Rechele under

control by telling her horrifying tales of ghosts, demons and imps, forever lurking around, ready to grab naughty little children and carry them off” (46). She lives in this atmosphere of decay and horror and becomes irritable and aggressive. Singer describes her disturbed and chaotic mental state thus:

Rechele would hide under the bed when the chimney sweep came, burying herself under a pile of clothing. She feared the broom he pulled out of an iron bucket, was terrified of the heavy smoke-covered ropes he uncoiled, would pale when she heard the stranger stumble over the oven....The slaughterer would come into the room, a knife in a corner of his mouth. His blood-stiff coat covered with feathers would creak as he bent to go through the low door. (47)

Singer has depicted the lonely and traumatic existence of Rechele who is all the time is haunted by the gruesome memories of her childhood. She was brought up on stories of wild beasts and goblins, robbers and witches and men eaters. The images of the knife, flesh, blood and monsters create gruesome atmosphere in the novel highlighting the traumatic experiences of the characters of the novel.

Singer's *The Manor* is another important novel depicting the psychological expressions of the characters that are under severe economic crisis. Singer has portrayed the stressful existence of Calman and his wife Clara. Irving Malin has also discussed the psychological anguish of Clara: “She is truly a wrapped creature. Singer doesn't know what to do with her. He condemns her quest for sexual freedom, but he also admires her independence and shrewdness” (Malin 28). Singer in his interview with Paul Rosenblatt and Gene Koppel (1971) observed that Clara “is a

modern woman; the rare combination of sexual liberty and modernism” (34). Clara is the nucleus of the novel as the psychological anguish of the characters is depicted through her character. She marries Calman and takes over his business. Singer has developed the relations between Clara and Calman describing the tensions and the anxieties of their married life. As Calman falls asleep, Singer writes:

The clock seems to her to be ticking at a feverish pace. Her pulse was beating just as quickly. She couldn't stop planning, waiting, and hoping. It was as if her blood were boiling within her. What's happening to me? Why am I so driven? And what am I so afraid of? She asked herself. She knew the answer; obstacles always littered the path to her happiness. (266)

Clara knows that she is very cunning; the clicking of the clock symbolizes her uncertain behavior and ruling passions. She becomes a sensual creature enjoying the pleasures of the world to escape from the tensions and trauma of life. Singer gives an insight to her heart thus:

This was not a woman but a devil. In the Righteous Measure, Calman had once read of demons who disguised themselves as human females, lived with men, and even married them. Could Clara be one of these creatures of the netherworld? (94). Singer has depicted Clara as a demon using the allegorical allusions from the Bible projecting her as temptress. She tries to seduce Zipkin but when she fails in her venture, she returns to Warsaw. When she returns to her apartment she finds it is full of dust. Singer reports thus:

Before going away Clara had left everything in order, but in her last minute hurry she had dropped some orange peel in a basket in the kitchen. She now recognized the peelings, which had become blackened and shriveled as if petrified. Clara began to laugh and cry at the same time. She had crossed oceans, been happy and had suffered, and here lay the orange peelings from a piece of fruit she had eaten just before leaving. (276)

Singer gives the imagery of “peeling” to describe the sufferings of Clara. She had been leading a broken and distracted life like the broken and shriveled orange peelings. At the end of the novel, Clara dies in frustration as she fails to overcome the burden of the psychological pressures. She suffers massive heart attack and dies. Singer describes the scene of her final death in symbolical language thus:

A Clara lies dying of a heart attack, she spies half an orange on the chair. It lightened in the afternoon sun, red as wine, and the seeds and veins could be seen exactly as in her vision...the vision of her death that she had received many years before”. (279)

Singer uses figurative language and particularly the imagery of orange peeling is very effective. Singer suggests here the eternal quality of life in that after death one is reborn into another dimension. The dried peeling foreshadows Clara’s end of poignant life and her struggle for survival. He struggles to achieve material prosperity for his family but he fails even to educate his children as Jews. He remains

an idealist and translates his dream of freedom from the strictures of Jewish God into the nightmare of enslavement of false idols:

What else should he have expected? His daughter barely knew the Hebrew alphabet. He had taught her everything except Judaism. He himself had shown her how to escape one's heritage. (231)

Ezriel is always burdened with the loss of material amenities because he lost his business, home and family in the Holocaust. His idealism collapses and in desperation he even loses his rational thinking. Ben Siegel emphasizes:

In his career as neurologist and psychiatrist Ezriel may Resemble Freud, whose theories Singer reflexively distrusts.

Like those who worship Mammon or Marx, Freudians are cosmopolitan in their assumptions about universal human drives. It is this cosmopolitanism that breaks down the distinctions between Jew and Gentile, that denies the uniqueness of the Jewish experience, and that inevitably betrays Singer's emancipated Jews" (Singer 82).

This chapter explores the social and economic implications of the Holocaust events and their impact on the life and sensibility of the Jewish characters of Bashvis Singer. The characters of Singer think of life and death; of their families killed by the Nazis. The scenes of the brutal atrocities of the Nazis give them trauma and eventually they turn neurotics. For example, Herman knows that he is trapped in a hellish situation; he tries to adjust with new surroundings but all forces are against him. He struggles to survive and learns the art of survival in the alien land. His

wounded heart cries as he thinks of the sufferings of the innocent Jewish community. The Holocaust environment made Yasha and Herman nihilistic and pessimistic as they lost faith in God and in Jewish religion. They revolted against the norm and rituals of the Hebrew and resorted to sexual and hedonistic pleasures to escape from the terrifying memories of death and destruction. Herman got great inspiration from Dante's *Inferno* to confront the evil forces. He recollected the ideas and thoughts of Dante who explored the nature of Hell in Dante's *Inferno*. He found that he is at bottom and is experiencing the real nature of Hell. He visualized the transcendental vision of evil. Sigmund Freud's famous book *The Ego and the Id* is a prominent research paper giving an analytical study of the human psyche outlining his views on the Id, ego, and super ego. Freud discusses in detail the development of the stages of disintegration of the survivors of the Holocaust. Freud's theory can act as an effective tool of research. William James *Principles of Psychology* is a monumental text in the history of psychology. James uses four methods to explore an individual, analysis, introspection, study of brain and experimentation. He discusses illusions giving physiological explanation of the mind he observes". "Illusions are thus a special case of the phenomenon of habit". (James 13) This is an important source to investigate the state of mind of the characters of Singer. Erik Erikson's theory of psychological development, Stryker and his *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version* (1980), and Goffman in his *Human Behavior and Social Processes* (1963) made observations on the abnormal human behavior. Singer has made remarkable efforts to dig out the inner landscape to investigate the wounded psyche of his Jewish and their traumatic journey of life. All the symptoms of the depression and schizophrenia are found in the characters of Singer who suffer from

the psychological ailments. Displacement, ruin of business, forced migration made them sick and despondent. They feel lonely, depressed, and rebellious as they do not find any hope in their life. Future is dismal for them and the environment is stifling in the alien countries. They are always haunted by the memories of their families and native places. Herman, Jacob, Aaron, Yasha feel guilty. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) looked at guilt and shame as products of intra psychic conflicts or more precisely as a weapon used by the superego to influence decisions made by the ego. Freud observes thus in his book *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*: "...moral sense of guilt is the expression of the tension between the ego and the superego" (76). He insisted that the superego created guilt without any consideration to the outside world. There are some traces of interpersonal relations in Freud. He writes in *Civilization and its Discontent* that the superego is a adaptation of the human organism with the civilised world, which can be understood as living together with other people. Helen Block Lewis (1987) contended in her book *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis* (1971) that interpersonal factors are irrelevant for shame and guilt. She writes that "guilt is evoked only from within the self; it is thus a personal reaction to an "objective act of transgression" (Lewis 84). Guilt is not even come from a possible contact with another person. She therefore denies in her analysis any significant role of interpersonal processes. Singer depicted the psychological outbursts of his Jewish characters in his fiction in his natural and lyrical style.

To conclude, the third objective of the research project is to "analyze select texts of Isaac Bashevis Singer with reference to psychoanalysis" and in this chapter all the major texts taken are analyzed from the psychoanalytical perspective. Singer's

novels *Enemies: A Love Story* and *Shosha*. *The Magician of Lublin*, *Shosha*, *The Family Moskat*, and *The Manor* depict the traumatic characters who live under constant menace of the Nazis. A large number of the Jews migrate to America to escape the killings of Hitler. The Jews like Herman and Aaron lose their identity; they struggle to escape and alienate from society and Judaism. They indulge into sexual adventures to overcome the trauma; they are convinced that the Jews in Poland are not safe. Herman and Aaron are sick characters; Herman disappears at the end of the novel and Aaron turns hedonistic to forget the traumatic experiences of the Holocaust.

Chapter 5

Comparative Analysis of the Selected Novels of Bashevis Singer

Bashevis Singer was the victim of Jewish Holocaust and in all his novels he depicts the malaise of the contemporary age. His novels portray the conflict between faith and doubt, hunger of the body and the quest for spiritual meaning of life. He gives an insight into the inner turbulent world of the characters trapped in the abyss of darkness. Singer created a galaxy of characters such as Herman, Jacob, Masha, Tamara, Yadwiga and Yasha who experienced the psychological ailments such as anxiety disorder, alienation, depression, neurosis and loss of self. Most of his characters resort to hedonistic pleasures to escape from the burden of guilt. Each novel of Singer is a heart-rending tale of the struggles of the Jewish protagonists who are the victims of external and internal forces of chaos and disorder. There is a pervasive tone of protest and pessimism in each novel dramatized from different angles. In his *Love and Exile* Singer expresses his views about the legitimacy of the protest;

Man had every right to protest against the violent acts of life. Man wasn't obliged to thank God for all the plagues and catastrophes that assailed him... This ethic of protest, I told myself, existed in all people, in all animals, and in everything that lived and suffered.
(Singer 44)

Elie Wiesel had lost his faith in God when he saw the inhuman cruelties of the Nazis in the concentration camp of Auschwitz. The indifference of God in face of starvation, persecution utterly shocked Singer. He fearlessly expresses the loss of faith in God thus in his *Love and Exile*:

I believe in God, I fear Him. Yet I cannot love Him - not with my whole heart and soul as the Torah commands nor with the amour dei intellectuals that Spinoza demands. Nor can I deny God as the materialists do. (45)

The conspicuous characteristic of Singer's novels is the ethics of protest and the situation of exile. Being haunted by the memories of physical and psychological oppression the characters of Singer are in exile. They live in a world of illusion and fantasy as the real life is always tormenting them. Singer's family saga, *The Family Moskat* together with *The Manor* and the sequel *The Estate* form a trilogy narrating the tale of the disintegration of Polish Jewry. The disintegration is caused by the displacement and rootlessness of the Jews who are forced to move from place to place to survive. *The Family Moskat* was written in both Yiddish and English and in Hebrew and the publication of the novel provided Singer a break through. He became an international celebrity and was recognized as an important novelist in the domain of fiction. In this chapter a comparative analysis is conducted analyzing all the major texts of Bashevis Singer from the perspective of psychoanalysis. Singer has cosmic vision as he uses multiple layers to depict the viewpoints that create turmoil in the minds of the protagonists. Singer is a postmodern novelist as he follows the ideas of Frederic Jameson and Linda Hutcheon presenting each novel as historiographic metafiction. The events of history are used to depict the contemporary malaise of the

Jews who survived the Jewish Holocaust. Murray Baumgarten in "*The Historical Novel: Some Postulates*", describes the significance of historical events:

If history- is now concerned of as a culture of a particular time and place as it manifests itself in the texture and life of an entire people then the writer tests the ideals of institutions and cultures by the realities of historical events and crises through the medium of imagined representative characters in typical conflict. (177)

Singer's first novel *The Family Moskat* reflects a process of disintegration of the family culture of the Jews who uses their personal will and liberty in their struggle to survive in the post-holocaust era. The plot is set in Poland of the early twentieth century as the historical events of Hitler's entry into Warsaw. The Jews are presented as emancipated individuals pursuing their separate destinies. The novel is epic in dimension and cosmic in themes of disintegration; disunity and the collapse of family culture. The plot unfolds the struggle of five generations of people integrated and united by a common destiny. The scenes of violence, death and destruction haunt all the protagonists of the novel. The pattern of events of the novel is woven with the thread of paradox of modern Jewish history providing Singer the vision of the phantasmagoria that was Jewish life in Poland. The conspicuous feature of the novel is its multiple vision. Singer weaves two stories in this epic novel. One is about the life of the Jews ruled by sexual passion or religion. The Jewish characters are thrown into the storm-center of modern history by anti-Semitism and two world wars. This contradictory approach to life is found in Hadassah Moskat who is a dominating patriarch of the family having many grandchildren.

Main Features of the novel *The Family Moskat*

- 1) Singer's novel *The Family Moskat* is entirely different from his other novels. His writing career begins from this novel. Singer was extremely upset as he suffered from the psychological trauma being the victim of Jewish Holocaust. He moved from place to place and ultimately he migrated to America where he started writing to overcome the anxieties and tensions of his life like Vladimir Nabokov. His *The Family Moskat* is his quest for the safety valve to get release from the trauma of life.
- 2) In *The Family Moskat* Singer presents a panoramic view of Polish-Jewish society against the backdrop of the impending holocaust. Like Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, there are many characters belonging to different categories ranging from millionaire to yeshiva student. There are characters belonging to royal class and there are revolutionary. Once Dryden remarked about Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* that "By Heaven here is God's plenty". The same can be said about Singer's *The Family Moskat*. From rabbi to profligate, or professor to peddler, are seen interacting with one another.
- 3) Singer has given two sets of values; the traditional Jewish values and the modern European values and their impact on the Contemporary Polish society. Singer devoted his life to understand the issues afflicting the Jews and came to the conclusion that the Jews are suffering from the tensions and anxieties because of their loss of connection from the Jewish religion and culture. This disconnection is one of the major causes of their loss of self.

- 4) Singer's *The Family Moskat* is a family chronicle recording the fortune of the Moskat family over three generations. The plot focuses on the character and views of Hadassah Moskat who is attracted towards Christianity. She is disgusted with the traditional and orthodox life of the Jews and envies the Christian girls who enter convent: If she was opposed to apostasy, it was for one reason only: it was the Jews who were persecuted, not the Christians. If what the Evangelist said was true, that the meek would inherit the earth, then the Jews were the real Christians" (Bashevis Singer, *The Family Moskat* 420). Masha, her cousin does embrace Christianity to marry the Polish painter Yanek. Singer digs the roots of Jewish history in this novel and presents Asa Heshel Bannet belonging to the age of King David. He goes to Warsaw to follow Spinoza seeking enlightenment and happiness through secular learning. He discards his Chassidic garments and his friends hail him this: "You look like goy". (144)

Jewish Identity

In the *The Family Moskat*, Singer explores the issue of Jewish identity after the Jewish Holocaust. The Jews were hated and despised by the Europeans; the Christians were prejudiced about them and formed the Shylock bias for the Jews. They wouldn't mix with them and seldom developed social relations with the Jews. Singer explored the problem of the Jewish identity in this novel. When Asa Heshel Bannet enters a restaurant, the owner tells him to "go back to Palestine" (147). Again when Adele Landau comes to Warsaw, she justifies Polish anti-Semitism by saying that these backward "Asiatic Jews have brought China into Poland. She realizes the

problem of the Jewish identity. This consciousness is one of the major factors leading the Jews into psychological depression.

The Depiction of Truncated Jewish Culture

In the novel *The Family Moskat*, Singer has charted out the diagrams of the family trees of the Moskat family in the depressing tone. He points out that the branches of the Moskat tree are falling out and the leaves are withering because of the selfish and greedy approach of the members of the Moskat family. Asa Heshel's uncle Reb Dan "had a genealogical chart of his own, inscribed on parchment with gold ink in the form of a many branched linden tree. The root was King David, and the branches bore the names of other illustrious forebears" (25). When Asa returns with his wife, Adele in the village of Tereshpol Minor, he looks at the torn tree symbolical of the uprooted Jewish culture:

It was lined with great trees, chestnut and oak. Some of them had huge gashes torn in their sides by bolts of lightning. The holes looked dark and mysterious, like the caves of robbers. Some of the older trees inclined their tops down toward the ground, as though they were ready to tumble over, tearing up with them the tangled thickness of their centuries-old roots. (240)

Singer has depicted the torn and battered nature of the Jewish community in the simple and lyrical style. Singer has taken a serious view of the culture of the Jew which is disintegrating as Singer himself says: "Willingly or unwillingly we have enacted here the struggle between two generations-the old and the new-religious Judaism and the secular" (234). Singer has highlighted the historical facts of the

juxtaposition of the old and the new marking the death of the Jewish culture. The plot focuses on the transition of the East European Jew from the Chassidic way of life to an imitation of modern secularism and scientific skepticism. Irvin Malin (1972) in his book *Isaac Bashevis Singer* observes thus:

In *The Family Moskat* old values and rituals-incarnated in Hasidic joy-give way to secular movements of Zionism, socialism or Enlightenment. The conflicts between traditional and modern Jews are viewed largely as generational disputes.... Singer begins with marriage, unity, 'togetherness ...and then gradually alerts us to separation and fragmentation. (Malin 12)

Status of Jewish Women

In Singer's *The Family Moskat* the identity of Jewish women is clearly discussed. They are rebellious as they revolt against the traditional Jewish rituals and express their freedom to enjoy sexual pleasures. They envy Christian women and discard the traditional Jewish morality. They rarely follow the code of conduct laid down for them in the holy books and become defiant.. Masha is an important woman character in the novel who abandons her religion. But in her quest for the sexual pleasures, she loses her identity and suffers as it is difficult for her to embrace the new order totally. Hadassah is first introduced into the novel when her uncle Abram Shapiro talks of her as a great beauty.

And his daughter, Hadassah-she's a beauty. One look at her and you're finished. Believe me, if I wasn't her uncle, I'd go after her myself. Besides, may be she'll be able to give you some tutoring. (46)

Hadassah evokes criticism as she is condemned by the traditional Jews for her indulgence. Rosa Frumetl openly admires her beauty. Asa comes under the spell of Hadassah as he watches the use of winter clothes out of season.

.... although the day was not too colct, she had heavy socks over her stockings. She reminded Asa Heshel of the aristocratic young ladies in the romantic novels he had read. Her light blue eyes had an embarrassed expression as though she were not in her own home but entering some strange house. (54)

Sin of Moral Transgression of Hadassah

Adele warns that she is marrying a man who doesn't love her. She willingly falls in the tragic trap and consents to an arranged marriage inviting anguish acting in an abnormal manner. Irving Howe observes that Bashevis Singer depicts the tragic fate of his Jewish characters who look lost and bewildered because of the basic conflict between the personal liberty and destiny. They feel guilty in renouncing their Hasidic identity and guile according to Freud the main source of depression. Freud gives his theory of guilt in the final section of *Civilization and Discontents* stating that "the sense of guilt is the most important problem in the development of civilization; the price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt" (Freud 134). The decline of the Moskat begins when Meshulam marries for the third time impacting the lives of other members of the tribe. Singer introduces Hadassah thus: "Hadassah appeared to be about eighteen, tall and slender, with blond hair coiled in braids. Her face was pale, her nose slightly

snub, the throat long, the forehead high and with a blush tint at the temples” (53). Asa is a romantic, forever looking for new adventures. Ben Siegel comments on Asa's impossible dreams, his disbelief in God or man, and his flair for failure and running away :

His talent for failure is matched only by his knack for survival. Asa survives war, prison, hunger, typhoid, and pogroms. But in a final act compounded equally of inertia, courage, and surrender, he rejects escape from Warsaw and rejoins family and friends to await the Nazis. In thus accepting death he again overcomes it. (13)

On Asa's part, his association with Hadassah marks a further step on the road to sophistication : "Her had thrown off his provincial garments : he had been with Hadassah. His life was beginning" (172). Hadassah is confused in her mind regarding even common things. She imagines mountains with golden tops and for her” (102). Asa Heshel and Abram Sapiro appear merging into each other. Even while she is drawn strongly towards Asa, she minds his being so young. She had always hoped that her “knight on a white horse would be at least ten years older than her. She has her premonitions too. In spite of her quest for adventure and the spirit of defiance she displays, the feeling of doom pervades her actions:

For myself I have no fear at all, though sometimes I am sure that I am making a mistake and that everything will end in disaster. Something inside me - a spirit or another self-wants to lead me to perdition. I remember that other self from my childhood. (137)

Asa Heshel is an enigmatic personality who is always uncertain and unpredictable and this is a major tragic flaw in his personality this is why he suffers deflation of self and neurotic disorder: “He began courses of study but never completed them. He was reading without system, browsing here and there. The eternal questions never gave him rest...” (33). Neither advice nor criticism can put an end to her love for Asa Heshel. Her restlessness is echoed by Asa who, in spite of his marriage to Adele, is unable to settle down. He drifts about without any sense of purpose in life. Like Hadassah, he shies away from all responsibility, hiding from his own family, and even denying. Hadassah didn’t like to marry Fischel as she was burning in the romantic fire ignited by Asa Heschel. She was having sleepless nights and looked pale and sullen. Singer describes the inner turbulent world of Hadassah thus:

On a chair lay her dress, her petticoat, and her jacket. Her shoes stood on top of the table-although she did not remember having put them there. Her stockings lay on the floor. She put both hands up to her head. Had it really happened? Could it be that she had fallen in love?
(113)

They decided at last to run away to escape the wrath and harsh criticism of the orthodox Jews and stifling environment. Hadassah too had been an encapsulated self-longing for liberation. Hadassah’s disappearance created a sensation in the Jews; the whole town talked about their adulterous elopement; the father of Hadassah was shocked to know that his only” child had run off” (217). He cursed his wife in the most virulent and abusive language and called her “a curse- a plague” in desperation. Shafira also condemned the rebellious step of Hadassah. They wanted to stay in

Switzerland but they were intercepted by the police at the border with Austria. Hadassah is arrested and her romantic adventure turns tragic misadventure. The psychic disintegration of Hadassah begins with her unfortunate art by soldiers” “Her dreams had a nightmarish quality. She imagined herself flying like a bat and then falling precipitately through space like a stone” (227). All her dreams are shattered and she is lost in the abyss of guilt and darkness. She had a painful experience and the traumatic experiences made her sick and a psychological wreck. She lost everything her name and lover and her parents.

To conclude, Singer’s novel *The Family Moskat* is a realistic chronicle of the life and culture of the Jews. Singer has depicted the forces of change and transformation in the Jewish culture in the post Holocaust period. Singer portrays all the oddities and whims of his Jewish characters who become depressed and neurotic because of their ignoble deeds and become the cause of disintegration of their family.

Singer wrote *The Magician of Lublin* presenting his typical Jewish hero Yasha Mazur and his profligacy and sexual adventures. The novel is remarkable for its study of the Jewish pervert hero revolting against the traditional religion of Kabala and Talmud. The novel differs from other novels of Singer because of the autobiographical elements. Singer was a wounded self when he arrived in America bearing the burden of many tragedies. He managed to escape ghettoization and deportation to the concentration camps by leaving Poland for America in 1937. Singer’s works center on the themes of the eternal struggles of the Jews; their dilemmas and their confrontation with the tensions and anxieties of life. The characters of Singer are the victims of psychological pressures as they are too fragile

to cope with the new culture of America. They have to survive in a harsh and oppressive world governed by the rule of chaos and disorder. He is a heretic and is cut off from the roots of the Jewish tradition of nobility and this is the main cause of his mental disorder. He is false and leads an artificial life indulging in the tricks of his magical games. Singer gives him freedom to make conscious decisions that determine the progress of life. In his journey of life he is battered and suffers the psychological anguish leading an alienated life; changing women in the mad pursuit of sexual pleasures. The main cause of the psychological ailments of Yasha is his involvement in the constant battle with life and the conflict between his fantasy and reality. He fails to conquer the evil drive. He finishes an issue and the other begins draining him away from the inner energies. In his early childhood Yasha was reared in a pious atmosphere as his mother and father were religious people. He studies Talmud but as he grew he discarded religion and joined the circus after his parents died. He has a home in Lublin with his wife Esther but he goes from place to place to show his tricks to make money. He has become famous as a "circus performer and hypnotist." Like a true magician he is not a stable personality, he assumes various guises; has a different mistress in each city. His libertine nature, sexual exuberance becomes the chief causes of his degradation and depravity. The relationship with a middle class Gentile Emilia brings anguish and depression in Yasha's life. He wants her to be his mistress but Emilia wants him to marry her divorcing his wife. It is a challenging job for Yasha; he has to divorce his wife and embrace Christianity to live with Emilia. Yasha's sufferings begin as he remains restless and is in the grip of anxieties and tensions of life. He falls and gets injured as he cannot concentrate on his tricks. He has no communion with God because he thinks that the gifts of God are

“plagues, famines, poverty, and pogroms.” He is faced with the dilemma of choosing “between his religion and the cross, between Esther and Emilia, between honesty and crime.” These choices will “seal his destiny.”

Yasha Mazur who leads a life of sexual adventures “walking the tightrope merely inches from disaster” He is a heretic and is cut off from the roots of the Jewish tradition of nobility and this is the main cause of his mental disorder. He is false and leads an artificial life indulging in the tricks of his magical games. Singer gives him freedom to make conscious decisions that determine the progress of life. In his journey of life he is battered and suffers the psychological anguish leading an alienated life; changing women in the mad pursuit of sexual pleasures. The main cause of the psychological ailments of Yasha is his involvement in the constant battle with life and the conflict between his fantasy and reality.

Sin and Redemption : Case Study of Yasha Mazur

Singer’s novel *The Magician of Lublin* is unique as it documents the loss of faith of the Jews who were the victims of the Jewish Holocaust. The plot of the novel is unique as it is a case study of a Jew who severs relations with religion and God and uses his liberty to enjoy the hedonistic pleasures of life. He is a sexual pervert; he is a street man throwing all the moral scruples in the air. Yasha Mazur is an acrobat, magician, lock-picker, psychic, womanizer, mystic and a philosopher. Hailing from Lublin, Yasha manages to carve a place of importance for himself in the world of entertainment all over and even he draws some attention abroad. He even dreams of executing somersaults on the tightrope but in spite of his multiple achievements, he is in exile himself. His exile from himself and exile from his family is the root cause of

his psychological depression and mental anguish. He is alive physically but mentally remains upset and restless; he is always finding a new way to escape the guilt and sins. In *The Magician Lublin*, the images of God and the magician are conflated so that the ontological search of Yasha for redemption leads him to awareness. He can perform “even finer tricks” (400). Yasha is a debased form of the traditional magician. He is a cheap performer and not a prophet, entertaining people with his tricks rather than performing miracles. However, Esther thinks of him in the terms often reserved for God: “She had long since come to the conclusion that she would never be able to understand all his complexities. He possessed hidden powers” (324). But in reality there is darkness inside Yasha; he is lost in the world of trickery and romance; he uses the power of magic for his sexual pleasures and to save the people from perdition. Yasha is not satisfied with his life while he shows “a conflict between his libidinal wishes and the part of his personality we call his ego, which is the expression of his instinct of self-preservation and which also includes his ideals of his personality” (Freud 316). J.S. Wolkenfeld observes that “the main theme of the novel is an act of stealing of Yasha whose life is chaotic and disorderly” (Wolkenfeld 95).

Yasha Mazur’s entire life is a battle. He can never conquer the sexual drive. He can only negotiate with it, appease it, or in some other way deal with it, so that it remains dormant. He never knows when it will awaken to begin another round. The novel *The Magician of Lublin* is a brilliant piece of art; modern, inclusive and a fine portrayal of the hero Yasha torn within and the victim of internal forces. Yasha carries “freedom” to its most death-defying limits. He refuses to compromise with his

smaller-minded, prying neighbors or even with God. “When were you in heaven, and what did God look like?” he asks his would be reformers” (315). He lives in the world of possibility, avoids the restrictions and has multiple identities. He performs many roles to suit his mood and situation and often emerges as a chameleon in the novel. He is an expert charmer and has the power to hypnotize women for his sexual pleasures. Yasha suffers from “the psychic disorder, they “mirror the chaos, disintegration, and sexual confusion of an increasingly violent and perverse world” (Pelzer 103). Singer calls him as an “open man” given absolute freedom to follow any road in his life. Singer depicts the real dilemma of Yasha in the novel which eventually leads to his disintegration of self and gives him depression:

Can a man soar in the air? Can he cross and re-cross his tightrope between warring dualities with grace? Can he, with his wisdom and sleight of hand, come to be regarded as a minor deity in his own right.
(Singer 374)

Herein lies the real germs of the psychic wreck of Yasha; his over ambitiousness gives him psychological tremors. Like Macbeth and Dr. Faustus he wants to touch the sky and makes futile efforts transcending time and space. He wants to become a demigod and this is the main cause of his disassociation of mind. He love miracles and miracles are his bread and butter in his life. He believes that there is a higher power which controls and directs the activities of man on earth.

Yasha Mazur was reared in a pious Jewish home, studied the Talmud until his father died. Yashas’s mother died when he was seven and then he joined the circus. He maintains a home in Lublin with his wife, Esther, but roams the Polish

countryside as a “circus performer and hypnotist.” Yasha’s only affection there is for his childless wife, Esther. She keeps herself busy in work; managing her small sewing business. Apart from providing her with a steady income, it keeps her occupied and enables her to forget her sorrow. Her youthful and jovial appearance is seen as a façade behind which she hides the void in her heart”. Esther was small and dark, had a youthful face, a straight nose, black eyes in which both, gay and sorrow were reflected” (10). She feels that it would have been better to have a husband with a steady job, but at the same time she cannot think of loving anyone but Yasha.

While Yasha shaves his beard and will practice only the most basic of Jewish rituals, Esther “wore the customary kerchief and kept a kosher kitchen; she observed the Sabbath and all the laws” (8). Esther knows that Yasha’s profession as a travelling magician brings him into contact with many women and she often questions him about his affairs: “I wish I had twenty silver pieces of for every girl you have had” (13). Yasha loves his wife dearly. In spite of his escapades, he always returns to her and resumes the threads of life at home. He never conceals the fact that he is married, and can never really think of deserting his wife for another woman. But Yasha is not orthodox he breaks the marriage vows repeatedly. Yasha is not a faithful husband and he had suffered long years of separation, he is, despite twenty year of marriage, “still as playful with her as he had been on the first days after their wedding” (14). She is certain that he has illicit relations with other women; but the eagerness and passion he shows to her make her believe that he had been living the life of a saint during his absence” (13). His boyish enthusiasm and hypnotic power over her make her feel as though he is both son and husband to her” (14). Esther is a true psychologist; she is the first woman in the novel who diagnoses the main

psychological malady of Yasha. She observes that Yasha is an unsatisfied and discontented personality; he can never be happy in any company because he is living with a void. According to Freud, when a subject is attacked externally, it becomes unconscious, but “it also remains unconsciously active” (Freud, *The Unconscious* 47). Freud further states that the “repressed does not constitute the whole of the unconscious. The unconscious is the more extensive; the repressed is part of the unconscious” (47). When a traumatic subject is reminded about its original trauma or it witnesses a similar incident or associated signifiers, it goes back to its original distressing incident. He is far too different from her world and her traditions to be one with her. He is a psychic case because he is a restless personality; he can never be content in any one world. The forces that flare in him give no peace. He is constantly searching for external gratification; a sure path toward self –destruction in the world of Singer. He is the stranger to the world of his fathers and he is a stranger to himself. As Edward Alexander points out: “Yasha is as mystified by the dark passions that storm in his soul” as others are awed by his ability to unravel what to them seem mysteries import” (61). Women belong to diverse types who come in Yasha’s life. In spite of their totally outlook, Yasha provides their common meeting point. Their awareness of Yasha’s shortcomings does not diminish their love for him. Each of them weaves her own dreams around the magician, thinking of a bright future where she can share his glory and fame. Even Halina, who is no more than a child is no exception.

The picaresque and adventurous journey of Yasha begins since he has to leave Warsaw to be a performer in the town moving from one place to another. His desires and behavior range through the entire spectrum of Singer’s imagination. His

life tale is a story of a roguish performer caught in the whirlpool of sexual passions. He goes on shifting roles and goes on changing identities to escape the inner turmoil of his heart but he remains bankrupt of ideas and lives with void till the end of the novel. His character is a case study of a man who loses everything because he fails to overcome his passions. In this chapter various causes and symptoms are explored to trace the gradual decadence of Yasha and his fall from grace and the loss of self. The first major cause is his Jewish consciousness and his loss of faith. He loses his connection with God. The primary problem of Yasha is his disconnection with God and his failure to build his relationship with God. He feels guilty through out of the novel because he is always haunted by the guilt of sin and his detachment from the Jewish roots further precipitates his problems and often suffers melancholy. Freud, in his essay *Mourning and Melancholia*, explains that “the distinguishing mental features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, and loss of the capacity of love” (Freud 244).

Yasha often becomes restless and directionless and with a view to escape from the guilt consciousness he indulges into sex adventures. Yasha is a man of many worlds so he is held in low esteem by the Jewish community of Lublin. Being possessed of a quick mind and an even quicker tongue, he answers the prodding of ‘the earnest moralists of the community with,’ “When were you in heaven, and what did God look like? (8). Yasha is an enigma, a dilemma and a trick-maker with multiple masks. He is “half Jew, half Gentile; neither Jew nor Gentile: (11). He works out his own religion: “There was a Creator, but He revealed himself to no one, gave no indication of what was permitted or forbidden, those who spoke in his name were liars (11). Yasha suffers from schizophrenia because all his choices are

contradictory and uncertain; he doesn't know what he is doing and what he is planning. His lack of belief in any particular revelations or dogma frees his extremely bright mind to explore the world about him. The journey of Yasha is adventurous, romantic, tragic and traumatic.

Yasha suffers from alienation and this puts heavy pressure on his psychic behavior. He has alienated himself completely from his Jewish community. Yasha is typical character because his conscious mind works contrary to the unconscious mind. For Freud, 'the unconscious' is the "object of a meta-psychological codification, a double point of view, at once *topical* and *dynamic*" (114). For Freud, 'the unconscious' is a systematic part of mind like the other "psychic co-systems" (114) namely 'the conscious' and 'the preconscious'. The unconscious mind holds repressed feelings, hidden perceptions, concealed phobias, automatic reactions, blocked memories, thoughts, and desires that impact human behavior. Freud divides the mind into the conscious mind (the Ego) and the unconscious mind (the Id and the Superego). Though the Superego is a part of the unconscious but it controls the Id (instincts and drive). Freud proposes a vertical and categorized architecture of human mind: the conscious mind, the preconscious mind, and the unconscious mind—each lying beneath the other. In the Freudian psychoanalysis, the preconscious is the state of mind that exists beneath the conscious but above the unconscious mind. In the preconscious, though the thoughts remain unconscious, but they are not repressed and they can be easily recalled unlike unconscious traumatic thoughts or memories. Yasha is a unique character of Bashevis Singer who acts under passions and is a slave of emotional exuberance.

His is a constant battle to keep at bay the dark, destructive forces that haunt him and gives him psychological tremors. He becomes hysterical and often he loses his balance of mind like a sick woman. Yah is basically a good person with an urge toward asceticism and mysticism. His lust for women overrides his mystical inclination. His animalistic lust causes him to liken himself to the thieves of Piask. Summing up his passion for women, he says that although he is married, he is Magda and is “wildly infatuated with Emilia” (51). He still lusts after Zefel whom he likens to a “dung heap.” His only explanation is that “just as the thieves had to steal money; he had to steal love” (52). Yasha experiences confusion and he becomes a psychic wreck because of his chameleon-like ability to play many roles and to cheat everyone he meets inhabiting many worlds. In his essay *The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis* Freud avers that “neurosis does not disavow reality, it only ignores it; psychosis disavows it and tries to replace it” (Freud 185). Yasha becomes a neurotic figure being lost in the world of thieves in Piask, drinking, boasting and listening to the lewd jokes and the next moment he could be with Emilia discussing with her Copernicus Galileo and other philosophers. The uncertain and unpredictable traits of Yasha bring his total downfall and make him sick and melancholic. Yasha has become the victim of melancholy and acute depression.

The fact that he can perform acrobatic feats without peer or use his psychic powers to locate lost objects only serve to make him more of a mystery to himself: “Walking a tightrope” becomes the symbol of his own life to Yasha. He is always balancing his life between worlds never fully comfortable, knowing always that one slip may lead to disaster. In *The Magician of Lublin*, Yasha Mazur is caught between the two worlds’ the one sacred and the other profane. He vacillates between the two

on a journey from exile towards the possibility of redemption through community and love for God. Yasha, the famous tight rope walker and the master of illusions begins his journey from country to city to show his acrobatic performances. Symbolically, his journey is from innocence to experience; from the unity of self to the disintegration of self; from a healthy state of mind to the neurotic being. He leaves Warsaw and his wife Esther and goes to meet Emilia who is a “high-born professor’s widow” (335). His entry into the world of Emilia is the first step towards the road to self destruction; melancholia and depression. The problem with Yasha is that he lacks self-discipline and has no control over his passions. Emilia is Gentile and Yasha is a Jew; both are from different worlds but Yasha fruitlessly makes efforts to bring union of the two worlds. And this becomes the major cause of his hysterical outbursts and psychological disintegration. Singer explores the real working of his inner mind thus:

For quite some time Yasha had been involved in this very dilemma. It disturbed him day and night. Of course he had always been a soul searcher, prone to fantasy and strange conjecture, but since the advent of Emilia, his mind was never quiet. (8)

The complexities of Yasha’s life unfold when he is on his adventurous journey. He gets entangled with women and his choices of life; his vision of life and the conflicts of his psyche are revealed in the three chapters of the novel. Singer describes the temptations of Yasha and his two love triangle. His affair with the Gentile Emilia brings in his life the religious and cultural issues because Emilia demands not only marriage but his conversion. She even asks him to leave his country and settle

abroad. This puts Yasha into a dilemma where he is unable to choose between Emilia and Esther. Even while Emilia's Slavic appearance aristocratic way of life attracts him. He talks of possible death or disability to himself to himself, trying to find out Esher's reaction to such situations. Emilia is a sensible woman, she loves him but at the same time she demands the price of her love. As he cannot talk directly to her about Emilia, Yasha takes the roundabout way of conditioning Esther to the prospect of life without him. But all his bantering draws from Esther the avowal of her love for him. She would not care to live without him, whatever be the circumstances. Esther is totally devoted to him and is always concerned about his safety. Although not in the habit of drinking, for some days after Yasha's departure, she drinks cherry-brandy in order to fight depression and loneliness. She remains moody and irritable finding fault with the seamstresses very easily. The secondary triangle involves Yasha, his assistant Magda and a whore Zefel. In Warsaw, Magda acts as his wife for him. Yasha's love affair with Magda and the ultimate tragic end of this love affair virtually results his disassociation of mind. Magda is a real support to him; she is his assistant and a mistress. She travels with him on his shows and helps on stage. She can perform some tricks on her own, like turning a somersault, or rolling a barrel with her toes. Magda is neither good looking nor sweet tempered. She is described swarthy, flat chested, even barely skin and bones, with high cheek bones and pimply skin, for which she has nicknamed at school as "the Frog." She had never enjoyed life at the boarding school as she had been surly, introspective, and furtive. But in spite of these shortcomings, the fact that she unusually agile makes her fit to be a magician's assistant. Magda is an important character in the novel because she is very serious and the real woman who pulls Yasha down and shatters all her illusions

about love, life and marriage. He visits her at her home in Piask, acting as a devoted son-in-law to Magda's mother, Elzbieta. Esther's childlessness is displaced into the childlike figure of Magda, while her maternal devotion to Yasha is reflected in Elzbieta who was like "a mother to him" (347). She cooks, advises and even warns him of his unruly life. Yasha creates a second family with these Polish peasants. The second world of Yasha is the world of Magda Zbarski who belongs to a lower class. She is a skinny, blemished peasant girl but committed to the love of Yasha. She provides full support to Yasha during his acts. She has been with Yasha for eight years and is possessive of Yasha as is Esther. She resents his philandering since she hares his bed as a wife. She does all the domestic chores for him.

Of all the women, Magda is the only one who helps Yasha in his career. She is the least demanding of Yasha's women. Yasha supports her family, Elzbieta who is her mother and her brother Bolek, a driver for the local thieves "with the air of a moron and the heart of a Nazi". Bolek hates and dislikes Yasha and feels uneasy when he visits to meet Magda but Elizabieta feels happy since Yasha brings delicacies and money for the family. His visits are treated as holidays. Yasha's sympathetic ear and humorous disposition breathe "new life" Singer depicts the anguish of Magda thus: "Each time he returned for Emilia, Magda looked at him with mute reproach. She almost ceased speaking to him altogether and had become withdrawn like a clam into her shell" (407). Lacking the religious strength of Esther, Magda finally commits suicide and strikes back at Yasha in killing herself and trying to place the blame on his conscience. His cruelty reaches in the climax when Magda commits suicide. Singer reports thus:

The stillness of death hung over the apartment, a silence pregnant with strangled screams...Her lips were silent and yet she was screaming- a cry such as no mortal could long endure. Swollen and cracked, the mouth shouted. Look what you have done to me! Look! Look. (Singer 518)

He has no justification for the tragic suicide of Magda who had nursed him when he lived in Warsaw. Singer has given the systematic graph of the fall of Yasha and the suicide of Magda is the first step towards his psychological disintegration. Yasha is involved in many sexual intrigues but the suicide of Magda forces him to brood over his life: "What was life's purpose if one did not know why one was born nor why one died?" (410). Yasha is heading towards total collapse because his affairs with women land him into troubles. He has been playing with the emotions of women; has been blackmailing them by the powers of the magic and hypnotism. He expresses his anguish thus: "Lord I forget everything. I promised to write Esther the minute I reached Warsaw, She's probably half out of her mind with worry. What's wrong with me? Am I sick or what?" (86).

In the third world, Yasha gets involved with Zefel, the deserted wife of a thief. His relationship with this underworld element is a curious one at best. He is held in the highest esteem by the members of this world because he has the ability to "jimmy" any lock brought to him. The thieves are anxious to learn from him the art of breaking locks so that they might become rich. This is the vulgar world of Yasha but he enjoys the sexual pleasures with Zefel and gets involved in the illicit, dangerous and even absurd situations. Yasha enjoys demonstrating to them his power

over locks. Yasha falls in the world of darkness and criminality and his loss of grace and dignity further gives him psychological shocks. He becomes conscious of his moral degradation and even starts hating himself. Yasha attempts burglary and the aborted theft becomes an epiphany for Yasha, but the guilt over his many transgressions that epiphany reveals is not the first example of Yasha's feeling of extreme guilt. The thought of leaving his wife and religion is a plague on his conscience. Even though he thinks he senses "the hand of providence" during his lapses and moral degradation. He questions the idea that "God lead him into theft and apostasy" (100).

In the world of Emilia Yasha strives to reconcile himself with God knowing that he must do this in order to win Emilia. At first, he tries to shrug off the thought of conversion saying: "What of it? You cross yourself and they sprinkle you with water" (57). But when he gets a chance to study Catholic dogma and theology he finds that it makes no sense at all to him. He fails to enter into the humanist world of Emilia. He remains only a committed "tight –rope walker" because he cannot be steadfast and sincere. He goes on making choices; following one and rejecting the other and his whole life is a den of illusions which make him a psychological wreck at the end of the novel. Yasha is repelled by the idea of fusing "religion with materialism, connubiality with adultery, Christian love with worldly hate" (59). From a mystical point of view, the most important theme in *The Magician of Lublin* is free will and how man is to use it and the value of human dignity and discipline in love, sex and marriage. The adventurous journey of Yasha begins to find a meaning of life but ends with his complete collapse of body and the spirit because he lacks discipline; he is not steadfast and lives most of his time in the dark abyss of guilt and

sexual passions. But when the combined catastrophes of the later part of the novel combine to make Yasha reject the life of a libertine and instead seek God's ways, he tries to give up his gift of free will by bricking himself into a hut behind his home in Lublin. He struggles to seek redemption in accepting God. He rejects his freedom and realizes that discipline alone can save him from the present neurotic situation. Yasha is a driven man and his greatest weakness is his unruly passion. He cannot the forces that destroy him and the passions that degenerate him. The image of his walking "the tight rope" becomes very effective and significant. The forces Yasha doesn't understand are his own acrobatic, hypnotic, and psychic skills. Esther rightly remarks in the early part of the novel: "He possessed hidden powers; he had more secrets than the blessed Rosh Hashanah pomegranate has seeds" (16). He cannot control his passions which are a combination of sexual and mystic desires. He longs to love many women, yet still be justified and understood in his vision of God. Hochman has noted in Yasha's character: "the prideful wish to be as God exists in dire relation to the strength of his lust. (Hochman 129). The result of the conflict among these various feelings is that Yasha believes that if the outside world were ever to become aware of the tremendous turmoil in his soul. "Yasha, would have long ago been committed to a madhouse" (20). Yasha loses his confidence and comes to know the power of God when he fails to open the simple lock on the safe. The tables are turned when the most famous "tightrope walker" and acrobat of Poland falls when climbing down a balcony and gets serious injuries on his left foot. To escape the watch man he hides in a synagogue. In that holy place Yasha is horrified to learn that he has forgotten how to use prayer shawls and phylacteries that are handed to him. His total collapse brings him awareness and he undergoes a revelation. He realizes that the failure is divinely ordained. He is not meant to

become a thief and an apostate. He is filled with a mystical feeling of peace and harmony for the first time in the novel. He hears the prayers around him and recognizes that they are all saying the same things he has always wanted to believe:

There was a God who sees, who hears, who takes pity on man. Who contains His wrath. Who forgives sinner. Who wants men to repent, Who punishes evil deeds, Who rewards good deeds in this world and what was even more; in the other world. (179)

The downward journey of Yasha begins with the suicide of Magda and the perfect magician of Poland flees in revulsion at the end of the novel. His flight takes him on a surreal voyage, spiral down ward in loss and degradation like the cripple “still spinning and twisting as if seeking to bore his head into an invisible wall” (472). Yasha goes to Emilia and confesses his crime to get relief from his psychic pressures. He wishes finally to be a “Jew...A Jew like all the others” (179). First Emilia doesn’t believe in his made up stories but when she observes that he looks like a changed man poor as well, she calls off the wedding. On his way home, he passes Lithuanian synagogue and is intrigued by the lack of beards and by other reforms that seem alien to the strict Judaism of his parents. He begins to wonder about the need for all the dogmas and rituals found in traditional religion: Why did God need these capotes, these side locks, these skull caps, these sashes? God was one thing, these man-made dogmas another” (231). Yasha gets the lesson of discipline as Singer gives an insight into the life and soul of Yasha who suffers because of his lack of discipline and the need for profound restraint. Dogmas don’t teach man discipline but they inhibit the growth of man. Yasha muses, if h had “put on a fringed garment and prayed thrice

daily: 232), he would have found it impossible to lead the kind of existence he did. Yasha is trapped between sin and guilt as the suicide of Magda has put heavy weight on his conscience. Arriving at the apartment in Warsaw he finds Magda hanging and the animals killed. Her suicide is magnified in horror when he finds Zefel in bed with a white-slaver he had played cards with. At that point “he knew that he was undergoing some sort of transformation...He had seen the hand of God. He had reached the end of the road” (258). The main body of the novel ends here. In the epilogue, Yasha is presented as Reb Jacob the penitent struggling to achieve redemption of his lost soul. He has become a neurotic self sick and despondent all the time haunted by the fears of demons and ghosts of hell; fearing an eternal; perdition. On the verge of madness, he has sealed himself in his “small, doorless house with its tiny window” (260). He has expressed his wish to be a penitent in the early part of the novel when she asks Esther what she would do “if I became an ascetic and to repent, had myself bricked into a cell...” (32). Innocently, she replies that that was not necessary, Yasha counters with, “It all depends on what sort of passion one is trying to control” (32). Yasha knows that there is a storm inside his soul and his free will one day land him into troubles. But like Dr Faustus he goes on committing sin and goes on losing grace and love of God. He is on the road to moral and spiritual degeneration and in this journey he loses everything; his family; his community and even his Magda who he loved so much. He thinks that he has killed Magda and has become a criminal. In the Epilogue, he performs the role of a penitent to ward off all evils and to put himself in a position where his lust could not be transformed into action. Inside the four walls, Yasha’s last uses of free will; his freedom is severely limited. By bricking himself Yasha becomes a representative of a man who is in the

last leg of life and who is on the verge of total psychological destruction. When he let his free will roam he “had violated every law of the Torah, had broken nearly every commandment (191). He renounces the most important tool of a mystic; his freedom of choice. Brick walled, he struggles to explore the causes of his moral degradation and insanity. He feels that his body has become sinful and in the last section he is seen struggling to revive his soul and begins his new search for meaning in life. He comes to the conclusion that: “The body is like a garment. When a garment becomes soiled or threadbare, it is cast aside” (277).

To conclude, So Yasha’s strategy to repair his soul fails and he remains restless and neurotic. His solution for his “uncontrollable free will” yields no result. He cannot free himself from his passions anymore. Even in his own mind he is nothing more than “a beast in a cage” (279). Singer gives the image of “beast in a cage” to depict the final scene of his degeneration, moral degradation and the status of insanity. The image of “beast” suggests his rejection of community in desperation. Singer comments that Yasha is never free from the guilt and all his efforts to achieve grace fail as the sexual temptations continue haunting him even in the brick walled position. His obsession with living the life of an ascetic is as great an obsession as his earlier passion for women. His own nature dooms him to extremes” there was no middle road” (269). His tool of mystical understanding at the end of the novel prove counter –productive; his studying of holy books, and struggle to get an insight into God’s spirit gives him no rest and peace of mind. He remains restless; despondent; degenerated and thinking of sexual passions. He appears only a psychic wreck crying in vain in the darkness of the four walls.

Bashevis Singer has given the historical setting of the novel *The Slave*, (1962) as the setting of the novel is the aftermath of Chmilnicki massacre. The special feature of the novel is the journey of Jacob from hope to despair; from freedom to slavery. The title symbolizes the fate of the hero who is forced to live on a mountain with the primitives. Singer uses historical events like a postmodern novelist as the roots from the Genesis are traced. Jacob is a biblical character and Singer uses allegorical technique to amplify the realistic elements of the Bible. Jacob's psychological trauma is the outcome of his disconnection from God. The cultural values of the 1920s were subverted by death, trauma and fear. Cathy Caruth asserts that trauma is experienced and witnessed through "a response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, or other repetitive phenomena" (Caruth 91). Kali Tai also observes in her book *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma* that textual representations of trauma are "written from the need to tell and retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it "real" both to the victim and to the community" (Tai 21). Judith Lewis Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery* contends that "the ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness" (Herman1). Buchen compares enslavement of Jacob with the Jews's slavery in Egypt. Buchen remarks that the novel is distinguished from most reworkings of biblical or mythical material in that the focus is no so much on a hero as a people, yet he neglects the realism with which Singer presents Jacob" (Buchen 150). Siegel also opines "that a parallel exists"(28). Malin states that Jacob "recognizes the timelessness of his name" (Main 66). The strongest mystical influence can be observed in *The Slave* of Singer.

Religion and Free Will of Jacob

The Slave is a story of religion and the plot analyzes the internal and external pressures of Jacob as he struggles with his faith. Jacob is a young and highly learned man who has been made a slave in 17th century Poland. Jacob is seen trapped in two major religious communities, one Christian and the other Jewish. The main focus of Singer in this novel is to depict the fate of a Jew who gets involved in endless misfortunes to save a gentle soul. Jacob passes through various stages of freedom and slavery. His journey of life is dominated by his committed slavery to God. His search for love and God is the main focus of Singer as Nili Wachtel says: “Jacob breaks a wrong, naïve passive slavery, in order to choose for himself a right, sober and active slavery” (186). He is conscious of being a slave and this feeling tortures him day and night; torments his soul as he cannot even pray to God: “Thou hast not mad me a slave” (Singer 10). Ironically, Jacob is not only a slave to God and his master, but also a slave to his emotions and passions. Maria P.P. Root observes that insidious trauma is “usually associated with the social status of an individual being devalued because a characteristic intrinsic to their identity is different from what is valued by those powers” (Root 240).

Jacob’s hometown was burnt by Cossacks and his family was killed in a brutal manner. Jacob lives alone in the abject circumstances of slavery; he lives alone on top of mountain next to a Christian village. He is always haunted by the old memories of his wife and children. Herman opines in her book *Trauma and Recovery* that the “typical phenomena of hyperarousal and intrusion cause trauma survivors to lose authority over their memory” (Herman 33). Jacob is a social outcast and herds

only cow only. He has to go downtown every day to get food and he observes the rituals and traditions of Christianity. Root further observes that alienation is a “threat to psychological safety, security, or survival” (241).

The plot of *A Slave* of Singer is divided into three sections entitled: “Wanda, Sarah and The Return.” The Wanda part of the novel depicts the psychological anima and its manifestations. Jacob lives on the top of a mountain where the semblance of civilization is completely lost. The village down the mountain maintains some shallow appearance of Christianity. The local priest is a corrupt drunkard who has grown anti-Christian. Incest is a common practice here and morality is non-existent. Jacob with his Judaism struggles to survive in a world whose goal is their obliteration. Jacob is a prisoner in exile and even in his traumatic situation he is committed to his Judaism craving the Jewish laws onto a rock. He inscribes them in his mind and in the granite. His love for Wanda becomes a source of psychological pain and anguish. Irving Buchen (1968) observes that in *The Slave*, “Singer has stripped Jacob of all the complexities of society and history so that we may experience directly the divinity of original creation” (Buchen 155). Jacob does not doubt the existence of God but at the same time he refuses to grant God the quality of mercy: “It was different to believe in God’s mercy when murderers buried children alive. But God’s wisdom was evident everywhere” (Singer 19). As Judith Herman (1992) pointed out in her book *Trauma and Recovery*; that “atrocities refuse to be buried” (Herman 1). They penetrate into the conscious and unconscious minds of the survivors. The psychological wounds are too deep to be cured. The Holocaust survivors were in the grip of powerful and acute trauma resulting into their internal dissonance. Sigmund Freud discusses the theory of displacement of self in

Interpretation of Dreams. Jacques Lacan's *Mirror Stage* examined psychic pressures and tensions resulting into neurosis. Eric Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* explored the suppression of individual freedom leading to degeneration of sensibility. R.D Laing wrote *The Divided Self* giving an account of schizoid and symptoms of schizophrenia. Dr. Karen Horney focused on human psychology and explored the causes of neurosis in *Our Inner Conflicts*. Ihab Hassan's *In Quest of Nothing: Selected Essays, 1998-2008* and *Radical Innocence* discuss the growth of trauma and the impact of fractured identities on the mind and sensibility of the individuals. Sypher Wylie propounded the theories of neurosis and trauma to investigate and explore the mental icebergs of human mind. Erik Erikson and Stryker in his *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version*, and Goffman in his *Human Behavior and Social Processes* made observations on the abnormal human behaviour. Diane Marcotte in her article *Irrational Beliefs and Depression in Adolescence* discusses the nature of depression. All the latest theories on trauma and neurosis are applied to investigate the behaviour of the protagonists of *A Slave of Singer*. The novelist has portrayed a barbarous world. Jacob is surrounded by savages living in a state of degradation. Sex for them is simply copulation, and the corpse of a baby is like garbage. The Christianity thrives on sexual morality, chastity and sanctity of religion. Among savages, Jacob is more thoughtful, sensible and hard-working than his fellow cowherds. The main conflict in the life of Jacob is to rise from obscenity and to open his mind to higher ideals. He is a slave of Jan Bzik and whose daughter Wanda falls in love with him. Wanda is the widow of a drunken farmer and is known as "The Lady" in the tribe because of her good manners. Wanda is a beautiful girl, at the age of twenty she was

taller than most of the other women. She had blond hair, blue eyes, a fair skin, and well-modeled features. She braided her hair and twisted it around her head like a wreath of wheat. When she smiled, her cheeks dimpled and her teeth were so strong she could crush the toughest of pits. Her nose was straight and she had a narrow chin. (Singer 16)

The real conflict begins when there is a psychological pressure on his soul to forsake Judaism and to get freedom from slavery. Ronnie Janoff-Bulman in his book *Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma* asserts that trauma radically destroys people's fundamental beliefs in the benevolence and meaningfulness of the world, and the worthiness of the self" (Ronnie 5). But Jacob refuses to leave his God and remains faithful to the Jewish God. In the last section of the novel Jacob gives in succumbs to the sexual passions for Wanda. Finally Jacob sexually consummates his love for Wanda. Singer has used the images from the Bible and Genesis to describe the ritual of their sexual consummation. Both of them immerse themselves in the stream ritually undergoing a symbolic union of souls. Jacob, however, is a victim of guilt though nature seems to sanction their sexual consummation next morning: "Dew covered the grass, and each droplet gleamed. Birds were singing, and in the distance a cow lowed" (70). He exhorts her to embrace Judaism, though he feels sinful. He realizes that Wanda's desire to accept his faith is not natural and truthful but is the result of impure motives. Their union is a moral transgression of the Jewish and the Polish laws. Singer presents men in terms of their traumatic experience and psychological aberrations. Women are presented as a class; subservient to men. While Singer presents men in terms of their individual psychological aberrations, he treats

Women as a class, making far more frequent use of clichés and stereotypes in depicting them than in depicting men. Singer's vision—combining the traditional Jewish image of woman as subservient and inferior with the misogynistic view of woman's nature in the philosophies of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud and Weininger—represents a powerful assault on the Jewish woman. (100)

Jacob spends most of his time in convincing Wanda to become a Jew as the Jewish Law doesn't demand anything performe. Wanda tells him about her relationship with her former husband Stach and Jacob tells her that: "The Torah tells how a man should conduct himself" (20). He even tells stories convincing her that even a prostitute can embrace Judaism. Jacob tries his best to control his passions and remains isolated from Wanda. His alienation becomes a major cause of his frustration and depression. He is always haunted by the question: "Did the creator require the assistance of Cossacks to reveal His nature? Was this a sufficient cause to bury infants alive?" (100). Jacob suffers from alienation and according to Patrick Colin Hogan "alienation is not itself an experience one chooses to have, it is, rather, an inability, as we shall see, frequently associated with emotional and mental disintegration" (Hogan 88). Hogan further suggests that alienation is a kind of "cultural disintegration involving a sense of alienation from all cultures, being no longer at ease in any cultures, finding a home neither in indigenous tradition nor in Europeanization" (88). Jacob's dilemma is that he cannot forget his wife and children and he remains restless and depressed. He becomes a guilty of murder through his forgetfulness. He had witnessed horror of Chmielelnicki genocide and in such a case

his memory becomes a source of poignant torture. Robert Jay Lifton in his book *The Life of the Self: Toward a New Psychology* observes that “the survivor undergoes a radical but temporary diminution in his sense of actuality in order to avoid losing his sense completely and temporarily; he undergoes a reversible form of psychic death in order to avoid a permanent or psychic death” (Lifton 144). Jacob struggles to forget his wife and children in his exercise of scratching forty-three commandments and sixty nine interdictions into a rock but all these spiritual efforts prove futile as memory of death intensifies his trauma. He keeps an ultimate faith in God as he realizes: “The leaves drop from the tree, but the branch remains; the trunk still has its roots” (268). He seeks the help of God believing that he may get peace of mind and freedom from the present dilemma and depression. Wanda tries her best to give him solace and to retrieve his trauma through her love and affection.

Jacob is a teacher and he knows Jewish law and the meaning of sinful transgression very well. He becomes a slave to his passions and keeps on making love to a gentile. In his loneliness, he thinks of Wanda in his quest for anima. He knows that he is a married man and Wanda doesn't belong to his faith and cohabiting with her amounts to adultery with her. But it is extremely difficult for him to control his emotion and passions. The wrestling match of love and religion begin in the mind of Jacob. His resolve to live with God flounders: “His yearning stayed with him praying and studying, sleeping and waking. He knew the bitter truth: compared to his passion for Wanda, his mourning for his wife and children and his love for God were weak. If the desire of the flesh came from Satan, then he was in the Devils's net. (47).

They fall in love with each other but Jacob struggles to escape and resist the temptation of Satan. Jacob interprets his powerful sense of lust and longing for sexual pleasures. He becomes slave to passions urging him to sacrifice the eternal for the temporal: “Remember this world is only a corridor; the true palace lies beyond. Don’t let yourself be barred from it the sake of a moment’s pleasure” (16). He even dreams of Wanda in his sleep and feels sleepless and restless. Freud says that the “dreams are the royal road to the unconscious” and no wonder, Wanda is the Centre of his unconscious mind. She has become a part of his existence and he is ready to make sacrifice his life for her. He waits for Wanda like a bridegroom waiting for his bride and visualizes her thus: “her eyes which were sometimes blue, sometimes green, her full lips, here long slim neck, her womanly bosom. Like any other peasant she worked in the fields, but her hands remained feminine” (17). In Jungian terms Wanda is a powerful anima for Jacob. Jung observes thus:

These drive elements which are related to life, as an unprecedented spontaneous, natural phenomenon, to the life of the instincts, the life of the flesh, the life of concreteness, of earth, of emotionally, directed towards involvement, the instinctual connectedness to other people.
(Jung 133)

Wanda is a slave to her animus; she proposed Jacob but he is afraid of committing sin of adultery. Wanda is perplexed to know the ambiguous attitude of Jacob. She is bold and beautiful; she offers her body to him and expresses her free will to offer him cohabitation without marriage. The love of Wanda for Jacob is fiery; she is motivated by her strong expectations and notions of free love and sexual pleasures. She has the

supernatural power to predict the events as she has strong intuition. She has seen Jacob in her dreams and visions. Jacob's refusal to respond to her love intensifies her emotions. Her repressed passions come on the surface: "She was even ready to leave her village, her parents, her family and follow Jacob naked and empty handed" (26). She is in conflict as she has to fight with Jacob's asceticism and her dormant sexuality. Like Wanda Jacob is also on the rack as he is trapped in moral consciousness: In the mercy of the nations' sin, he tried to strangle the love he felt for her" (19).

To conclude, Jacob's life is a woeful tale of tragedy of his life. He suffered acute anguish and psychological pain because of the loss of his wife Zelda and children killed by the Cossacks of Poland. Jacob lost everything, his house, wife, family and children and above all his Jewish identity as he was enslaved and forced to live at the top of mountain with animals. His alienation and intrusive memories haunted him day and night. His struggle is for love, identity and for God and all his dream and hopes are shattered leaving him dead in body and in spirit. Carl Jung in his book *The Archetypes* argued that the latent memories from the past are "a part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to personal experience ..." (Carl Jung, *The Archetypes* 42). Jacob has all the symptoms of trauma; depression; anxiety, frustration, alienation and intrusive memories of the loss of his wife, family and children and Jewish identity. They behave like animals and "ate dogs, field mice and indulges in every sort of abomination" (12). Women pursued women with demands of "Lay me" while urinating in his presence. They had "in their clothes and elflocks

in their hair” (14). They could “scarcely speak Polish, grunted like animals, made signs with their hands.” One night the cowherds “capture” Jacob and force him to watch their autumn celebrations. When a cowherd on a girl but is “too” drunk to do anything, they wrestled and squirmed like a dog and a bitch, while the others laughed, spat, dribbled from their noses, and goaded the lovers on” (Buchen 53). Those on the ground “grunting like pigs, licking the earth, babbling to rocks, the sight of such repulsive behavior causes Jacob to wonder how could the sons of Adam created in God’s image fall to such depths” (51). Jacob wants to understand what “prompted God to demand the slaying of entire peoples” (32).

Bashevis Singer’s novel *Enemies: A Love Story* is about the Jews of Eastern Europe who were bound together by a strong religious commitment. The main focus of Bashevis Singer is the tragic tale of Herman Broder; his doubts about the existence of God and his relationships with his three wives and his problems to assimilate in the new American culture. Herman, Yadwiga, Masha and Tamara are the main characters of the novel who experience the terrorism of the Nazi occupation of Poland. Yadwiga is a gentile Polish servant who worked for the family of Herman. Masha and Tamara are survivors of Auschwitz and Buna; the famous concentration camps of the Germans. Herman hid in the hayloft during the war on the farm of Yadwiga to save himself and Yadwiga risked her life and the lives of her family hiding and protecting Herman. In fact all the characters of the novel are traumatized by the occupation of their homeland.

All the main characters of Bashevis Singer’s novel *Enemies: A Love Story* are immigrant survivors of the Jewish Holocaust. They are settled in America but they

are always haunted by the intrusive memories of the past trauma as the past repeats itself in the life of each character. Singer has poignantly depicted the psychological pain and anguish of the major characters in the plot of the novel. Emmanuel Levinas (1988) observes that the Holocaust is the real model “of gratuitous suffering which left a hole in the personal and collective life of the Jews” (Levinas 162). The Jews who had witnessed the inhuman practices of Nazi extermination got awareness of the end of the illusion of “beautiful death.” Herman Broder is the highly neurotic character of *Bashevis* Singer whose traumatic journey is the chief interest of the novel. Herman Broder is a Polish intellectual who escaped the persecution of Nazi by hiding in a hayloft for three years. Yadviga who is his family servant helps him to save his life. Herman marries Yadviga and migrates to New York for safety and survival. He is jobless there and penniless but he earns his living by ghosting sermons writing for a rabbi. His sexual relations with several women land him in problems and as a professional he emerges as a pack of lies. Herman believes that “survival is based on guiles; he is devious and enmeshed in lies.” Herman lives in constant fear that his deceptions may not be revealed and exposed.

Herman is a survivor of the Holocaust and the event has shattered his life and expectations of life. Singer has depicted the psychological landscape of the survivor. Habermas argues that “common to all traumatic experiences is the destruction of what I call the basic fundamental elements of the “psychological landscape” (qtd in Kirmayer). The psychological landscape consists of beliefs, values and aspirations of the people. Dissociation is often considered as an important element of trauma. The Holocaust suffered from dissociation of self and in this situation their psychological landscape collapses. Doris Broder (1995) observes that “in many traumatic incidents

the psychic adhesive integrating the self dissolves” (56). It is argued that “trauma loosens this glue, crippling psychological life and leaves them plunged into a nightmare world of self-fragmentation in which sanity, indeed the very continuity of existence can no longer be taken for granted” (56). The Nazis used all inhuman strategies to give dehumanizing killings to the Jews. Dominic LaCapra (1994) observes that Nazi ideology “need a demonized outsider group that could be perceived as a threatening “Other” and hence help stabilize the insecure inner solidarity in post-World 1 Germany. The Jew conveniently served as the projective carrier of anxieties or a phantasmatic cause of all evil” (56).

The novel is a serious interpretation of the traumatic life of the Holocaust survivor immigrants. The Holocaust is a life-altering ordeal that marks his alienation from the world: “He had spent almost three years hiding in a hayloft. It was a gap in his life which could never be filled. (Bashevis Singer, *Enemies: A Love Story* 28). Judith Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery* intensively investigated the symptoms of trauma and conducted the clinical study. Herman argues “that disconnection and disempowerment are the core elements of traumatic experience” (Herman 133). Trauma is engulfed in the layers of wounds and pains and Herman leads a life of detachment, deceit and callousness. Herman creates a world of illusions and fantasy; he creates an artificial defensive wall to escape the world of misery, loss and exile. Yasha Mazur of *The Magician of Lublin* is also in exile and suffers alienation and detachment from society and at the end of the novel he gains transcendence and redemption. But Herman’s exile from society is detrimental leading him to his loss of self and dissociation of mind. He spent three years of his life hiding in a confined space in utter isolation from other human beings. His

nightmarish experiences push him into an extreme pessimism. Although he survives the horror of alienation and death haunted him day and night and his mind was deranged. He feels guilty and thinks that he doesn't deserve to live and his life is not worth living. Singer has depicted his mood of utter despair and despondency 'for lacking courage to commit suicide, he lives like a worm by managing to shut his eyes, stop up his ears, close his mind' (19). Being depressed Herman confesses: "When a man hides in an attic for years, he ceases to be a part of society. The truth is that I'm still hiding in an attic right here in America" (101). Herman Broder is a ghostwriter for an American rabbi; he describes his ghastly existence to his wife Tamara: "When a man hides in an attic for years, he ceases to be a part of society. The truth is that I'm still hiding I an attic right here in America" (101). Herman was raised as a traditional religious Jew but the Holocaust events transformed him into a nihilist. In Poland, Herman would have enjoyed respect and honor but ironically in America he calls himself as "a fraud, a transgressor; a hypocrite too. The sermons he wrote for Rabbi Lampert were a disgrace and a mockery" (Singer 15). Marilyn Chandler describes Lampert as a "modern man of the world, and the one character in the novel who seems to have emerged from the war unscathed and to have adapted admirably to secularized postwar American life, had departed radically from the traditional role" (Chandler 140). Chandler further opines that "Herman sees the words he authors as mimicry, pretense and deception" (Chandler 141). Chandler believes that "Herman's writings therefore are both a betrayal of Jewish tradition and a betrayal of himself" (Chandler 141). Herman is the only child of his wealthy father in Tzivkey who educated his son: "He hired a rabbi to instruct his son in Jewishness and a Polish tutor to teach him secular subjects. Reb Shimuel Leib hoped his only

son would become a modern rabbi” (Singer 29). Herman’s mother wanted Herman to be a doctor but his interest was in philosophy. He joined the University of Warsaw and entered into the school of philosophy. He met Tamara in the university; he fell in love with her and married her against the wishes of her parents. She was a student of biology and active in the leftist movements raising the cries of the working people in her protest demonstrations. He impregnated her before marriage; she refused abortion and forced her parents to marry her with Herman. His relationships after marriage with Tamara were not cordial as he was a neglectful, absentee father and wanted to divorce Tamara. Herman expresses his dissatisfaction thus: “Tamara talked incessantly of redemption of humanity, the plight of Jews, the role of woman in society” (63). But Herman differed from the ideas of Tamara because his philosophical background developed in him the nihilistic attitude. Singer comments thus: “She praised books which Herman considered little better than pulp, enthusiastic about plays that revolted him, sang the current song hits with gusto” (64). Herman is an intellectual snob who takes pride in being an independent thinker. He rejects the radical views of Tamara as Singer points out: “She seemed to Herman to be the incarnation of the masse, always following some leader, hypnotized by slogans, never really having an opinion of her own” (64). Dorothy Bilik in her article “Singer’s Diasporan Novel: *Enemies A Love Story*” argues that “Herman Broder is typically Singerian in that he is craven, lecherous, inconsistent; at times he retreats toward orthodoxy, only to be drawn again to his customary hedonism” (Bilik 90). Singer has depicted the hunted personality of Herman Broder:

During the war and in the years after, Herman had time enough to regret his behavior to his family. But basically he remained the same: without belief in himself or in human race; a fatalistic hedonist who lived in pre-suicidal gloom. Religions lied. (Singer 30)

Herman is involved with three women and all these women; Yadwiga, Masha and Tamara fill a vital need in Herman's lonely life. Chandler comments thus: "The three women in this novel represent three modes of existence: action, speech and simple being. Each function as a catalyst in Herman's tragic odyssey" (Chandler 147). The novel begins in New York with the dream of Herman. The scene provides the inner turbulent world of Herman; his nightmare of the Nazi occupation of Poland and the loss of his home, family and children. Singer describes Herman's dependence on Yadwiga who saved and protected her: "For three years Herman had depended on her utterly. She had brought food and water to him in the oft and carried out his waste" (6). The commitment of Yadwiga is evident in the plot "she put her mother and sister in constant jeopardy; if the Nazis discovered that a Jew was hiding out in the barn they would have shot all three women and perhaps burned down the village as well" (6). Herman's first wife Tamara is lost and is rumored to have been killed by the Nazis. Herman marries Yadwiga out of obligation with belief in his religion: "Yadwiga had been ready to adopt the Jewish faith, but it seemed senseless to burden her with a religion that he himself no longer observed" (5).

In the Coney Island most of the migrant Jews lived there: "Jews were allowed to live freely here! On the main avenue and on the side streets, Hebrew schools displayed their signs. There was even a Yiddish school" (17). Herman married

Yadwiga but from the start of his married life the cracks appeared because of the differences of opinions and religious ideas. Yadwiga was a Christian and Herman as a Jew; she was innocent and Herman as a pack of lies. However he is unwilling to leave Yadwiga because of his guilt. Singer comments thus: “She had the freshness and shyness of a Polish village girl. She used no cosmetics. She had learned only a few English words. It even seemed to Herman that she carried with her the odors of Lipsk” (4). She continues to cook in the old style: “She prepared all kinds of delicacies for him and cooked his favorite dishes: dumplings, matzo balls with borscht, millet with milk, goats with gravy” (11). Yadwiga is a loyal and caring wife: “She had freshly ironed shirt, underwear, and socks ready for hi everyday” Herman’s life is chaotic and deceptive; his life is built on lies which adversely affects Yadwiga’s life. He lies about his vocation and behaves he is a travelling salesman. He tells Yadwiga that he is a travelling salesman; however he travels to the Bronx where he has a mistress, Masha. He even tells lies to Rabbi Lampert about his married life.

Masha is Herman’s Lilith, his object of chaos. Cahndler observes that his association with Masha is the main source of his psychological ailments and become the main cause of his downfall: “Herman is drawn into Masha’s world of unreality, succumbing to the seductions of ungrounded intellect and imagination and passion detached from life-giving love, which in the end destroys both” (Chandler 147). Yadwiga lives in a cozy world but Masha lives in a world of decay haunted by the harrowing memories of the Holocaust. Singer writes about the neighborhood of Masha: “It only had a few houses separated by empty lots of overgrown with weeds. There was an old warehouse bricked-up windows and a gate that was always shut. In

one dilapidated house a carpenter was making furniture that he sold unfinished” (32). Masha lives with her mother in the third floor “of a house with a broken porch and a vacant ground, the window of which were covered with boards and tin” (32). Masha was a beautiful sensual woman as Singer describes her:

She wasn't tall, but her slenderness and the way she held her head gave the impression that she was. Her hair was dark with a reddish cast. Herman liked to say that it was fire and pitch. Her complexion was dazzling, her eyes light blue with flecks of green, her nose thin, her chin pointed. She had high cheekbones and hollow cheeks. A Cigarette dangled between her full lips. (Singer 33)

Masha has strong influence on the life and ideas of Herman. She is a tortured personality and a victim of the Holocaust. She narrates her wild stories from the ghettos, the concentration camps and her walking through the destruction of Poland after the war.

Singer has given an effective image of “retreat” and “withdrawal” to depict the traumatic experiences of Herman; he breaks from the active life of society and reenacts his previous retreat from life. The war is over. Herman continues employing the strategies of exile, secrecy, disguise for his survival. He continues living in the old style and distrusts everyone around him suspecting all the loving bonds with others. His misanthropic detachment and pathological lies trap him in his own isolated world. Interestingly, Herman's disconnection from others reinforces the stasis in his life. He carefully crafted his re-enactment of the past in his present life to dramatize his traumatic experiences. The Holocaust becomes the main cause of his

disconnection, fragmentation and stasis. Herman's morbidity and neurotic fantasies are realistically portrayed by Singer. His progression of life is blocked by the traumatic war experiences. Herman returns of the frequent fantasies reveal his fears and wishes and particularly his frequent fantasy about the fears and the wishes take on "the character of obsessions" (10). In the beginning of the novel, Herman is seen in his apartment in Brooklyn shaving.

To conclude, like other Holocaust survivors, Herman repeats the past and is often overwhelmed by the events of the killings of his family and friends. His repetitive fantasizing reveals that he is alive. He tests his foothold in reality to claim his survival. His close encounter with death leaves permanent marks on his life. His parallel existence of the past and the present confounds his disordered and disoriented life. The negative impacts of his past trauma make him sick and mentally disturbed. He moves like a shuttlecock between "intrusion and constriction exhibiting the symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder" (Herman 47). Past memories haunt him day and night intruding his daily life making him a prisoner of the past. Lawrence Langer in his book *Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays* (1995) observes that "traumatic upheavals have a durational integrity that exists outside the flow of normal time" (Langer 141). Allan Young (1995) calls trauma a "disease of time and continues to influence those afflicted with past losses or pains. The past for them is not the past and returns to them all the time with vivid memories and undiluted emotions" (Young 7). Herman, Masha, her mother Shifrah Puh and Tamara live in the past as they are always haunted by the past. Masha can never forget the Holocaust killings, Shifrah Puh always wears black

and lights memorial candles for the dead and her life is just a temporary reprieve for death. Singer comments thus: “The further removed they are from the holocaust, the closer it seemed to become” (Singer 43). For Tamara, her past has ruined her whole life as she feels that the Nazi bullet is lodged inside her body and has become a permanent part as she notes: “This bullet...is my best souvenir. It reminds that I once had a home, parents, children, If they take it away from me, I won't have anything left at all” (190). All the characters in the novel are riveted in their past traumatic experiences as they cannot forget their harrowing memories. They feel guilty for the lack of proper mourning their beloved during the Holocaust. Henry Krystal in his book *Massive Psychic Trauma* (1968) calls it as a “missing grave syndrome responsible for the unrelenting grief of the survivors. All the characters of the novel suffer from this syndrome. The Holocaust has turned their present into a dismal graveyard for the past” (Krystal 74).

Bashevis Singer's *Satan in Goray* explores the traumatic experiences of his Jewish characters entrapped in the forces of evil. Singer puts his faith in Judaism that has survived in spite of the innumerable obstacles from within and without. The Jews suffered because of their alienation from traditional norms and rituals and their mad race of assimilation. Singer's hero is torn between two conflicting fates as he begins his quest; he is carried away lust; sensual pleasures grip his psyche and he often confronts failures as he confronts truth and God. Each character of Bashevis Singer is alone survivor of the Jewish Holocaust struggling to find his roots; his religion love and God.

Conflict between Good and Evil

This novel gives the religious theme of good and evil. The question of evil obsesses Singer as he sees it a major force destroying the lives of millions of people in the world. He wrote many novels and short stories to answer the eternal psychological problems of the Jews haunted by the nightmares of the Holocaust; deaths and destruction that they witnessed in Auschwitz. The learned rabbi is of the opinion that the Jews are being punished for their transgressions and Hitler represents Satan. Singer believes that earthquakes, plagues are the curses of God. Nietzsche wrote his famous book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Nietzsche brought about a wave of pessimism and nihilism. In the present study the researcher has relied on the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud; Lacan; Ihab Hassan; Dr. Karen Horney and R. D. Laing and Cathy Caruth. The novel depicts the degradations and tragedies of the Jews who lost their faith in religion and God. The people of Goray deluded themselves with expectations that Messiah will soon appear. But all their hopes and aspirations ended in despair as the Messiah never appeared and the Jews of Goray continued living in quagmire of poverty. They were cheated by Shabbati Zevi who proved to be a false Messiah. He is converted into Mohammedanism. Singer explores the nature of human hope and human vision: “the Messianic hope becomes infinitely more devastating and demoralizing than the total despair produced by the savage violence of Chmelnicki and his followers.” (123). Singer lashes at these people who have false hopes and believe in false messiahs. He gives freedom to his Jew characters to follow God and adopt the vision of religion and God. The novel gives the theme of conflict between good and evil as the Jews after the Holocaust seem confused and

bewildered. Singer's characters happen to have been born Jewish but they are, above all, restless modern men and women who irreverently question everything.

Waiting for the Messiah

Singer's novel *Satan in Goray* is an allegory about the coming of the Messiah. The critics have flayed Singer for creating the allegorical pattern of the novel. Even Edwin Gittleman ignores the universal symbolic nature of Goray by suggesting that the town is unique. He writes, "Goray is the town on the verge of falling into the void, the town whose existence is measured by its proximity to the cosmic cataclysm ending the world. It is the apocalyptic town" (69). Singer tells the people that there is no remedy, no hastening system of belief that can bring the Messiah, symbolizing the end of hope for man. Singer observes that it is the fate of man to adhere to his faith or die. This is conveyed through the allegorical pattern as the Jews living in Goray experience psychological anguish for the loss of Messiah. The holy Rabi Benish Ashkenazi even announced that "he would not repair his roof for the coming of winter, since it would be a waste of time and money. Why bother, when we'll all soon be on the way to Israel anyway?" (228). Of his father, Joshua writes, "flushed, beaming, exultant, father painted the coming world in vivid, glowing pictures to hushed crowds in the house of worship" (229). When the Messiah does not come on Rosh Hashanah as predicted, "the autumn rains gushed down from leaden skies that hung so low they caught against the trees"(237). Singer has depicted the scenes of chaos and disorder in the world of Goray because of the absence of Messiah and the loss of faith in the Jews. Their expectations turn into disappointment; Joshua noted

that the houses are neglected and when the Messiah doesn't come on the Holy Day,

Singer writes:

At the last moment runners had been sent to the surrounding villages to buy the most necessary articles. But they had not as yet returned.

The unpainted houses huddled together, their roofs torn and their interiors visible; dusty attics full of cobwebs and rubbish. (179)

To conclude the novel *Satan in Goray* is a regions allegory dealing with the significance of the presence of Messiah and of hope and aspirations of the people of Goray who feel cheated as the false Messiah appears to dupe the Jews. Singer tells the Jews that they can enjoy peace and bliss if they are not supported by the real Messiah who is unhappy with them because of their sexual perversion and loss of faith in him. The Jews flouted the norms and rituals of their traditional religion after the Holocaust and embraced Christianity in their mad race to enjoy sexual liberty and material prosperity. This is the major cause of the psychological anguish and trauma.

Singer's novel *Shosha*, depicted the moral conflict and traumatic existence of Aaron who suffers from dilemma for his inconsistency with the faith of his ancestors and his hedonistic attitude to escape from the mental stress. Sigmund Freud presented a new theory exploring the various symptoms and causes of hysteria in his female patients. His theory became famous as the "seduction theory" highlighting the abnormal behavior of his patients including the feelings of being choked and sexual trauma. The protagonists of Hemingway behave in an abnormal manner. Aaron becomes an outsider in his own community; he remains a total stranger to his religion as his hedonistic activities alienate him from his past. Aaron suffers from a big blow

when his play fails on the stage because of non-seriousness of Betty and this failure symbolizes the failure of the evil forces and the victory of moral consciousness. This victory saves Aaron from literary suicide and anticipates his abandonment of hedonism. The real moral crisis begins in Aaron's life over the question of marriage with Betty or Shosha. He is almost on the rack and like Hamlet of Shakespeare he cannot decide whether to marry Betty or Shosha. In this part of the novels, Aaron appears a psychic wreck who has weak mind and poor sense of reasoning. He meets Shosha after a long time who is his childhood playmate. While walking in the Krochmanla Street, he meets Shosha and finds her exactly as she did twenty years ago. She looks beautiful and good in her behavior. Aaron feels excited and immediately decides to marry her. He decides to marry her as a part of the fulfillment of his childhood commitment to "take her for a wife" (15). Aaron begins to visit her house daily; becomes the paying guest of her house and often stays with her family during the night times. Shosha's mother Bashale treats him like her son and her sister treats him like her brother. Aaron wins the confidence of the family with his amiable behavior and friendly gestures. He swears to Shosha: "Shoshale, I have sworn by God and by the soul of my mother that I will never abandon. It's about time that you trust me" (117). Aaron is an uncertain and unpredictable character. On the one hand he is after Shosha and on the other hand he carries on with Betty who wants that he should marry her and tries to seduce him. She makes every effort to turn his attention away from Shosha. She poisons his ears against Shosha saying that "The girl is an idiot; she belongs to an institution. But you're in love with her. The moment you saw her, your eyes lit up in a strange way. I'm beginning to think you aren't in your mind yourself" (78). She urges Aaron not to start with Shosha as she is sick and physically

and mentally. She tells him that a girl like Shosha is not fit for marriage as she cannot produce children. Aaron should not fall in the trap of Shosha at all. Betty is in high spirits as she invites him to Gerrtner's restaurant one morning to comfort him and to share her feelings with him. She confesses that she is responsible for the failure of the drama and apologizes for her non-seriousness. She tempts him by making so many alluring offers to him reassuring him that she and Sam will buy the play and he will be given handsome amount. Both of them can try it in America. Betty requests Aaron to visit Sam who is struggling to survive in life. Sam Dreiman praises the talent of Aaron and tells him that in Poland there is no future for him. There are no book publishers as he says that the Yiddish newspapers are in trouble, the Jews are under threat of a Nazi invasion. He suggests that Aaron would marry Betty and come to America. He offers him many allurements. He promises that he is willing to become his agent to sell his books. He can set up his own trust fund and can lead an independent life without financial worries. He wants Aaron to make a promise that he will allow him to continue be close to Betty. He can keep his relationship with Shosha even after the marriage with Betty. Interestingly, Betty also gives her consent quickly to entrap Aaron who is hedonistic. Sam's proposal creates tensions in the mind of Aaron. He had decided to marry a girl like his own mother: "a decent chaste Jewish daughter" (142). He feels pity for men who have unchaste wives and the ugly past of Betty is known to him. She herself has told him regarding her sex adventures with men in Russia and America. She had seduced a Red Army man, a sailor also had enjoyed sexual pleasures and a director of a travelling actor's troupe also developed sexual intimacy with her. Betty was a whore and Sam "wants to be her lover after her marriage is a serious matter" (146). In his traumatic state, he seeks the

guidance of his father who appears and says: "Don't shame me, your mother, and your holy ancestors: All your deeds are noted in heaven" (146). His father abuses him as "Heathen: Betrayer of Israel and complains that Betty is a "cursed thing" (146). He has never revealed to Aaron before despite his prayers. In his distress he cries and revelations come to him as he says: "Father, save me" (146). He fails to take a firm decision and broods over the advantages of marriage with Betty. If he rejects the marriage proposal that would amount to staying in Poland and risking his life as he might be killed by the Nazis. He fears that he might be transported to Auschwitz and be thrown into the gas chamber. Marriage with Betty will provide him safety and security; he would get the American visa as Betty is the visa: "It's the visa, not the money, I justified myself, the fear of falling into the hands of the Nazis" (149). In a Saloon where he goes for shaving, a barber tells him that Hitler would smoke out the Jews "like bed bugs" (150). He thinks: "No I wouldn't stay in Poland, I'd leave, at any rate price" (152). Despite the advantages of marriage with Betty, he fails to his promise to marry her and is drawn to Shosha for her virtues. In her he finds the reflection of his own childhood: "I see myself" (78). He is drawn to Shosha and compares her virtues with Betty and finds that Shosha is a symbol of beauty, purity, innocence and simplicity whereas Betty is corrupt, cunning, unchaste and undependable. Shosha is a real lover; she has preserved her old books and the familiar pictures, her old play things and the poems and notes that he gave to her in childhood. Aaron tells her about his adventures with other women, she "dismissed it as of no importance" (95). When he expresses his desire to marry her, she expresses her innocence thus: "Mommy Aaron is going to marry me after Succoth" (154). Aaron broods over the good qualities of Shosha; she is a good girl with sound

economic sense. She will be a good housekeeper as she is not in the habit of wasting money like Betty. Being simple, she is like the child of Nature and he must not lose the opportunity to marry her. P. Gray observes that he “marries Shosha with the conviction that Shosha is the only woman in the world who would never betray him.” He is sure that his marriage with Shosha has brought good fortune. After his marriage, he gets an order to write the biography of Jacob Frank. He is extremely delighted on getting this order and tells Shosha: “Shoshale you’ve brought me luck, I have a job on a newspaper” (202). He firmly believes that Shosha being the symbol of purity and innocence is also a symbol of good luck. She represents all the virtues of Judaism and is a role model for the Jewish women.

To conclude, the critics of Singer observe that Aaron begins his life as a hedonist but after his marriage with Shosha he abandons his hedonism and expresses his concern for God and his religion. His rejection of Betty and marriage to a chaste and simple Jewish girl leads to his redemption and helps him to some extent to overcome from the trauma of life. He expresses his modern outlook in rejecting Betty; he is not for money and comfort but for domestic happiness and permanent love. He abandons Betty but she saves him at the end of the novel; she returns to Warsaw and provides a visa for Aaron saving him from the wrath of the Nazis. He is able to save himself like many Jews who migrated to America. The Jews are depicted crying: “There is no tomorrow’ only today!” Aaron cannot even the magnitude of the approaching terror unleashed by Hitler. The novel is an exploration of soul and method to escape the terror of life. Aaron is haunted by the ghost of death throughout his life and the consciousness of death brings in his life nihilism, despair and psychological anguish. The main objective of the research project “to analyze

themes, metaphors, symbols and stylistics variations used by Isaac Bashevis Singer” is achieved in this chapter analyzing the tests of the major novels of Singer. Singer is a powerful writer who is at once original in his stylistic techniques presenting the new themes in his novels. His prose is lucid, natural touching the heart. The portrayal of sufferings of the Jews is indeed heartrending. Yasha, Rachele, Jacob cry in despair as they are afflicted with the forces of chaos and disorder. It is observed that all the major novels of Bashevis Singer such as *The Family Moskat*, *The Magician of Lublin*, *Shosha*, *The Slave* and *Satan in Goray and The Manor* depict the scenes of the loss of social status and traumatic loss of self-experienced by the Jewish characters. Each novel is a harrowing tale of loss of identity; alienation and fragmentation of self.

Conclusion

Isaac Bashevis Singer is perhaps the one of the most celebrated American novelist who devoted sixty years of his writing career to express his concern to depict the problems and dilemmas of his Jewish protagonists who struggled against the existential realities of the harsh world being stranded and wounded by the Holocaust. The textual analysis of the novels of Singer reveals that he has dramatized the cause and the symptoms of the psychological ailments of the Jews who were displaced and struggled for survival. They were always haunted by the painful memories of the Holocaust and lived with the burden of guilty consciousness.

The textual analysis of the novels of all the novelists under research has revealed that all the major protagonists of Isaac Bashevis Singer suffer from the psychological ailments in one form or the other. F. Scott Fitzgerald, Joseph Heller, and Norman Mailer wrote war novels to depict the battered and wounded war heroes trapped in the abyss of pessimism and despair. The heroes of the quest are transformed into absurd and lost protagonists. They are tattered and fallen beings suffering from eternal disillusionment and frustration. The conspicuous feature of the American novels of the "Roaring Twenties" is the awareness of death and destruction and the loss of self experienced by the wounded soldiers. The novelists of the "Roaring Twenties" are confronted with the baffling problem of depicting a self that seems to have lost its reality. Darwinism led to the formation of the idea of the machine-man, the image of the mechanical self. Kepler's laws and Freud's explorations of the unconscious brought home the realization that man is but an

infinitesimal fraction of the energy that flows through the universe. In the age of Freud and Einstein, God ceased, as it were to reveal Himself in man.' Declaring that "modernism and tragedy are incompatible", Joseph Wood Krutch had rightly pointed out that modern malaise, nausea, angst, alienation, loss of identity, entropy, nihilism were forces that had dehumanized and deflated the heroes (Krutch 79). In this study serious efforts have been made to explore the causes and symptoms of the sick and wounded protagonists trapped in the abyss of darkness and despair. Nietzsche wrote his famous book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883). Nietzsche brought about a wave of pessimism and nihilism. In the present study the researcher has relied on the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud; Lacan; Ihab Hassan; Dr. Karen Horney and R. D. Laing and Cathy Caruth.

The German bombs killed Hadassah who is a major character in the novel. Asa Heshel is anguished, depressed suffering from the traumatic experiences. His death is indeed tragic as he dies as a heart broken Jew in the novel. Aaron in *Shosha* leads a hedonistic life to escape from the sordid and mundane world. He is always haunted by the idea that the world is very quickly heading towards a big catastrophe and very shortly the world will end. This psychological fear is the root cause of his psychological ailments. He expresses his anguish thus: "It is preferable to enjoy the present moment: "Yes, I had fine pleasure before I died and returned nothing" (Bashevis Singer, *Shosha* 56). Bashevis Singer's novel *Shosha* is about the theme of survival and death. Singer records that "from the day they were exiled from their land, Jews had lived in anticipation of death or the coming of Messiah" (239). In this novel the role of death is paramount; the Jews have lost their hope and faith and peace in the future. The protagonists of Singer struggle through time alone without

their God and this is the main cause of their psychological traumas. They wait death in the darkness before the dawn of life and civilization. In this study a fresh psychoanalytical perspective has been taken to reinterpret the novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer who was a contemporary of Earnest Hemingway William Faulkner and Scott Fitzgerald.

Singer puts his faith in Judaism that has survived in spite of the innumerable obstacles from within and without. The Jews suffered because of their alienation from traditional norms and rituals and their mad race of assimilation. Singer's hero is torn between two conflicting fates as he begins his quest; he is carried away lust; sensual pleasures grip his psyche and he often confronts failures as he confronts truth and God.

Singer observed that the Jewish people got afflicted with many psychological ailments such as depression; frustration; neurosis and anxiety disorder. The hospitals were occupied with the patients suffering from multiple mental diseases. In this study, the concept of the unconscious; hysteria; neurosis and the dissolution of self is analyzed focusing on the contribution of Sigmund Freud who came under the influence of Charles Darwin, Jean Martin Charcot, Josef Breuer. The study also explains Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theories including the explication of the theory of "death consciousness, depression, anxiety disorder, repression and sexuality. These theoretical concepts have been applied while analyzing the texts of Bashevis Singer In his essay entitled *On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: A Preliminary Communication—A lecture*, Freud considers "hysteria as a branch of psychological trauma" (Freud, *The Standard Edition* 365). Freud further

adds that “every case of hysteria can be looked upon as traumatic hysteria in the sense of implying a psychological trauma” (Freud, *Freud – Complete Works* 34). Freud developed his theory of hysteria and neurosis. He wrote the essay *The Psychotherapy of Hysteria* in which Breuer and Freud claimed the successful treatment of their patients having hysterical symptoms. In this study, the theories of Dr. Karen Horney on neurosis are also applied. Horney wrote *Our Inner Conflicts; Neurotic Personality of our Time; Neurosis and Human Growth* and explores the various causes and symptoms of neurosis found in human beings. According to Dr. Horney, neurosis is the product of chronic distress. Neurosis is not in any way a form of psychosis but it implies the loss of touch with reality of life. The majority of characters of Willa Cather are the victims of neurosis.

Each character of Bashevis Singer is alone survivor of the Jewish Holocaust struggling to find his roots; his religion love and God. He stands on the ruins of his destroyed world struggling to re-create Judaism in the void. Jacob in *The Slave* had witnessed the massacre of Chmielnicki and Herman Broder in the novel *Enemies* had to spend two years hiding in the hayloft. Both the characters are mentally stressed and psychologically disturbed as they confront a harsh world where the loss of identity is inevitable. Both are paralyzed by the terror of the modern civilization; its absurdity and anxiety. Herman is so much obsessed and terrified the existential realities that he wants to hide somewhere like Kafka’s cockroach. Jacob’s dilemma is heart rending as he refuses God to grant the quality of mercy: “It was different to believe in God’s mercy when murderers buried children alive. But God’s wisdom was evident everywhere” (Bashevis Singer, *The Slave* 19). In this study the main focus is to explore and investigate the traumatic experiences of the characters of

Singer relying on the theories of Sigmund Freud, Cathy Carruth and Karen Horney. The textual analysis of the texts of Bashevis Singer reveals that the death, trauma, depression and anxiety are the main concerns of Singer in his novels.

Singer's characters suffer moral and spiritual degeneration and the guilt that they are no longer in communion with God leads to psychological trauma. Jacob of *The Slave* is a lonely Jew cut off from his roots. He doesn't know the whereabouts his wife and two children and the other people of the town who are believed to be killed in the massacre. He is twenty-nine years old and is employed as a slave by Jan Bzik. He is a stranded protagonist leading the life of a prisoner in a remote pagan village with no hope and peace of mind. He is suffering from mental depravity and physical deformity and he seems to be the first primitive man on the earth. Jacob suffers because he is at war with himself; he is torn in body and in spirit. There is a conflict inside his soul; between his body and spirit; good and evil and finally he succumbs to his sensual desires. Singer's novel *The Estate* is packed with the images of death and alienation and psychic disorder of the characters. Ezriel suffers from the series of misfortunes; Shaindel dies in an insane asylum; his sister Mirale is exiled to Siberia; his lover Olga deserts him and becomes the mistress of a rich landlord and his daughter Zina becomes a revolutionary.

The present study has four main objectives and all the objectives have been achieved in all the chapters written in this study. The first objective of the study is "to trace the socio – political forces of the contemporary era and their impact on the psyche of the characters of Isaac Bashevis Singer." The first chapter entitled *Brief Candle* explores the socio-political forces and impact of these forces on the mind and

sensibility of Bashevis Singer. He wrote novels to depict the wounded psyche of the Jews haunted by the traumatic memories of the Holocaust and of the concentration camps. The hero of Singer's *The Slave* Jacob suffers because he is at war with himself; he is torn in body and in spirit. There is a conflict inside his soul; between his body and spirit; good and evil and finally he succumbs to his sensual desires. Singer's novel *The Estate* is packed with the images of death and alienation and psychic disorder of the characters. Ezriel suffers from the series of misfortunes; Shaindel dies in an insane asylum; his sister Mirale is exiled to Siberia; his lover Olga deserts him and becomes the mistress of a rich landlord and his daughter Zina becomes a revolutionary. All these events give him psychological tortures as he realizes that the modern world has given him nothing but pain and anguish. His son Joziek expresses his plight and says the truth that "Jews aren't men. You know that, Papa. We're emasculated" (Bashevis Singer, *Estate* 59). Bashevis Singer has depicted the real life and existence of the Jews who are mentally and psychologically tortured people leading a life in death:

We're people without a home and we can't live with anyone, we remain alien, always the object of mockery and derision. Nothing has changed. Conditions are as bad today as they were a thousand years ago. Even worse: in those days, there was no enlightenment. In those days, at least, Jews kept their faith. (359)

In the *Introductory* chapter, the main theories of psychoanalysis are explored to investigate the cause and the symptoms of the wounded characters of Singer. Jean Martin Charcot was the first French neurologist who observed that the main cause of

and mental illness is his alienation from the family. He explored the causes of hysteria and depression. He came to the conclusion that the symptoms of hysteria are sudden paralysis, amnesia, loss of memory and convulsions. Godfrey suffers from all these psychological ailments.

In the *Introductory* part, the psychoanalytical theories of Freud and Post-Freudian thinkers have been relied to investigate the causes and symptoms of depression and neurosis of Singer's characters. Sigmund Freud discusses the theory of displacement of self in *Interpretation of Dreams*. Jacques Lacan's *Mirror Stage* examined psychic pressures and tensions resulting into neurosis. Eric Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* explored the suppression of individual freedom leading to degeneration of sensibility. R.D Laing wrote *The Divided Self*-giving an account of schizoid and symptoms of schizophrenia. Dr. Karen Horney focused on human psychology explored the causes of neurosis in *Our Inner Conflicts*. Cathy Carruth published *Unexplained Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* and in this book, she explored all the causes and symptoms of trauma. The characters of Bashevis Singer experience trauma in their life in one way or the other. They exhibit abnormal behaviour and look stressed and depressed. Freud, Lacan, and Carruth propounded the theories of neurosis and trauma to investigate and explore the mental icebergs of human mind. All the latest theories on trauma and neurosis are applied to investigate the psychological ailments of the characters of Isaac Bashevis Singer. The Jewish protagonists of Bashevis Singer are trapped in the sensual desires as they run after women to escape from the harsh and cruel world. They always longed to commit suicide as they lost their courage to live after the Holocaust. Freud observes thus on suicide ideation. "Death is the great Unknown and the "gravest of all misfortunes" as

Freud observes. He further argues that death is the “main aim of all life” (Freud 123). Vickroy, in her work *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*, defines "trauma narratives" as "fictional narratives that help readers to access traumatic experience" (1). Cathy Carruth defines trauma as “direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury or other threat to one’s physical integrity or witnessing an event that involves death injury or a threat to the physical integrity of another person” (Cathy Carruth, *Unexplained Experiences* 31). Sigmund Freud has investigated human nature from a psychodynamic perspective. In each individual hidden aspects of mental life remain unknown. Freud has made several efforts to acquaint the individuals to comprehend the psychological defense mechanisms to cope with the uncertainties and challenges of routine life. In this study it is found that the characters of Singer employs their defense mechanisms in several situations and emerge successful in fighting with the odds of life. But the characters such as Jacob, Aaron, Asa Heshel benet, Yasha Mazur remain ignorant or lack inner vitality to use their defense mechanism and as a result suffer the multiple psychological ailments.

Singer has portrayed that Holocaust is not one incident, it is narrative a discourse and a recurring nightmare. This is a tragic tune which is played by political and social agents for their selfish interests but for the survivors this is a reality which they live a relive every day. The social political incidents and discursive narratives impact their everyday life. It makes their scars go deep and never allow them to heal. They are chased by racial forces and ethnic cleansing is a contestant process. The Jews are pushed out from city limits and compelled to live in ghettos in most unhygienic conditions. Their children are deprived of basic educational rights. Their

business opportunities are marginalized and they are not allowed to perform their religious duties and even they are not allowed bait olam (Jewish cemeteries) at particular places.

The second objective of the study is “to foreground Holocaust and its deep-rooted psycho-social implications.” In the second chapter entitled: *Jews and Their Predicaments: An Analysis of the Selected Novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer* the Jewish Holocaust is discussed in detail. It is argued that the Jewish Holocaust was an unusual event in the history of mankind. The Holocaust literature throws a light on the brutal cruelties of Nazis on European Jews. The Holocaust was the systematic effort to eliminate European Jews before and during World War II. The Jews were rounded up and transported like animals to concentration camps such as Buna and Auschwitz where they were sent to the gas chambers. The Holocaust continues to bring endless sufferings and psychological ailments to the survivors and to their families. The trauma of the holocaust survivors was so tremendous that as a result they stayed in a state of internal dissonance. Giorgio Agamben in his *Remnants of Auschwitz: the Witness and the Archive* traces the social and political causes that motivated Adolf Hitler to launch the drive to decimate the Jews. Hannah Arendt published *Men in Dark Times*, *The Human Condition* and *The Life of the Mind* in which she discussed the savage cruelties of the Nazi army.

Ted Hughes reviewed Singer’s *The Family Moskat* in *The New York Book Review* and observed that Singer has depicted the Jewish consciousness in his epic novel in a poetical style. His characters are “disintegrated as they are haunted by the nightmarish memories of the Holocaust” (Hughes 613). Asa Heshel ben-net; innocent

and philosophical feels that he is misfit in the Jewish society. Reb is the first to suffer psychic depression; he grows sick and lies on his death bed regretting the way he led his life. Asa is always in conflict and suffers eternal tortures because of the guilty consciousness. He fails to follow the dictates of the Hasidic values of life. Asa is an anti-hero of Singer; his painful struggle ends in despair and he always feel lonely and cut off from the roots of the Moskat tribe. He feels that the Jews are trapped in history by family and heritage. Freud observes that the guilt and repressed memories lead to the internal psychic disorder. To Freud, when a subject is attacked externally, it becomes unconscious, but “it also remains unconsciously active” (Freud, *The Unconscious* 47). Freud further states that the “repressed does not constitute the whole of the unconscious.

Jacob in *The Slave* is psychologically battered since he feels that he has no divine father and is abandoned to a life of care, anxiety and failure. Jacob is sick of life as he leads a directionless life. He lives alone on the top of a mountain as a social outcast bound to herd cows. Jacob is sick and sullen because the semblance of civilization is lost. The tall girls come to him exciting his sexual powers but behaving like beasts. He is sick of the heartlessness of the people around him and becomes depressed. Jacob lives alone atop the mountain; Jacob would benefit greatly from abandoning his faith. Powerful temptations haunt him every day, year after year.

The hero of *The Magician of Lublin* is Yasha Mazur who leads a life of sexual adventures “walking the tightrope merely inches from disaster” He is a heretic and is cut off from the roots of the Jewish tradition of nobility and this is the main cause of his mental disorder. He is false and leads an artificial life indulging in the

tricks of his magical games. Singer gives him freedom to make conscious decisions that determine the progress of life. In his journey of life, he is battered and suffers the psychological anguish leading an alienated life; changing women in the mad pursuit of sexual pleasures. His libertine nature, sexual exuberance becomes the chief causes of his degradation and depravity. The relationship with a middle-class Gentile Emilia brings anguish and depression in Yasha's life. He wants her to be his mistress but Emilia wants him to marry her divorcing his wife.

Bashevis Singer wrote his famous novel *Enemies: A Love Story* in 1972 depicting the tattered life and the struggles of Herman Broder. The plot of the novel portrays the life poignant life of Herman conditioned by the gripping force of past trauma. Herman is a neurotic protagonist of Singer who escaped Nazi persecution by hiding in hayloft for three years with the support of Yadviga. He marries Yadviga; migrates to New York and struggles to survive in a mercantile alien society. In *Shosha*, Singer dramatizes the fate of the Jews marching toward their own destruction in pre-war Poland. They are trapped like beasts in a cage by the will to believe that resulted into their eternal anguish. Singer believes that life continues its eternal cycle of destruction and restoration, of death and rebirth. The main protagonist of the novel is Aaron Greidinger who is also the main narrator is leading a hellish life because of his libertine nature.

The social bonding of the victims of Holocaust has deeply impacted this unfortunate event. Their understanding of the world is myopic as they watch and analyze the world through the prism of Holocaust. It also made their social integration weak and they feel uprooted and scared. Its psychological implications

are more severe than the social ones, they suffer from diseases like depression, schizophrenia, anxiety disorder, survival guilt, suicidal ideation etc. The religious bond also diluted resulting in subsequent falling apart of social institutions and rise in immorality. The overall society is subject to complete anomic disorder.

The third objective of the study is “to analyze themes, metaphors, symbols and stylistic variations used by Isaac Bashevis Singer” and in the third chapter entitled: “*Politics of Survival and Hysterical Outbursts in the Selected Novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer*” the politics of survival is explored by analyzing the texts of Bashevis Singer and his use of images and symbols in the texts. The Jews were treated like animals by the Germans; they were killed and butchered and millions of them were killed. Grippled by the feeling of insecurity many of them migrated to other countries. Singer himself migrated to America to save his life. Singer has depicted the theme of the consciousness of survival of his characters who struggle against the forces of chaos and uncertainty unleashed by the Holocaust. Singer has depicted the cries of the Jews and their hysterical outbursts in his novels. Yasha of *The Magician of Lublin* struggles in his life to survive. Yasha is always disturbed by the inner demons threatening his destruction. Guilt-ridden, he is always fearful of his own capacity for evil and of the fear of losing the precarious balance he maintains on the tightrope. He is so much stressed that he is on the verge of madness, landing smack in the middle of the demonic part of the self. Yasha’s fragmentation of life, evident in his drifting from one woman to another and from one family to another, is indicative of a more profound fragmentation within himself. Singer believes that dehumanization and repression are the chief forces that lead to the loss of self of the individuals living in the ghettos. Freud “insisted that our civilization is a repressive

one. There is a conflict between the demands of conformity and the demands of our instinctive energies, explicitly sexual". (Quoted in R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self* 13). Freud in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) explored the mystery of death; the instincts of death in human beings are inevitable as death is the main destination of life. In *The Magician Lublin*, the images of God and the magician are conflated so that the ontological search of Yasha for redemption leads him to awareness. He can perform "even finer tricks" (400). In *Satan in Goray*, the opposing forces are presented as two distinct elements within the community. Yasha Mazur's entire life is a battle to survive in the harsh environment. In desperation, he realizes that he can never conquer the sexual drive. He can only negotiate with it, appease it, or in some other way deal with it, so that it remains dormant. He never knows when it will awaken to begin another round. Jacob of Singer's *The Slave* with his Judaism struggles to survive in a world whose goal is their obliteration. Jacob is a prisoner in exile and even in his traumatic situation he is committed to his Judaism craving the Jewish laws onto a rock. He inscribes them in his mind and in the granite. Judith Herman (1992) pointed out in her book *Trauma and Recovery*; that "atrocities refuse to be buried" (Herman 1). They penetrate into the conscious and unconscious minds of the survivors. The psychological wounds are too deep to be cured. The Holocaust survivors were in the grip of powerful and acute trauma resulting into their internal dissonance. Sigmund Freud discusses the theory of displacement of self in *Interpretation of Dreams*. R.D Laing wrote *The Divided Self* giving an account of schizoid and symptoms of schizophrenia. Singer has portrayed a barbarous world. The struggles of the Jewish characters is full of challenges as they have to confront the forces of evils; orthodox traditions. They feel misfit in the society which is fast

growing and the Christian values are dominating. The Jewish characters of Singer feel alienated because of their disconnection from the Jewish God and this disconnection becomes the major cause of their sufferings and psychological ailments. Being alienated they resort to sexual adventures to escape their anxieties and tensions and ultimately feel guilty. Jacob is a victim of guilt though nature seems to sanction their sexual consummation next morning: "Dew covered the grass, and each droplet gleamed. Birds were singing, and in the distance a cow lowed" (70). He exhorts Wanda to embrace Judaism, though he feels sinful. He realizes that Wanda's desire to accept his faith is not natural and truthful but is the result of impure motives. Their union is a moral transgression of the Jewish and the Polish laws. Singer presents men in terms of their traumatic experience and psychological aberrations. Jacob suffers from alienation and according to Patrick Colin Hogan "alienation is not itself an experience one chooses to have, it is, rather, an inability, as we shall see, frequently associated with emotional and mental disintegration" (Hogan 88). Jacob's dilemma is that he cannot forget his wife and children and he remain restless and depressed. He becomes a guilty of murder through his forgetfulness. He had witnessed horror of Chmielnicki genocide and in such a case his memory becomes a source of poignant torture. His struggle is for love, identity and for God and all his dream and hopes are shattered leaving him dead in body and in spirit. Jacob has all the symptoms of trauma; depression; anxiety, frustration, alienation and intrusive memories of the loss of his wife, family and children and Jewish identity.

All the main characters of Bashevis Singer's novel *Enemies: A Love Story* are immigrant survivors of the Jewish Holocaust. They are settled in America but they are always haunted by the intrusive memories of the past trauma as the past repeats

itself in the life of each character. Singer has poignantly depicted the psychological pain and anguish of the major characters in the plot of the novel. Emmanuel Levinas (1988) observes that the Holocaust is the real model “of gratuitous suffering which left a hole in the personal and collective life of the Jews” (Levinas 162). Herman marries Yadviga and migrates to New York for safety and survival. He is jobless there and penniless but he earns his living by ghost sermons writing for a rabbi. His sexual relations with several women land him in problems and as a professional he emerges as a pack of lies. Herman believes that “survival is based on guiles; he is devious and enmeshed in lies.”

Major themes discussed by Singer are Racism, Assimilation, alienation, dualism, nihilism, tyranny of passions, belief, violence etc. To highlight the impact of these social issues he uses metaphors such as “The rising mist” this particular language use is used to enhance the imagery, “grunted like animals” expressing the disgust and vulgar behavior of Gentiles, “The ribs elastic” is used for flexibility and quick movement and symbols such as Rabbi is used for religion and krochmalna street for violence. His stylistic variations are functional in nature and helps readers to understand the plight of Holocaust victims.

The fourth objective of the study is “to analyze select texts of Isaac Bashevis Singer with reference to psychoanalysis” and in the fourth chapter entitled: *Psychological Expressions of the Social and Economic Implications of the Jews in Selected Novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer* the causes and the symptoms of the psychological ailments of the Jewish characters are explored. The Holocaust of Hitler brought about the reign of terror in Europe and this led to the recession of economy

and the loss of business. The Jews were basically business men and they were worst hit as the forces of chaos and disorder brought about uncertainty and huge financial loss. The shops of the Jews were burnt by the Nazis and they were forced to flee from Europe to escape death and destruction. The economic disaster of the Jews was a major factor that brought the psychological anguish. The huge loss of money shattered their life; their families were disrupted and they lost faith in God too. The displacement and homelessness brought about in their psychological ailments. No wonder their psyche was wounded by the economic forces unleashed by Weimer government. Hannah Arendt comments thus: The Jews were thus seen as having "happiness without power, wages without work, a home without frontiers, religion without myth" (Arendt 10). Adorno thus believes that "the projection of power and otherness onto the Jew is not mere appearance, but historically connected to the perceptual system of civilization" (Adorno 123). The Jews indulged into sexual adventures to overcome the depression of life. According to Freud, "the more intense the repression of primary erotic drives in a society, the greater a mobilization of surplus aggressiveness against the repression. Singer is not interested in the ordinary life of a common Jew who struggles for survival. Singer's focus is on the values and realities of life but on the aberrations of human psychology. Singer gives the Jewish background constantly and his characters change their places of residence and struggle to assimilate in new culture. This struggle also becomes a cause of their psychological anguish. Singer has given the historical setting of the novel. Jacob of *The Slave* is presented as a symbol of the Jewish people and his psychological trauma is the outcome of moral and spiritual disconnection from God. In the novel *The Family Moskat*, Bashevis Singer deals with the themes of social and economic

worries of the Jews who were displaced and migrated to other countries for safety and survival. The policies of Hitler were anti-Jews who lost their homes, business and stability of life. They were treated as the “Other” in the alien lands but they were helpless. Singer has used the symbolical language in the novel to depict the inner tensions and the anxieties of the Jews resulting into the disintegration and the lack of unity of *The Family Moskat*. The Jews lost their faith in Talmud and Kabala as they started believing that God had vanished from the universe and there was none who could save the Jews. The Jewish consciousness is a part of all his characters; and the Jewish God is always laughing as He watches their futile struggles of life. In the novels of Singer God is invoked, shouted at and wrestled with on every page of Singer. Singer believes that the Jews survive today because of God and God exists because of the Jews; it is a complex and exciting relationship depicted in the novels of Bashevis Singer. Singer has depicted the reality of the Jews; their struggles and confrontations; failings and depression and nihilism. Hertz Yanovar is dispirited in the midst of the bombardment of Warsaw. The main cause of the loss of self and depression of the characters of Bashevis Singer is the oppression and cruelty that they experienced in this world. The characters of Singer are not great heroes as they don't perform great deeds but are distressed people since the world has crushed them. Singer's novel *The Slave* depicts the traumatic experiences of the Jews who lost families and homes because of the atrocities of the Chmielnicki massacre. The loss of home and business was a great setback for the Jews. Singer gives the metaphor of slavery to depict the poignant condition of the Jews. Singer's novel *The Slave* is a story of a displaced and homeless Jew and the plot analyzes the internal and external pressures of Jacob as he struggles with his faith. The Holocaust survivors were in the

grip of powerful and acute trauma resulting into their internal dissonance. Sigmund Freud discusses the theory of displacement of self in *Interpretation of Dreams*. Jacques Lacan's *Mirror Stage* examined psychic pressures and tensions resulting into neurosis. Eric Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* explored the suppression of individual freedom leading to degeneration of sensibility. R.D Laing wrote *The Divided Self* giving an account of schizoid and symptoms of schizophrenia.

Singer's novel *Shosha* is another heartrending tale of pessimism and of economic worries. The plot reveals the hollowness of life; its fears and terrors that grip the psyche of the characters lost in the bog of sexuality and hedonism. Aaron reads scientific discoveries of Archimedes, Copernicus and Newton to justify his hedonistic pleasures of life. The majority of the characters in the novel are sick physically and mentally. Betty tells that Shosha is sick both physically and mentally, warns him that a girl like Shosha is not capable of living with a man and producing children. Betty warns him not to be in the trap of Shosha otherwise he will be ruined. Singer's novels *Enemies: A Love Story* and *Shosha*. *The Magician of Lublin*, *Shosha*, *The Family Moskat*, and *The Manor* depict the traumatic characters who live under constant menace of the Nazis. A large number of the Jews migrate to America to escape the killings of Hitler.

Singer portrays characters which under the influence of different vagaries or forces of chaos go through various psychological disorders like depression, neurotic disorders, schizophrenia etc. Through the contestant exposure of unconscious mind to numerous traumatic experiences and as a result of chaos inflicted wide ethnic cleansing, holocaust and specific targeting of Jews got manifested. The

manifestations are directly proportional to the kind of circumstances and the level of psychological strength of a particular character. Some characters like Yasha Mazur are depicted to be psychologically resistant to some extent while as others are weak and resultantly got completely knocked off like Hadassah. These ailments have developed as a result of constant exposure of these characters to psycho-social, psycho-economic, psycho-religious and psycho-political traumas.

Singer in his different works exposes different psychoanalytical interpretations although some are common while others are specific. Some characters fight back or mitigate the psychological over burden by getting involved into other activities while others gave in to these. Singer displays psychological trauma of characters through out the course of narration and the transition encompasses various attributes of psychology vis a vis psycho-social, psycho-economic etc

In the fifth chapter entitled *Comparative Analysis of the Selected Novels of Bashevis Singer* comparative study of all the major texts of Singer is done to depict the psychological ailments of the Jewish people. He gives an insight into the inner turbulent world of the characters trapped in the abyss of darkness. Singer created a galaxy of characters such as Herman, Jacob, Masha, Tamara, Yadviga and Yasha who experienced the psychological ailments such as anxiety disorder, alienation, depression, neurosis and loss of self. Each novel of Singer is a heart-rending tale of the struggles of the Jewish protagonists who are the victims of external and internal forces of chaos and disorder. There is a pervasive tone of protest and pessimism in each novel dramatized from different angles. They live in a world of illusion and fantasy as the real life is always tormenting them. Singer's family saga, *The Family*

Moskat, together with *The Manor* and the sequel *The Estate* form a trilogy narrating the tale of the disintegration of Polish Jewry. The disintegration is caused by the displacement and rootlessness of the Jews who are forced to move from place to place to survive. *The Family Moskat* reflects a process of disintegration of the family culture of the Jews who uses their personal will and liberty in their struggle to survive in the post-holocaust era. The plot is set in Poland of the early twentieth century as the historical events of Hitler's entry into Warsaw. The pattern of events of the novel is woven with the thread of paradox of modern Jewish history providing Singer the vision of the phantasmagoria that was Jewish life in Poland. Singer devoted his life to understand the issues afflicting the Jews and came to the conclusion that the Jews are suffering from the tensions and anxieties because of their loss of connection from the Jewish religion and culture. This disconnection is one of the major causes of their loss of self. In the *The Family Moskat*, Singer explores the issue of Jewish identity after the Jewish Holocaust.

Social Relevance of the Study

The relevance of this study is indubitable as millions of people are suffering from mental diseases all over the world. Life of a modern man is full of challenges; trials and tribulations are very common. The study inspires the youth in a positive manner by conveying a message that life is long and challenging but we should face the existentialist reality boldly and with courage and high spirit. The perception and the vision of Singer of the world is examined who gives positive direction to humanity with power to confront the psychological ailments afflicting the humanity today.

The study has a positive impact on the society as it gives the youth a mental strength to face the difficulties of life. The Jew protagonists of Singer realize that they have to develop the capacity to wrestle with the existential concerns and improve their conditions. They suffered a lot in hands of destiny but did not lose hope and continue their struggle relentlessly in their quest of survival. I. Ajzen in his article “Nature and Operation of Attitudes” is of view that positive attitude, positive thinking and optimism are now known to be a root cause of many positive life benefits. Yasha Mazur struggles to survive in the harsh community performing his role as a magician and risking his life to entertain the audience. He acts as a role model for the society and also inspires youth by highlighting the idea that suicide is not a solution to the problem and thus gives inspiration to live life facing all the risks involved in the job.

The study highlights the fact that the psychic anxiety can be controlled by developing positive attitude. R. Pettinger in his article “Developing a Positive Mindset: Changing Your Attitude to Change Your Life” asserts that a positive attitude is a strategy to deal with problems and to move towards success. Jacob and Yasha realize that no one can escape the reality of life and both of them accept the reality of life and are successful to overcome the anxieties and tensions of life. The research examines the fact that mental strength is an essential element, required to face the harsh realities of life. The characters of the novels of Bashevis Singer learn various coping strategies to survive in this harsh world. Freud advocates the idea that individual experiences a severe trauma may find it easier to dissociate and move away from self as a means of coping. Jacob and Yasha try these therapies to overcome their depression. The scope of the present study is that it adds new dimensions to the research domain since all the texts of the Singer have been

investigated from the Psychoanalytical perspective. The contribution of the present study is that it will help other researchers to have a better understanding of various psychological problems along with their causes and symptoms. The novelists of postmodern era Thomas Pynchon, Thomas Updike, Kurt Vonnegut and Vladimir Nabokov can be studied from this perspective.

The study is useful for the society since the study highlights the positive side of the struggles of the protagonists. The main thesis of Singer is his faith in Jewish God. Nobody can lead a happy and peaceful life breaking his ties from Jewish God. The Jews who violated the norms and rituals of the Jewish culture suffered. The study conveys the message to Jewish youth to accept the reality of life and also gives positive direction to face the obstacles of life boldly. It also gives them social and psychological awareness to confront the anxieties and psychic pressures. The present research also examines the fact that the physical wounds are curable but the wounds on the psyche remain incurable and give endless torments to man. The present research paves the way for further research in the field by highlighting the already conducted research. So this study will inspire the coming posterities for research and exploration.

Limitations of the Study

Every effort has been made to explore the themes and challenges confronted by the Jewish characters as depicted by Bashevis Singer. But the researcher also faced many limitations as the texts of Singer are basically written in Yiddish and later translated into English. The researcher was therefore constrained to rely on English versions as a result many clues are expected to be missing while interpreting and exploring the themes of Singer.

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CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION OF PAPERS FOR Ph.D.

This is to certify that, Ms. Hina Wali pursuing Ph.D. (**Full Time/ Part Time**) programme in Department of, English with Registration Number, 11719593 under the Guidance of, Dr. Balkar Singh has the following Publications / Letter of Acceptance in the Referred Journals / Conferences mentioned thereby fulfilling the minimum programme requirements as per the UGC.

S. No.	Title of paper with author names	Name of journal / conference	Published date	Issn no/ vol no, issue no	Indexing in Scopus/ Web of Science/ UGC-CARE list (please mention)
1.	Social Roles and Social Discourse in Isaac Bashevis Singer's <i>The Manor</i>	Shodh Sarita	29/3/2021	2348-2397/ 8, 29	UGC
2.	Social Stratification and Social Dissonance in the Selected Texts of Isaac Bashevis Singer	Shodh Sanchar Bulletin	27/3/2021	2229-3620/ 11,41	UGC
3.	Trauma and Survival Instinct: A Study of Isaac Bashevis Singer's Satan in Goray	IJRCS	22/7/2021	2456-6683/ 5,22	UGC

S. No.	Title of paper with author names	Name of journal / conference	Published date	Issn no/ vol no, issue no	Indexing in Scopus/ Web of Science/ UGC-CARE list (please mention)
4.	Trauma and Survival Instinct: A Study of Isaac Bashevis Singer's Satan in Goray	International Conference on Global Trends in English Language, Literature and Linguistics'.	17 July – 18 July 2021		Jointly organized by School of Languages, Literature and Linguistics EU English Literature Club Research Cultural Society and Sponsored by Scientific Research Association
5.	Holocaust and Trauma: Comparative Analysis of the Selected Novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer	7 th JGU International Literary Conference	23 July – 25 July, 2021		Organized by O.P.JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY
6.	Displacement and Disintringation of Jews in Isaac Bashevis Singer's The Slave	International Conference on Power, (in)Equality and Cultures of Resistance: and Interdisciplinary Approach to Humanities and Social Sciences	28 and 29 th January 2021		Organized by School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Held at Sharda University Greater Noida, India

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7.	Traumatic Experiences of Characters in Bashevis Singer's Enemies: A Love Story	Journal of Critical Reviews	8 th July 2020	2394-5125 Vol 7, Issue 16,2020	Scopus
8.	Literature as a Therapy: Yasha Mazur as a case Study in Isaac Bashevis Singer's The Magician of Lublin	Shodh Sarita	Oct-December 2019	2348-2397 Vol 6, Issue 24	UGC
9.	Traumatic Life of Asa Heshel and Hadassah in the Family Moskat of Isaac Bashevis Singer	Shodh Sarita	Oct-Dec 2019	2348-2397 Vol 6, Issue 24	UGC
10.	Displacement and Disintringation of Jews in Isaac Bashevis Singer's The Slave	Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research	15/5/2019	2349-5162 Vol 6, Issue 5	UGC

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