THE TENANTS IN THE EVOLUTION OF BERNARD MALAMUD'S ART

by

DAVID R. MESHER

B.A., University of Washington, 1971

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department

of

English

We accept this thesis as conforming

to the required standard

© DAVID R. MESHER, 1973

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

April 1973

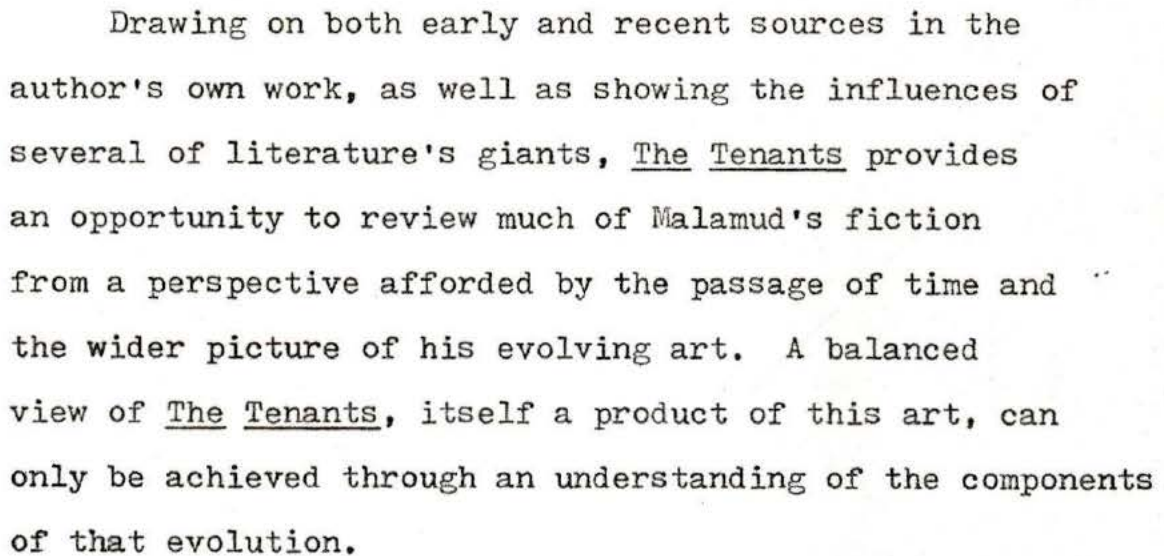
All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced
in whole or in part by mimeograph or other means,
without the permission of the author.

Abstract

Supervisor: Professor Herbert F. Smith

The Tenants, Bernard Malamud's fifth novel, takes place in New York City, a background unused by the author since the period of _The Assistant_. Like the setting, many of the techniques and motifs of the novel show a revival of the influence of _The Assistant_ and of Malamud's early stories. Most noticeable among the revived techniques is the author's return to the confrontation of doubles, or counterparts; in a sense, Harry Lesser and Willie Spearmint, in _The Tenants_, attempt to reenact the relationship of Morris Bober and Frank Alpine, in _The Assistant_. Even the formats of these two novels are similar: both are reconstructed from earlier stories and, as with _The Assistant_, an understanding of the antecedent stories is necessary for a full interpretation of _The Tenants_.

But this novel is more than a return to an earlier, successful format. _The Tenants_ must also be seen in the context of Malamud's latest work. The experimental, post-modern techniques and style of the novel indicate a progressive development in the novelist's art, a development also suggested by Malamud's continuing concern with the relationship of art and life, which constitutes the central tension of Lesser's characterization.



Drawing on both early and recent sources in the author's own work, as well as showing the influences of several of literature's giants, The Tenants provides an opportunity to review much of Malamud's fiction from a perspective afforded by the passage of time and the wider picture of his evolving art. A balanced view of The Tenants, itself a product of this art, can only be achieved through an understanding of the components of that evolution.

Contents

Abstract ii

Acknowledgements. v

List of Abbreviations vi

Introduction 7

Part One: Naming Names. 19

Part Two: The Stranger as Fallen Angel 58

Part Three: The Promised End. 93

Footnotes 126

Bibliography of Works Cited 143

Acknowledgements

For his help in the preparation of this thesis, I wish to thank Professor Melvyn D. Faber. For his advice on and beyond the thesis, I am indebted and very grateful to Professor Herbert F. Smith. And to my wife Marsha I am eternally thankful for her encouragement and love.

D.M.

List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations for Malamud's works have been used for the purposes of citation and the identification of the volume in which a short story has been collected.

A . . The Assistant

F . . The Fixer

IF . . Idiots First

MB . . The Magic Barrel

N . . The Natural

NL . . A New Life

PF . . Pictures of Fidelman

T . . The Tenants

For the setting of The Tenants, his fifth novel, Bernard Malamud returns to New York City; yet the novel represents a return within the author's work in more respects than just the locale. Though New York provided Malamud with the settings for his greatest critical successes, his second novel The Assistant and at least half the short stories collected in The Magic Barrel and Idiots First, he abandoned that urban background for almost a decade. In the interval, Malamud published two novels: A New Life, his third, which deals with an Easterner who takes a position at a college in the Pacific Northwest, and The Fixer, which is set in pre-revolutionary Russia. During the writing of The Fixer, and for some time after its publication, Malamud published no short stories. The stories that ended this period of reticence follow the pattern of the novels. Several were collected, with earlier stories, in Pictures of Fidelman, set in Italy; "Man in the Drawer," another story from this period, is set in the Soviet Union. The Tenants, with its return to the urban setting, established a precedent for Malamud's more recent stories. In most of these, published since the appearance of his last novel, such as "My Son the Murderer," "God's Wrath," or "The Silver Crown," the background is again New York City.

In <u>The Tenants</u> Malamud also returns to the use of the double, a technique of major importance in each of his first three novels but abandoned in <u>The Fixer</u>. The particular variation of that technique utilized by the author in his latest novel indicates, like the setting, a revival of the influence of <u>The Assistant</u>; the relationship of the main characters in both novels can be reduced to a common formula. Frank Alpine is an apprentice to Morris Bober in the latter's grocery store, and similarly Willie Spearmint studies the craft of fiction writing with Harry Lesser; of course, this reduction is valid for the sake of comparison only. The relationships are actually much more complex, and are developed quite differently in each novel. Nevertheless, the techniques used in these two novels are especially similar when contrasted with the application of the double in either <u>The Natural</u>, Malamud's first novel, or <u>A New Life</u>.

There are also similarities in the structural format of <u>The Assistant</u> and <u>The Tenants</u>. The former novel is partially constructed from a series of early stories. Of Malamud's first seven stories published, three deal with failing grocery stores, and the plot of each is worked into <u>The Assistant</u>. In "The Cost of Living" (<u>IF</u>), a new grocery opens in the neighborhood; "The Prison" (<u>MB</u>) deals with stealing from a store; and in "The Bill" (<u>MB</u>), the owner's generosity is misused, and an account is never

settled. A fourth story, "The First Seven Years" (MB), concerns a shoemaker, but is also integrated into The Assistant: like Frank Alpine, the shoemaker's assistant works for the love of his employer's daughter. A fifth story, "The Place is Different Now," contributes the character of Ward Minogue (in the story, Wally Mullane) to The Assistant.[1] The two remaining stories of Malamud's first seven have also been reworked into later writings. "Benefit Performance" is an early draft of what became "Suppose a Wedding," in Idiots First. The last story of the group, "The Death of Me" (IF), was not utilized for twenty years, when it was reworked into The Tenants; the novel's violent climax is an adaptation of the story, in which two men resort to brutality to achieve a personal contact, while a third avoids interacting with them even on the most basic, destructive level. Though many other stories from this early period contribute to The Tenants, the novel's characterizations and plot are also drawn from more recent sources. For example, the format of presenting stories by characters within the novel is an outgrowth of a recent development in Malamud's fiction, and an indication of his growing interest in the artist as the subject of his fiction. In the three stories Malamud published prior to The Tenants, a similar format was used. "Pictures of the Artist" (PF) includes a series of descriptions of Fidelman's paintings. "Man in the Drawer"

and "An Exorcism" are prototypes for the novel's use of internal stories; in each, one of the characters of the story, Levitansky and Simmson respectively, is a writer of fiction whose short stories are particularized in the text. Indeed, Fogel, the established writer who is Simmson's mentor in "An Exorcism," strongly resembles Lesser. A lonely bachelor, Fogel has written two novels, both of which "had been received with praise, though not much more; and Fogel had for the past six years labored on a third, about half finished."[2]

There is even some internal evidence in The Tenants, perhaps specious, which seems to document the return by the author to an earlier period of his work as consciously motivated. Harry Lesser, the central protagonist, has had two novels published. The first, which Lesser considers a good novel, was "a critical success that couldn't outsell its small advance."[3] This may be a reference to The Assistant, though that novel has proved to be hardly a financial loss; yet it was not a popular success, as is often the case with recent, critically acclaimed works. The second of Lesser's novels, which he considers bad, was "by good fortune bought by the movies" (p. 8 T). The Fixer is the only novel by Malamud made into a film, and if the analogy between Lesser and his author is valid, the negative evaluation of the second novel implies a covert rejection of The Fixer. There are other passages which seem to support this interpretation as well. Irene, for example,

plays roughly the same role in The Tenants as Helen does in The Assistant: a Jewish girl having an affair with a non-Jew. After reading Lesser's first novel, Irene tells Harry that "the girl reminds me of myself when I was her age" (p. 115 T). The greatest weakness of this analogy is that Malamud has written his fifth novel, while Lesser is only writing his third; if the interpretation is justifiable, The Natural and A New Life must be completely eliminated. But this elimination is not necessarily a serious problem, since a fiction writer is not constrained by the same principles as a biographer. The analogy deals only with The Assistant and The Fixer because those are the most important novels hitherto in Malamud's canon, and the works that have received most of the critical attention given the author. The implied rejection of The Fixer in this analogy substantiates the novelist's apparent revival of elements in his art absent since The Assistant.[4]

Though in its setting, technique of the double, and integration of short stories into the plot, The Tenants constitutes a return by Malamud to an earlier period, other aspects of the novel are examples of an ongoing evolution in the author's art. The title of Lesser's novel within the novel, The Promised End, is an instance of this. Formerly, the goal of Malamud's protagonists was "a new life," but this is a misleading phrase. The

new life is achieved by an enlightenment through suffering, but beyond the enlightenment there is little "new;" for many even the suffering continues. Progressively, Malamud begins to concentrate upon the moment of enlightenment rather than its results or effects. The rebirth begins to take precedence over the new life into which the character is reborn. Thus Roy Hobbs, in The Natural, begins a new life by affirming his love for Iris and rejecting Memo, Gus, and the Judge long before the novel ends. In contrast, Frank Alpine assumes his future role as an impoverished Jewish grocer at the conclusion, but The Assistant ends before he has assured himself of Helen's love and of their future life together. A New Life finishes with a final ironic reminder that Levin is duplicating the life of Leo Duffy; though his new life with Pauline and her children has commenced, his old role as Duffy's double has yet to be discarded. Like the other protagonists, Yakov Bok is left at the threshold of his rebirth in The Fixer: the trial that will free or condemn him for life is about to start. But the emphasis of the novel is on the moment when Bok accepts the political and moral responsibility for his fellow man; a new or future life seems incidental to the moment of this acceptance. In The Tenants, the instant of enlightenment is brought into focus even more sharply. Except for Levenspiel's anticlimactic wail, the novel

ends at the moment the mortal blows are delivered; with the implied deaths of Willie and Lesser, the novel's conclusion can hardly be seen as a new life. Though the cost to the writers is great, the end of The Tenants nevertheless fulfills the promise of enlightenment, and in that sense, the promised end is both positive and successful.

Another evolutionary change manifest in The Tenants is the absence of Malamud's metaphor of the Jew as a representative for the suffering of mankind. A New Life and The Fixer are the most obvious links in this evolutionary chain: they both involve a Jew who suffers for being a stranger, or an outsider. The progression from the former novel to the latter serves to clarify this metaphor. In A New Life, Levin's Jewishness is marginal, his suffering is minimal, and his enlightenment is moot. By contrast, Yakov Bok's suffering is not only excessive, but casts him as an overt symbol of the oppressed proletariat; his enlightenment is both effective and decisive, completely reversing his former identity as an apolitical man, and precipitating the dream of his assassination of the Tsar. Further, though he rejects the Jewish religion, he remains loyal to the Jews, and is treated as one under Russian law. Malamud first depicted the Jew as a suffering outsider in The Assistant, where Frank Alpine enters a Jewish family as a stranger,

observes the misery of their lives and recognizes his own. Frank's conversion at the end of the novel is not meant in a religious sense, and none of the rituals of religious conversion are described; rather, as an outsider enlightened by his suffering to bear the burden of humanity, Frank becomes one of Malamud's metaphoric Jews.

The subjects of The Natural, Malamud's first novel, do not fit readily into many overviews of the author's work; unlike his subsequent novels, The Natural is devoid of Jewish characters.[5] Yet there is a certain logic in the progression from that baseball story to The Tenants that may be worthwhile to discuss, although it lies outside the strict domain of literary criticism. Far from his status today, the Jewish novelist in the post-war period seemed to have two choices, based on the history of Jewish American literature. He could, like Nathanael West, avoid the stigma of his Jewish identity in a Christian society by consciously selecting non-Jewish themes and characters; he could also, like Henry Roth or Abraham Cahan, deal with the Jewish community in his writings, and remain basically unknown to the outside world.[6] Until The Natural was published, Malamud was primarily relegated to the latter category; though some of his stories were published elsewhere, the author was best known at the time to the readers of Commentary, the Jewish monthly. The Natural, however, altered that. It combines

the origins of English literature (the Arthurian legends of the quest for the grail), the rudiments of the Christian religion and its pagan sources (the mythic fertility cycle), and a symbol of the American way of life (baseball, "the national pastime").[7] Though some of the novel's symbols, themes, and techniques, like the seasonal cycle, the quest for a new life, and the use of the double, are found in Malamud's later work, many are discarded after the completion of The Natural. This all suggests that the novel was contrived to establish Malamud as an acceptable writer with the American reading public at large, a writer not limited by his ethnic identity, and one who could skillfully handle the indigenous gentile American culture as well as that of the immigrant Jews.

The theme of the Jew as an outsider links all of the author's work, and is emphasized by Malamud's subject in his first novel. Rather than dealing with the Jewish and immigrant characters of his early stories, for The Natural Malamud chose an all-American setting, enhanced by imagery from the core of European culture. At the time, the Jewish writer himself was an outsider, and the subject matter of The Natural served to legitimize Malamud's position as a specifically American novelist. His second novel, The Assistant, justified Jewish subjects as The Natural authenticated the American Jewish writer.

Frank's eventual conversion not only establishes Malamud's metaphor of the suffering outsider as a Jew, but also blurs the distinction between Jews and gentiles; in The Assistant, the Jew is Everyman.

A New Life extended that metaphor out of the ghetto. Levin is a Jew but not an immigrant, a stranger and yet a native American. His suffering is a product of the ambiguity of this position, and his enlightenment comes only with self-definition. The Fixer was Malamud's first novel to depend specifically on an historical situation to establish the nature of the character's suffering. Though Morris Bober distinguishes the old country variety as "a different kind of anti-Semitism" from the more sinister American strain,[8] Yakov Bok is Malamud's vicarious representative for the Jews' long history of suffering in Europe; by implication, Bok also represents the six million victims of the Nazi holocaust, indelible symbols of man's inhumanity, and of the suffering of the Jews as outsiders in a Christian world.[9]

Though his themes are universal, Malamud's return to a modern urban setting for The Tenants represents a return to a contemporary subject matter; the novel gains a certain relevancy by depicting the modern urban confrontation between blacks and Jews. That confrontation has impinged on Malamud's central metaphor of the Jew as suffering for humanity. His treatment of the blacks in The Tenants is a tacit admission that Jews no longer

have a monopoly on suffering in world opinion. Indeed, the history of the black race in North America might equal, in terms of human misery, that of the Jews in Europe, if one's mind could comprehend the magnitude of either suffering. This historical reality has ended Malamud's metaphor; no attempt is made to present Willie Spearmint as a Jew, and yet Willie suffers as much as anyone in The Tenants.

The effects of Malamud's earlier work on The Tenants is balanced by the influences of the great talents of English and American literature revealed within the text. From quotations by Coleridge (pp. 23, 106 T), Keats (p. 105 T), and Dryden (p. 158 T), [10] to a paraphrase of Blake (p. 51 T), to the novel's many biblical allusions, The Tenants presents an almost random collection of significant and incidental sources; the significance of some, however, is unquestionable. Malamud's frequent use of the double, for example, is linked in The Tenants to Joseph Conrad, a master of the technique, and specifically to his famous short novels, The Secret Sharer and Heart of Darkness. Mark Twain's influence appears ubiquitous; The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and The Mysterious Stranger are two works indispensible for a full understanding of The Tenants.

Another pervasive literary source in the novel is William Shakespeare and The Tragedy of King Lear. [11]

Bill Spear is, in part, a play on the playwright's name; Lesser's own novel, The Promised End, takes its "title and epigraph from Lear" (p. 192 T). Shakespeare's exquisite tragedy concerns fatherly errors and sibling rivalry; on one level, The Tenants displays the confrontation between man and his brother. On another level, the novel can be read as a racial conflict, involving representatives of two cultures.

On a third level, The Tenants is the story of one man's quest for self-understanding. The novel may be an expression of the confusion and agony of one mind groping to find another, any other, and yet unable to get outside itself. This final level of The Tenants is concisely expressed by the epigraph from King Lear for Lesser's novel: "Who is it who can tell me who I am?" (p. 193 T).[12] Above all, the quest of the self, so pervasive and apparent in the techniques, themes, and symbols of the novel, helps to reveal Malamud as a supremely conscious artist.

1. Naming Names

Many of Malamud's stories are begun with the author's characteristically abrupt opening phrase. As if by a formula, the protagonist's name is given first, followed by a syncopated view of his present, usually troubled, condition.[1] Thus "The Angel Levine" begins: "Manishevitz, a tailor, in his fifty-first year suffered many reverses and indignities."[2] Nearly two decades later, the author's style is basically unchanged; "The Silver Crown," a recent story, has this first line: "Gans, the father, lay dying in a hospital bed."[3] Such examples are not difficult to find, occurring in roughly half of the author's stories; nor is this abrupt opening confined to the short stories. _The Natural_, _A New Life_, and _The Tenants_ all begin immediately with the name of the main character. The emphasis this places on the names is not misleading. Malamud has a particular skill in choosing names open to many varied explanations and interpretations, and with the evolution of his art, the author's ability to create or utilize suggestive names has developed as well.

In his early novels, Malamud uses names which fit the characters into the imagery and symbolism of the work. The temporary king of an athletic jungle, for example, is aptly called Roy Hobbs. Frank Alpine's name combines some of the primary symbols of _The Assistant_. His surname

suggests the desire for a smell of "fresh air" and the snow which ultimately kill Morris Bober (p. 223 A). His given name identifies Frank with St. Francis of Assisi, but is also punned upon when Helen wonders if Alpine is being "frank with himself" (p. 121 A). Even the title of the novel, in one respect, is a play on the saint of "Assisi."[4]

The function of S. Levin's name, in A New Life, is different from those of the protagonists of the first novels. His surname has been related to "leaven," and thus a part of the recurrent bread-breaking or bread-giving symbolism of Malamud's work,[5] though the novel's epigraph implies that the name was taken from a line in Joyce's Ulysses. Levin's initial becomes a symbol itself, in his search for a lost identity that is not discovered until the last page of the novel, when he remembers, or admits for the first time, that it was "Sam, they used to call me home."[6] During his life, Levin has been divorced from his original identity, one created by home and heritage; reassuming his childhood name is a symbolic enactment of his recovering that genuine self. Until then, Pauline calls him Lev, a shortening of his surname that approximates "love." Though lev is Hebrew for "heart," an appropriate nickname for a lover, one is more inclined to understand it as the Russian for "lion," producing a further link between the instructor and Leo Duffy, Levin's double in the novel; Levin, of course, is also the name of a character

in Anna Karenina by Tolstoy (another Leo), and while reading that novel, Frank Alpine feels "moved at the deep change that came over Levin in the woods just after he had thought of hanging himself" (p. 107 A).[7] That Malamud is aware of this meaning of lev is obvious when Pauline provokes Levin to remember "Sam," his childhood name, by saying that "Lev's no lamb" (p. 365 NL). A play on the biblical pairing of the lion and the lamb in the messianic age, this comparison clearly qualifies the achievement of Levin's "new life." The Yiddish for "lion" is leib, and if Levin is understood as lebin, his search for a new life becomes the search for "the New Levin" (p. 55 NL).[8]

Like Levin, the name of Yakov Bok carries a number of implications, perhaps the most obvious of which is "book"--the source of the fixer's introduction to worldly knowledge.[9] The name itself is secondary, in the novel's symbolism, to the change from Bok to Dologushev effected by Yakov to hide his Jewish origins. After his arrest, Bok admits this deception readily, at his first interrogation by Bibikov; but the resumption of his real name, unlike with Levin, is only Bok's first step towards understanding and accepting himself. The names of Hobbs and Alpine may function only as labels, but S. Levin and Yakov Bok find that something of their own essence is symbolically centered in their names, and the loss or change of that name indicates a loss of identity.

Malamud's success in choosing names that have such implied significance may, in part, result because the characters bearing the names are usually based upon very common stereotypes. Roy Hobbs, for example, is a stereotyped professional athlete: brainless brawn with a lust for glory, money, and women. Morris Bober is the poor, Jewish corner grocer whose business is ruined by progress. Levin is an Eastern, urban, Jewish liberal who finds himself in a small, conservative, Western college town. Yakov Bok is a country yokel who comes to the city with a thirst for knowledge and experience, and who, of course, ends up in trouble. Occasionally these stereotypes are even unobtrusively admitted within a novel; Helen Bober, for instance, is the protected young Jewish girl who would "keel over for somebody just because he happened to be gentile" (p. 66 A). Though Helen denies this, she knows her mother believes it. Eventually, Helen's love for Frank is based on more than just his religion and background, yet ironically, the stereotype remains at least superficially relevant until the end.

Though stereotypes are consistently found throughout the author's work, there are important differences in their functions. Hobbs, for example, may never transcend his stereotype because he refuses to quest for a meaningful existence; S. Levin cannot even simulate his stereotype with a straight face, and A New Life becomes as much a satire on the liberal Jew as on the western conservative.

The Assistant and The Fixer, Malamud's best-received novels, are populated with characters that achieve a certain roundness beyond the stereotype. Though the personal anguish of the earlier novel is superior in many respects to the physical degradations and mental hallucinations of the latter, both Alpine and Bok attain a measure of dignity and self-respect that carries them past the limitations of their stereotypes.

Malamud's use of stereotypes in his novels, like caricatures in his short stories,[10] has long been recognized. The usage, however, has not received much critical deliberation. In The Tenants, and to a lesser extent in his earlier works, Malamud is actually working with two types of stereotypes. The first is a product of mass society and the need for instantaneous classification or labeling of any new person in a world of millions of such individuals. In a sense, this is a categorical stereotype, operating by the indentification of the most obvious and superficial traits of an individual in his relationship with society; such classification, for example, allows literary critics to group Malamud, Bellow, Roth, Friedman, and Wallant, to name only a few, in a consideration of contemporary American Jewish novelists, though their writings in fact have little in common. Categorical stereotypes serve as a modern frame of reference in interpersonal relationships, until the other individual is better known, and Malamud presents his

characters with such a categorical introduction until they can be developed more fully. Underlying the categorical stereotype, which incidentally is socially acceptable and even necessary, is the mythic stereotype, which modern liberal sensibilities have obscured but not obliterated. Thus the categorical stereotypes of Lesser and Levenspiel, for example, are ultimately related to the underlying mythic stereotype of the "cerebral Jew," the too crafty, too pragmatic, too intelligent enemy of gentile society. To understand the mythic stereotypes of The Tenants, which surface at the novel's conclusion, the categorical varieties must be considered first.[11]

In The Tenants, Malamud continues to use expressive or symbolic names and readily apparent stereotypes. For example, Levenspiel is, as Willie describes him, a "Jew slumlord" (p. 93 T). The slumlord, making huge profits from the racial minorities who rent his uninhabitable tenements, is perhaps the most common stereotype of the urban Jew in the past decade. The novel itself offers verification of this stereotype; Willie lives in three different places during the action of The Tenants, and the "landlords" of each place--Irene's apartment, Lesser's apartment, and Levenspiel's building--are all Jews. Interestingly, Malamud has used the name Levenspiel before: in The Assistant, Helen works at "Levenspiel's Louisville Panties and Bras" (p. 106 A). The urban American

Jew as a part of the garment industry was the categorical stereotype for the first half of this century, replaced by the slumlord, among others, sometime between the writing of The Assistant and The Tenants. In Malamud's own writing, the Jew as slum landlord first appears in the short story "Black is My Favorite Color," published six years after The Assistant; there Nat Lime, a prosperous Jew with a liquor store in Harlem, is accosted by three blacks, one of whom says that Lime "talks like a Jew landlord."[12]

Malamud has dealt with the relationship between a landlord and tenant before the present novel, in short stories like "The Mourners," and in a way "The Jewbird." Schwartz, the black bird of the latter story, dies when he is evicted from the safety and warmth of the Cohen's apartment by a maliciously jealous and vindictive father. The bird's cry of "grubber yung," (p. 108 IF), is echoed in the name of the landlord in "The Mourners," Gruber. That landlord attempts to evict a retired egg candler, Kessler, but is finally unable, struck by the pathos of Kessler's life of suffering and by a certain sense of shared fate. Gruber comes to Kessler's apartment for the last time in the story, afraid that the old man is dead; instead, he finds Kessler in mourning. At first Gruber thinks that "Kessler had got bad news, yet instinctively he knew he hadn't. Then it struck him with a terrible force that the mourner was mourning him" (p. 25 MB).

Levenspiel, as the landlord, metaphorically shares Lesser's fate on several levels. The most apparent example is that Levenspiel is unable to build his new building, and begin a new life, until Lesser finishes his novel, and moves out of the old building to a new life of his own. To some extent, Levenspiel's misfortunes earn him the sympathy of the reader, and this tends to draw his character away from the stereotyped slumlord. Almost by definition, the shyster slumlord of the stereotype would not have nor care about a "sick wife and knocked-up daughter, age sixteen" (p. 18 T); as the magnitude of the landlord's suffering and generosity--indicated by the increasingly large amounts he offers Lesser to leave the building--become clear, the question of who is the real villain becomes more pronounced. Indeed, for much of the novel, Lesser appears to be victimizing Levenspiel by preventing the landlord from building the new apartment house, only because the writer wants to "finish his book where it was born" (p. 6 T). This issue is never clearly resolved, partly because of the author's manipulation of the stereotype of the slumlord. Following Levenspiel's long narration of his troubles, for example, Lesser mentions that the landlord owns a "tenement in Harlem" (p. 19 T). This, of course, is such a standard element of the stereotype that Levenspiel's character is snapped back into the unscrupulous; the stereotype makes Levenspiel not only

immoral but dishonest. The reality of his misfortune is suspect, and even his ability to suffer becomes questionable--and one who cannot suffer surely cannot be a victim.

An indication of the most negative aspects of Levenspiel's character is revealed when he states that Lesser's work is only "a make-believe novel" and can't be compared to the landlord's own "woes and misery" (p. 21 T). This is Malamud's favorite test of his characters' enlightenment. Willie, in contrast, recognizes that a novel "might be fiction but ain't nonetheless real" (p. 31 T). The acceptance of the reality of fiction becomes an important symbol is two earlier works, also. George Stoyonovich, in "A Summer's Reading," at first "couldn't stand made-up stories" (p. 136 MB); similarly Frank Alpine, when asked about reading novels, replies that he would "rather read the truth" (p. 97 A). The later personal development of both George and Frank is partly indicated by their growing awareness of the veracity of fiction. Levenspiel undergoes no such development; his inability to accept the difficulty of writing a novel--or the reality of the suffering within the work--on a par with his own misery and misfortune, is an indication that he is unable to feel sympathy for anyone but himself. Indeed, the only reason he reveals his personal troubles to Lesser is the hope of getting the writer to sympathize and move out of the building; the amount of money he offers Lesser diminishes in

importance, too, when the landlord's eventual profit from the new building is considered.

Because the landlord's personality is limited by the stereotype, Levenspiel operates more as a symbol than as a character in the novel. He is seen infrequently, and seems to appear more often in Lesser's imagination and memory, as a symbol would, than in person. The enmity which the main characters, Lesser and Willie, share towards Levenspiel increases his symbolic significance. The two writers share three sentiments in the novel, all primarily symbolic: hatred for Levenspiel, respect for art, and love for Irene. These three are also related on a more practical level, through the landlord's name. Lebin shpiel is Yiddish for "playing life," and Malamud may have used this name to suggest both performing and imitating life; the latter is the classic definition of art, the former a reference to Irene's avocation, an off-Broadway actress.

Irene's function in the novel, like that of Levenspiel, is highly symbolic; most of Malamud's female protagonists operate more as symbols than as women. Women in minor roles in Malamud's fiction, like Mary Kettlesmith, are often more credible than central figures like Irene because they are less developed and less symbolic. Harriet Byrd, for example, is one of the many "birds" of The Natural who, like Fowler and Vogelman, attempts to sabotage Roy's career; she is parenthetically described as "less and more

than human"[13]--a symbol, perhaps, of Jung's "mother of death,"[14] but not a believable woman. She wears a flower, which Roy thinks is "a gardenia but it turned out to be a white rose" (p. 15 N); in turn, Harriet cuts him "down in the very flower of his youth" (p. 65 N). The flower imagery runs throughout The Natural, connected to symbolic women like Harriet, Memo, and Iris. Indeed, flowers and birds are symbols in all of Malamud's novels, an indication of the symbolic function of the female characters with whom they are always associated. When Frank Alpine first sees Helen naked in the bathroom, for instance, she has "breasts like small birds in flight, her ass like a flower" (p. 75 A). Later, Frank begins to carve a pine board and "to his surprise it turned into a bird flying." The bird seems too rough to offer Helen as a token of his love, so "he set out to carve her a flower and it came out a rose starting to bloom" (p. 192 A). Further, Levin and Pauline, who is first described as "a lily on a long stalk" (p. 4 NL), begin their affair when she discovers him in the forest birdwatching. Like the Levin of Frank Alpine's reading, "a deep change" comes over S. Levin when he makes love to Pauline in the woods. The same imagery of birds and flowers is associated with Irene when Lesser first meets her: she is "slightly pigeon-toed" and "where she had been Lesser breathed in gardenia scent" (p. 44 T). Later, when Lesser returns to proposition her, he notices that "Irene wore

on her blond head a caplet of wax violets she had woven from a bunch one of the women of Lesser's past had left" (p. 52 T). The artificiality of the violets is compounded by the fact that Lesser has already given one to Mary; that coincidence foreshadows Lesser's sexual relations with Mary, at Sam's expense, and then with Irene, betraying Willie; all this results indirectly from the party, attended by those five characters only, where the wax flowers are given.

Like Levenspiel and the women in previous novels, Irene's symbolic function is emphasized by the stereotypic base of her characterization. When Willie first introduces her to Lesser, "he said she was his white chick, not giving her name" (p. 42 T). This namelessness adds to Irene's categorization as the black man's white woman or, as Willie says elsewhere, "a nigger-stuck chick" (p. 99 T). Irene is young, "verging on beautiful" (p. 42 T), with long dyed blond hair; she is talented and non-conforming, an off-Broadway actress; her parents are rich, and she literally keeps Willie; she is Jewish and promiscuous--and as Willie says, "Jewgirls are the best whores" (p. 50 T); she nervously bites "her nails to the quick," plucks "her eyebrows clean" (p. 52 T), and is undergoing psychoanalysis. All this contributes to her categorical stereotype. She uses the surname Bell, but, like Yakov Bok, admits that it is an alias. She tells Lesser that her "name is Belinski, not Bell" (p. 52 T).

Irene acknowledges that her relationship with Willie is at least in part racially motivated, when she tells Lesser that "the blackness of him scared and excited" her (p. 118 T). Lesser, too, responds to the black sexual myth. His first thought, when Willie suggests having a party in Lesser's flat, is that "he hoped Willie would bring along a lady friend or two. He had never slept with a black girl" (p. 37 T). Eventually Lesser fulfills this wish with Mary. Though Mary cautions him not to "make too much out of" the color of her skin, when she asks him what he likes about her, Lesser answers, "the black of you" (p. 126 T). Lesser's interest in Irene is both encouraged and inhibited by her role in the sexual myth; when he meets her by accident at the Museum of Modern Art, Lesser reflects that "she's a black man's girl, they're a special breed" (p. 113 T). Irene recognizes his preoccupation with the black sexual myth, and asks Lesser if he loves her because she is "Willie's Jewish white girl" (p. 139 T). Lesser can neither affirm nor deny this, but when in bed with Irene, he is conscious that he is "lying beside her in the black's former place" (p. 149 T).

As Levenspiel, the garment manufacturer or the slumlord, represents two generations of categorical stereotypes of the Jewish business man, Irene and Helen Bober are both illustrative of the rebellious Jewish daughter of their times. They both deny the culture and ideals of their

parents and their people, to seek love with an outsider, a non-Jew. Two decades ago, when The Assistant was written, a white gentile was sufficiently alien to Jews to demonstrate the rebel's individuality; with the evolution of integration and ecumenism in the last decade, however, Irene's rebellion is necessarily expressed not only inter-religiously, but inter-racially. Like Pauline and Levin, another couple that crosses religious distinction, Helen and Irene both hope to forsake New York City and begin a new life on the West Coast; Pauline and Irene talk of moving to San Francisco, and Helen dreams that Frank will one day take her parents and her to live somewhere in California. San Francisco is a symbolic goal for Malamud's characters, a city named for Saint Francis, a paragon of humanity in several of the author's works.

Even the names are relevant in comparing Irene and Helen; both are Greek names, but they carry very different connotations. A Hellenist was a Jew who adopted the customs and culture of non-Jews; Helen's attraction to Frank is originally motivated by his position outside her familiar world.[15] Helen progresses in the novel from having an interest in Frank as a gentile, to a true love for him as an individual; the fact that Frank becomes a Jew and that Helen's love finally has nothing to do with his background, belies the stereotype of the Jewish daughter who "would keel over for somebody just because he happened to be a

gentile" (p. 66 A). By her love for Frank, Helen develops her character beyond the limitations of that stereotype.

Irene's progression in The Tenants is very different. Her name means "peace" in Greek, a quality naturally associated with love. Though her initial relationship with Willie seems a more physical version of Helen's first infatuation with Frank, Irene is never able to achieve the higher, purer love with which The Assistant concludes. Instead, Irene becomes involved with Lesser. The triangular situation which results from the writers' mutual love for her is similar to the triangle established by their shared hate for Levenspiel: as love suggests peace, hatred implies war and violence, and the function of Levenspiel and Irene as symbols is primarily achieved through their relationships with Willie and Lesser.

Like Helen, Irene sheds her stereotype in the course of the novel; but unlike the grocer's daughter, she fails to achieve a unique personality. Instead, she merely exchanges one stereotype for another, from the black man's white woman to the nascent Jewish mother. As she becomes involved with Lesser, Irene begins to redeem "her face, and perhaps something inside her" (p. 154 T). She puts away the black bath towels and the picture of a black Jesus, emblems of the time when Willie was her lover. Her hair grows in black, and her nails and eyebrows grow back normally. She decides to give up acting, and even tells

Lesser that she would "rather be married and have a family" (p. 188 T). The change would be incredible for a real woman, but the alteration in Irene's symbolism is obvious: she is only a reflection of the man she loves, and for Lesser she becomes the archetypal Jewish woman. A further indication of Irene's strictly symbolic role in the novel comes when she breaks off with both Willie and Lesser. She may have found that individuality and personal identity which eludes her throughout the novel, or she may have simply changed lovers again. Yet because she is only a symbol, at the point where she ends her involvement with Willie and Lesser, Irene disappears from the novel, only reappearing later in Willie's poems and Lesser's thoughts.

The roles and characters of Levenspiel and Irene can only be described in relation to Willie and Lesser; the writers' total domination of the novel adds to the marginal quality and symbolic effect of the landlord and the lover. Indeed, the universe of The Tenants is tightly constructed, with Willie and Lesser in the center like two stars that have randomly entered proximity, each bringing its satellite into a mutual orbit. As the novel progresses, Levenspiel becomes more concerned about Willie, the illegal tenant, and Irene is attracted to Lesser. Had the situation stabilized, the writers could have openly shared their sentiments for both the landlord and the lover, like twin sons sharing the orbits

of their system; but Willie and Lesser can never seem to achieve an equilibrium, and cataclysm results.

Willie and Lesser are deliberately drawn as twins, or doubles. The double is one of Malamud's favorite techniques, a variation of which is found in each of his first three novels. Roy Hobbs, for example, is merely another specimen of the superstar, like the Whammer, Bump, or Youngberry; Roy's downfall occurs because he doesn't realize this. He fails to become, in the mythic terms of the novel, a quester.[16] His answer to Harriet Byrd, when he is young and just out of highschool, is that his goal in life is to be known as "the best there ever was in the game" (p. 33 N). Fifteen years later, when Roy is one beyond thirty-three years of age, Iris Lemon tries to make him strive for more in life than just the glory of baseball, but she fails; in a dialogue filled with the author's ambiguity, Roy reveals that his goals have not changed:

> He coughed, tore his voice clear and blurted, "My goddamn life didn't turn out like I wanted it to."
> "Whose does?" she said cruelly. He looked up. Her expression was tender.
> The sweat oozed out of him. "I wanted everything." His voice boomed out in silence.
> She waited.
> "I had a lot to give this game."
> "Life?"
> "Baseball. If I had started out fifteen years ago like I tried to, I'da been king of them all by now."
> "The king of what?"
> "The best in the game," he said impatiently. (p. 156 N)

Resisting the enlightenment proffered by Iris, Roy goes the way of the Whammer--who was thirty-three when Roy himself ended his career--and Bump. Completing his segment in the mythic cycle, Roy is crucified at the plateby Youngberry, the new pitcher whose ability, as indicated by his uniform number of sixty-six, is twice that of his aging victim.

The function of the doppelganger in A New Life is similar to that in The Natural; though the symbolism is less mythic, the setting is more pastoral. In The Natural, the doubles only meet at the crucifixion, when the ascending star dethrones the reigning king. In Levin's case, he never meets Leo Duffy at all. Levin differs from Hobbs in that he doesn't resist enlightenment; rather, Malamud has varied the technique so that Levin unwittingly duplicates or, in the instructor's words, becomes a "carbon copy" of Duffy's career at Cascadia College (p. 325 NL). Roy tries to replace the Whammer and Bump not only on the baseball diamond, but also in the affections of Harriet and Memo; similarly, Levin espouses those liberal philosophies once pronounced by Duffy, and also has an affair with Pauline, Duffy's former lover. The difference is that Roy repeats the cycle with full knowledge of the repetition--though without complete understanding; Levin, on the other hand, only discovers that he is reproducing Duffy's exploits after the fact. For example, Levin seems to be the only one on campus who does not know Pauline Gilley was involved

with Leo Duffy until Avis tells him about the photograph Gerald Gilley took of the lovers naked on the beach. Hearing this, Levin "lived through the nauseating sense of having been there before" (p. 262 NL). Nevertheless, Levin arrives there again and again. His ignorance of Duffy's personal history produces the biting irony of the novel, but once this ignorance is dispelled, Levin, like Hobbs, continues in the cyclic pattern, aware of the ironic duplication. The cycle continues despite the instructor's new knowledge, and he seems incapable of altering it. The novel ends with a scene indicative of Levin's persisting role as Duffy's double, in which the photograph Gilley took of his wife and her former lover is recalled. Levin and Pauline, leaving the Cascadia campus, happen to drive by Gilley:

> When he saw Levin's Hudson approach he swung the camera around and snapped. As they drove by he tore a rectangle of paper from the back of the camera and waved it aloft.
> "Got your picture." (p. 367 NL)

The cyclical patterns of Levin and Hobbs are extremely similar; neither seems consciously to desire to remove themselves from the cycle, nor do they appear able. Though the mythic symbolism is much less emphasized in A New Life, Levin's failure is attributed to the same cause as that of Hobbs: the refusal to assume the role of a quester. But the philosophy of the author has made Levin's "new life" more complicated than that of Hobbs appeared. Levin realizes that "happiness is not something you flush

out in a planned expedition, a hidden complicated grail all at once the beholder's; that it's rather grace settled on the spirit in desire of life" (p. 195 NL). Nevertheless, despite this cognizance, Levin is unable to avoid duplicating much of Leo Duffy's life.

Roy Hobbs is part of the mythic cycle of The Natural because he is a baseball player; S. Levin becomes Leo Duffy's double after he becomes, like Duffy, an instructor at Cascadia College. Though Frank Alpine aspires, as do Hobbs and Levin, to greatness, he is in a much less favorable position to realize his dreams. He enters the novel as a penniless criminal, and even Morris Bober, a financial failure and a "shlimozel" (p. 149 A),[17] is sufficiently superior to him that Frank's emulation of the poor grocer is a difficult task; that emulation alone appears to satisfy Frank's ambition to "accomplish something worthwhile" (p. 37 A).

James Joyce has had a significant influence on Malamud's work, and The Assistant bears many superficial resemblances to Ulysses.[18] Frank and Stephen Daedelus are both young Catholics in search of a surrogate father; Morris and Leopold Bloom are both Jews, but not religiously observant. Their Jewishness is more a symbol than a faith. Stephen meets Bloom on the way to a funeral; Frank chooses Bober as his father-image in a metaphoric procession to a funeral--ironically, that of Morris. The grocer believes that "in a store you were entombed" (p. 6 A),

but stoically rises with a bandaged head to tend the counter. When his wife Ida complains that he needs rest to recuperate, Morris replies, "Rest I will take in my grave" (p. 32 A); whether he means death, or only the store, for Morris the novel becomes an inexorable progression to that grave.

Frank's real father, he tells the grocer, deserted him in a furnished room, saying he was going out "to get a pack of butts" (p. 36 A), and never returning. Morris, in his own way, unconsciously attempts to leave his family for cigarettes, too. Despite his unhealthy lungs, Bober still smokes, and when he does, "he coughed till he feared his head would pop off" (p. 35 A). Further, Morris is in a position to reciprocate Frank's adoption of him as a father-image. Morris' real son, Ephraim, died young (p. 38 A), and the grocer has never recovered from that loss. Thus Frank's emulation of Morris produces the relationship of a father and son as well as of doubles. At one point, for example, Frank waits like a son for Morris "to tell him how to live his life, but Morris was thinking, I am sixty and he talks like me" (p. 37 A).

Frank's role as Morris' double is also established by the same imagery which foreshadows the grocer's death. Like Morris, Frank is often described in terms of a corpse. The assistant, who looks to Sam Pearl at the beginning of the novel like someone "half in his grave"

(p. 30 A), eventually follows Morris into both the "tomb" of the store and, ironically, into the grocer's real grave also. At the cemetery, Helen tosses a rose into her father's grave. "Frank, standing close to the edge of the grave, leaned forward to see where the flower fell. He lost his balance, and though flailing his arms, landed feet first on the coffin" (p. 231 A).

Though there are similarities between all of Malamud's novels, Willie and Lesser most closely approximate Frank and Morris in their relationship as doubles. Willie is a poor black struggling to be a writer. Lesser, though poor, and struggling in a different sense, is at least established as a writer, with two novels published. In the metaphor of the novel, Willie is a vagrant, using the building illegally, while Lesser, though unwanted, is a legitimate tenant. Malamud carefully delineates the metaphoric unity of the central characters. Lesser's opening reverie of the stranger foreshadows the later entrance of a black intruder (p. 4 T). When Lesser first hears Willie's typewriter, he toys "with the thought he had left himself at work somewhere around while he was out getting his groceries" (p. 26 T). Lesser searches the floor for the source of the typing, and when he finds it in the apartment next to his own, he is "astonished to have wandered far to find it close" (p. 27 T). When he enters the flat and first confronts Willie, he is embarrassed to be intruding on an intruder; and when he

he returns later to warn Willie that the landlord is on his way up, Lesser enters the black's apartment ambiguously "calling out his own name" (p. 38 T), as if he expected to find himself, not Willie, within. There is, however, a distinct difference between the technique of the double used in The Assistant and that in The Tenants, a difference implied even in the novels' titles. Frank Alpine emulates Morris as an assistant, and becomes the grocer upon the grocer's death; Willie and Lesser imitate each other, and slowly exchange roles as the novel progresses. There is only one assistant, but there are two tenants.

The transposition of their situations occurs on the most basic levels for Willie and Lesser. When the writers first meet, they reveal the circumstances of their existence by identifying the person with whom they are most in contact; only afterwards do they disclose their own names. Willie, for instance, "said his chick was an Off-Broadway actress," while Lesser "told the stranger Levenspiel had been trying to force him out so he could wreck the building" (p. 31 T). Part of the progression of the novel is an alteration in these self-definitions: Levenspiel becomes principally interested in Willie as a trespasser, and Irene breaks off her affair with the black and becomes involved with Lesser. Willie inherits not only the landlord's harassment, but slowly develops the writing block that cripples Lesser at the story's beginning. After Lesser begins to sleep with Irene, he

explains his absences to Willie as caused by the end of that stagnation, saying "my writing was sitting in a hole for a while. Now it's out and so am I" (p. 157 T). Willie answers that "mine has been smelling up my room for a lot more time than I like to count up" (p. 157 T). This exchange of roles is highlighted in this scene when Willie speaks Yiddish, ironically referring to himself as one of the "alter cockers" (p. 156 T).

Though related in the sense of counterparts, the characters of Willie and Lesser are based on widely variant stereotypes. Willie, for example, is the young radical black writer. Indeed, Black Writer is an alternative for the title of Willie's first book. Willie contends that what Lesser thought, in that book, was "autobiography is pure made-up fiction" (p. 72 T), yet he lies about his past to conceal obvious similarities between himself and the narrator of the first section of his book. Willie tells Lesser that he was born in Harlem, but Irene admits later that he was born in the South, and "came from Georgia to Harlem with his mother and kid sister when he was sixteen" (p. 116 T). Like his narrator, Willie also served time in prison. With certain alterations and reservations, the autobiographical aspects of the story are undeniable; moreover, as Lesser realizes, that story has "been written before, and better, by Richard Wright, Claude Brown, Malcolm X, and in his way, Eldridge Cleaver" (p. 66 T). The similarities in the work of these

and other black writers have produced the stereotype on which Willie's narrator, and by extension the character of Willie himself, are based.

Actually, Willie's own thoughts are rarely revealed in the novel. Malamud seems to be sensitive to precisely that opprobrium which accrues to a white man who purports to be, in Willie's words, "an expert of black experience" (p. 36 _T_). Indeed, the author may be indirectly developing Willie's character, without entering the black man's psyche, in order to avoid a criticism of the central black character of _The Tenants_ similar to that which Willie levels at a black in one of Lesser's novels: that the character isn't "really black" (p. 80 _T_). Nevertheless, Willie's character is supplemented by the most common stereotypes of the black. Lesser finds, for example, that "the black responded to sound," and when he suggests that "a writer had to discover his own rhythm" in work, Willie responds that "don't nobody have to tell me about rhythm" (pp. 86-87 _T_). Willie's emphasis on sexuality in his affair with Irene, his ghetto-bred anti-Semitism, and the violence with which he revenges his betrayal by Irene and Lesser, all contribute to this stereotype.

Yet Willie's overt sexuality, a part of his mythic black stereotype, ultimately serves to unify, not divide, his character and Lesser's. Making art and making love are both acts of literal creativity. Willie calls his typewriter his "fuckn machine" (p. 77 _T_), and he uses it to "bang on" his manuscript (p. 161 _T_). Similarly, Lesser

speaks of love as he does art; he approaches Irene, for example, to offer his "creative juice" (p. 53 T). These characteristics of Willie and Lesser at once distinguish and unify their personalities. Whereas Willie tries to create art out of his life, Lesser tries to discover life through his art.

Although they are doubles, and even share equal billing in the title, Willie and Lesser are not equally important or developed characters. Harry Lesser, like Frank Alpine, dominates every scene in which he is present; Frank, however, is not always present in The Assistant, while the focus of The Tenants never leaves Harry or his thoughts. Lesser's character is based on the stereotype of the New York City Jewish novelist, a stereotype arising from the success of a generation of Jewish writers including, of course, Malamud himself. Lesser rebels against conformity, success, and progress; in Harry's own words, like S. Levin who must "hold on" (p. 338 NL), the writer is holding out: "Lesser had held out, thirty-six, unmarried, a professional writer" (p. 8 T). In the stereotype of conventional Jewish values, a writer is unemployed, a bachelor is unfulfilled, and thirty-six is too old to be either. Even the building he lives in has become an issue for Harry: "thirty-five families had evacuated it in the nine months after the demolition notices had been mailed but not Lesser, he hung on" (p. 5 T). His battles to hang on and hold out are Pyrrhic;

he has reduced his life to a struggle of continuing to write his novel in his apartment, and has effectively excluded the entire outside world.

Lesser's initial relations with Willie are marked by the motivation of a stereotyped liberal mentality. The opening reverie of a black intruder is indicative of the apprehension with which Lesser confronts the black that first time; further, this apprehension seems to have affected Harry's perception. Willie is a "strongly built" man "of medium height" but to Lesser he "seemed at first a large man" (p. 28 T). By the time Willie first comes to Lesser's apartment, Harry is composed enough to realize that Willie's "hair wasn't Afro-styled, as Lesser had thought" and the black's fluctuating height changes again, to "about five ten, taller than Lesser had imagined" but probably shorter than he had originally feared (p. 34 T). Lesser's trepidation and prejudice affect his senses, and he initially visualizes Willie as a ghetto savage: a large, bushy-haired, very black menace. Lesser attempts to hide his prejudices when confronting the black. He is affronted, for example, when offering an unanswered hand to shake; Lesser's instinctive reaction to the black is, first, self-ridicule, playing "for comedy: Charlie Chaplin with his moth eaten mustache, examining his sensitive mitt to see if it was a hand and not a fish held forth" (p. 31 T). Next Harry justifies the snub to himself as Willie's legal right, "no criticism of anyone intended or implied. Who

said anybody had to shake somebody else's hand? That wasn't the Fourteenth Amendment" (p. 32 T). Finally, Lesser almost resorts to the ultimate cliche of stereotypic liberalism: "he was tempted to explain that he had, as a boy, for years lived at the edge of a teeming black neighborhood in South Chicago, had had a friend there" (p. 32 T). Even without announcing that "some of his best friends are," Willie's insult has reduced Lesser to the caricature of a liberal.

In a way, the liberal guilt complex which produces this reaction manifests itself in Lesser's attitude to Willie throughout the novel. Lesser assumes "the white man's burden" by offering to supply Willie with anything he needs--"eraser, pencil, whatever" (p. 32 T)--and later by interrupting his own work to help Willie with his problems. When Levenspiel finds Willie's study, Lesser becomes an accessory to trespassing by hiding the black in his bathroom; and though Lesser is almost penniless himself, he buys Willie some second-hand furniture to replace what the landlord destroys. Not all of this can be attributed to Lesser's liberal guilt. He and Willie share the camaraderie of two struggling writers, and their relationship at times approaches true friendship. Yet the attitude of a white man overreacting to hide any prejudice he may feel is always present in Lesser's character.

The portrait of Lesser as a latent white bigot is

broadened by his view of women; he is also an archetypal male chauvinist. Every woman in the novel with whom he comes in contact is considered as a possible lover. Indeed, this is the primary appraisal Lesser makes of Mary and Irene; as mentioned earlier, Lesser had hoped that friendship with Willie would lead to the bed of a black woman, and in his first conversation with Irene, after hearing Willie say he wouldn't sleep with her that night, Lesser attempts to proposition her. The model for Lazar Kohn's unfinished painting is unnamed and insignificant to the story; the only thing known about her is that "Lesser had once met the model at a party but nothing had come of it" (p. 110 T). Obviously, sex is the medium in which Lesser responds to women, and love seems almost concomitant, for Lesser, with the physical act. Significantly for a man trying to teach himself how to love, in Irene's case Lesser finds himself in love with "Willie's girl" before he actually sleeps with her (p. 137 T). This is Lesser's only real attempt in the novel to treat women as anything more than a means of self-gratification.

Willie shares Lesser's view of the subserviency of women. The writers' second conversation, for example, revolves partially around this topic, and though Willie's sentiments may sound harsher than they are meant to be because of his slang, he nonetheless presents women as sexual objects. His slang metonymy of "meat," for instance, may be less a metaphor than a focused observation. When

Lesser mentions that he doesn't write on Sundays, Willie replies:

> "Sundays I ball my sweet bitch."
> "Well, I envy you that."
> "No need to, man, there's meat all around."
> "The women I meet generally want to get married."
> "Stay away from that type," advised Willie. (p. 35 T).

This conversation is laced with ironic foreshadowing. Willie's advice to "stay away from that type" of woman includes Irene, who wants to get married when involved with Lesser, though she doesn't want it in the same situation with Willie; her desire to get married is indicative that something in Harry, and not necessarily in the women he meets, creates the marriage wish. Figuratively, without even having met Irene, Lesser here tells Willie that he envies the black for having her as a mistress. Further, Willie's answer exposes a naivete in him; with "meat all around," Willie foolishly never considers Lesser a threat. Perhaps Willie's ignorance can be excused at this point, but with subsequent developments Willie seems blind rather than uninformed, and his nescience appears to be as much a cause of his betrayal as are the intentions of Lesser and Irene. At the party where Harry first meets her, for example, Willie finds them together under Irene's cape. Willie's reaction is to tell Lesser "like cool it, man" (p. 53 T). Since Lesser has propositioned Irene while under her cape, Willie's mild reproof and continued affection for Harry is emblematic of his

potentially harmful ignorance. When the party is over, the writers "embrace like brothers" (p. 54 T), but only because Willie fails to recognize Lesser's deceit.

As Lesser's interest in Irene becomes more obvious, Willie's ingenuousness is less excusable; the black apparently never suspects the truth. Even Mary is aware of Lesser's attraction to Irene; while agreeing to sleep with him at the second party, she asks him, "Are you partial on Irene? You been eye-eating her" (p. 123 T). Nevertheless, Mary arranges to sleep with Lesser, and be unfaithful to Sam. For this, Willie punishes Harry by involving him in a game of "half-dozens." Later Willie explains to Lesser that he challenged the writer because "Sam wanted the brothers to beat up on" Harry for sleeping with Mary, and the game was a way to satisfy them by shaming Lesser, rather than injuring him (p. 136 T). Ironically, Willie saves Lesser for precisely the same sort of offense that he will later attack Harry's manuscript, and person, to avenge. The climax of "half-dozens" reveals the latent bigotry in both writers; impassioned by the insults, they view one another as a "kike" and "nigger" (p. 134 T). Later, when their strained relations are no longer part of a game, the writers grow to hate and fear each other, and they degenerate into little better than these xenophobic slurs.

There are many other indications of this prejudice. Willie, at one point, calls Levenspiel (somewhat of a

racist himself) a "fartn Jew slumlord"--and justifies the anti-Semitism as "an economic fact" (p. 41 T). The black's writing is principally filled with a hatred of whites. Discussing his writing with Lesser, Willie exclaims that the blacks "are the rising people of the future, and if the whites try to hold us down it ain't no secret we might have to cut your throats. You have had your day and now we are gonna have ours" (p. 82 T). By the end of the novel, Willie has focused his hatred on Jews in particular; Lesser finds a pencilled note to that effect on a page of a story by Willie entitled "The First Pogrom in the U. S. of A." The story depicts a group of black ghetto guerrillas slaughtering all the Jews they can find on one block in New York City. In the note, Willie claims he doesn't "hate the Jews," but has developed his attitudes "from knowing the Jews." He concludes that "the way to black freedom is against them" (p. 220 T).[19]

As part of his stereotyped liberal personality, Lesser's racism is more subtle at first than that of Willie; he shares the white racial guilt, and acts accordingly. Since Willie's fiction is, in part, a call to destroy the whites and Jews, Lesser recognizes that it poses a threat to his personal safety, however remote. He is therefore uncomfortable about Willie, a "potential executioner, requesting him to midwife his bloody fable" (p. 83 T). Further, Lesser exults in Willie's failure to

get the book published, especially because the black thinks that Jewish publishers have rejected it. When Harry attempts to criticize the book, Willie becomes enraged, denying the possibility that a white could understand black writing. Willie curses himself for even letting a white read the manuscript:

> "What a blackass fool I was to let you read my book."
> Lesser desperately makes a final suggestion. "Why don't you send your manuscript to a publisher and get somebody else's opinion if you're not satisfied with mine?"
> "Because I tried ten of those rat-brained Jews and they all turned it down for a lot of horseshit reasons, because they are _afraid_ of what the book says."
> The black, his eyes tumid, beats his head against Lesser's wall, as the writer, not without pleasure, looks on. (p. 75 T)

Lesser's pleasure accrues from the defeat of the personal and professional threat Willie poses, and Harry's tendency to negative criticism may be a covert attempt to frustrate such threats. Willie represents the rising power of black nationalism and black literature. The former, as in "The First Pogrom of the U. S. of A." could produce bloodshed, while the latter could conceivably replace other popular ethnic trends in literature, like the Southern renaissance, the Irish revival, or of particular importance to Lesser, the Jewish writers. Despite this potential menace, it is Lesser, ironically, who destroys Willie, both personally and professionally.

Though at one point Willie complains to Harry that "you've bitched up and whammied all my pleasure that I

used to enjoy out of my writing" (p. 88 T), it is he who first comes to Harry for help when his novel is going badly; he may consider the publishers "rat-brained Jews" but he seeks Lesser's advice because nobody else he knows "has got two novels published" (p. 57 T). To ask a white for help is, for Willie, an act of racial abasement; this is a serious course of action, indicative of the extent of his troubles in writing. Therefore, Willie's accusation that Lesser spoiled his writing is partially unjustified, since the novel must have been going badly before he let Lesser read it.

Nevertheless, Lesser's direct and indirect influence is undeniable. Willie comes to him for help, and though the black ostensibly rejects "white culture," Lesser's comments about art and form make a lasting impression on him. As Willie's writing becomes more difficult and more important to him, Willie becomes a more dedicated artist. Irene tells Lesser that Willie "used to write only when he felt he had to" (p. 118 T), but now his writing, like Lesser's, is a daily task. One of the most significant milestones in Willie's evolution to being a dedicated writer is his symbolic name change. Like Levin, Bok, and Irene, among other Malamudian characters, Willie's Spearmint's adoption of the pseudonym Bill Spear signifies an attempted alteration of his very essence. Lesser first discovers the pen name on the title page of Willie's first novel; even he, like so many

of Malamud's critics, succumbs to the temptation of drawing implications from the "ingenious pseudonym, part surname, part tribal hunting weapon, plus overtone of Shakespeare, also Willie" (p. 59 T). Later, Willie adopts the pen name as his own, making the conversion from someone with a dual personality (both writer and non-writer) to one with a single, unified personality as a writer. He tells Lesser simply, "my writing name is my real one from now on I decided--Bill Spear" (p. 79 T).

Neither name is particularly realistic; "Bill Spear," a pseudonym within the framework of the novel, is an overt contrivance denoting the nature of Willie's symbolic change. "Willie Spearmint" is the type of name that would result, in Malamud's words from a different context, from "seeing old Stepin Fetchit films" (p. 55 T). Malamud's blacks are often given incredible names of this nature. In "Black is My Favorite Color," the black cleaning woman locked in the bathroom is named Charity Sweetness; in contrast, Willie names his own character the much more credible "Herbert Smith." The lack of verisimilitude in the names makes the implications and symbolism of their change more significant. In The Tenants the change involves both first and last names: Spearmint is shortened to Spear, at a sacrifice of the refreshing and natural flavor of the former name, to emphasize the primitive and dangerous power of the second; Willie is itself such a common black name--especially, it would seem,

for black athletes--as to add to the original stereotype of the character, and it is changed to Bill, as if to foreshadow the black's growing conviction and resolution by implying an eventual payment for their disregard (and by eliminating the skeptical, haunting question "Will he?").

The symbolic name change serves as more than a demonstration of Willie's assumption of an alter ego; it also serves as a criterion in evaluating the humanity of Lesser and Irene. From the time Willie adopts it, Bill is the name of a writer who attempts to transcend his former shortcomings to achieve art. As Lesser says, "if you're an artist you can't be a nigger" (p. 51 T). Willie, in many ways, is a "nigger": the stereotyped ghetto black. Bill, the devoted artist, is not. Symptomatic of their insensitivity on this point, Irene and Lesser do not respond to this subtle metamorphosis, nor even discern it.

Only in personal discourse with Willie does Lesser ever call him Bill, and when Lesser speaks instinctively with hate or pain, he uses "Willie" to remind the black of his former self. For example, when the landlord is looking for him, Willie says to Lesser that Levenspiel is a "Jew slumlord bastard" and Lesser replies:

> "Shit with the Jew stuff, Willie."
> "Bill is the name of my name, Lester," the black said, his eyeballs reddening.
> "O.K., Bill, but cut out the Jew stuff."
> (p. 94 T)

Lesser considers Bill's anti-Semitism as a threat

to his people, and therfore to himself; Bill views Lesser's inability to use his new name as a personal attack. Bill's sensitivity to the matter is emphasized by the distancing in "the name of my name," as if the black himself is not yet confident that the name, and the new identity it implies, applies to him. Lesser apparently rejects this token change, and when alone or with Irene always refers to the black as Willie.

That this resistance to calling Willie by his new name is an example of insensitivity and perhaps racism, is evidenced by Willie's explanation of the name change. Before he tells Lesser that "my writing name is my real one from now on," Willie makes a simple request: "Call me Bill, Lesser, man" (p. 79 T). The ambiguity of this statement is an example of Malamud's superb use of his characters' slang and colloquialisms. It can be read in several ways, besides the straight surface meaning. First, the request might further document the position of the writers as doubles: "Call me Bill Lesser, man." It could also imply that Bill's new dedication has elevated him above the sphere of Harry, now the "lesser man," or that in this dedication Willie recognizes Harry as his mentor, and that he is "Bill, the lesser man." But the statement is best understood as a desperate plea by an individual denied the pristine dignity of a human being; he asks to be called "Bill," the unique individual, then "Lesser," used like a generic term for the doubles, Harry

and Willie, and other artists like them. Finally, he asks to be called simply "man."

The inability of Irene and Lesser to treat Willie as an individual, or to call him Bill, the name of that individual, strips Willie of the support and confidence he needs to stop being a "nigger" and become an artist. As Irene says, they are nothing more than "a couple of Charlies giving a nigger a boot in the ass" (p. 148 T). Willie, unable to be Bill, reverts to the stereotype of the ghetto black; his writing and his woman gone, Willie seethes with that hatred and violence with which the novel ends.

It is on Lesser's name, however, that the symbolic emphasis of the novel falls. Levenspiel, after all, is the lessor; Harry is only a lessee, a tenant. As the novel's title implies, Willie is also a tenant, though compared to Harry his illegal status makes him, as it were, a lesser lessee. Harry, on the other hand, in his relationship with Willie, and especially when the black is living in his apartment, is the lesser lessor. Though the formulation of these relationships, as above, is almost silly, their import is quite significant. Through Lesser's name and his relationships with the other characters, all the characters of The Tenants are mutually identifiable and almost identical. The technique here is not so much the double, as the triple or quadruple, a symbolic structure crossing age, race, and sex. On this level, therefore, the novel

is concerned not with the interpersonal relationships of unique individuals, but rather with the tensions created in a society of remarkably similar beings, and perhaps with such tensions as found in the mind of a single, fragmented personality.[20]

2. The Stranger as Fallen Angel[1]

Though The Tenants concludes with the violence of inter-racial enmity, the novel earlier presented a positive pattern for friendship between a black and a white. Willie and Lesser approach true friendship at several points, but never achieve that consummate relationship. They are closest to each other when spurred by their common love of art; at one point, under the influence of hashish, they seem to reach the ideal. At the first party, Harry and Willie "sit crosslegs on the small kitchen floor, shoulder to shoulder, passing a rumpled cigarette back and forth" (p. 47 T). They drift into an imaginary setting, where a cathedral "is a floating island smelling of forest and flowers after summer rain" (p. 48 T). The island is floating down a river, and "Willie rows coolly, sighting ahead in the swift shifting current of the broadening river, watching out for snags and sandbars and the hulks of wrecked ships" (p. 49 T).

The image of a black and white floating down the river in search of friendship, freedom, and success comes from The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Mark Twain's pair achieve personal freedom and a deep mutual understanding in their picaresque adventures on the raft. Malamud seems to posit the friendship of Jim and Huck as a paradigm to which Willie and Lesser should aspire. Their common love

of art would provide the basis for such a relationship. Willie seems to affirm this after the party, when he tells Harry, "We groove on art, dad. You and I are gonna be real tight" (p. 54 T).

The river fantasy involves some of the central symbols of the novel. Lesser envisions them not on a raft, but on a "floating island." The island is a constant image for Lesser; it first appears in the opening pages as part of Lesser's dream of the paradise awaiting him upon completion of his novel, that "long labor concluded at last" (p. 4 T). His paradise is a "sceptered isle on a silver sea" (p. 52),[2] where he enjoys the "sensuous smells of land surrounded by the womanly sea," and where "birds rise from the shore, wheel, fly above the ragged, mast-like palms into the lucent sky" (p. 4 T). The birds, flowers, and water that Lesser imagines in his island paradise are all symbols in the author's writing for women; the island itself represents achieved art. Lesser equates the island with art at the party, when he asks Willie to "think of this sacred cathedral we're in, Willie, with lilting bonging iron bell. I mean this flower-massed, rose-clustered, floating island. I guess what I mean is what about art?" (p. 50 T). That island, or cathedral, of art is Lesser's goal, which he can only attain by making a masterpiece out of his unfinished novel.

But when reality returns Lesser to the frustrations of his unfinished work, the "sceptered isle on a silver sea"

becomes the "forsaken house" (p. 5 T), in which he lives. Even the hashish-induced river voyage is deficient in the unity and beauty of Mark Twain's original. Willie's racism, for example, intrudes on the idyllic scene; he is not satisfied that Lesser sees "people on both shores of the river" cheering them, but asks "who are those cats, brothers or ofays?" (p. 48 T). Lesser replies that they are "black cats with white hats and white ones with black hats" (p. 48 T). Though this seems to equivocate the races, and thus to dissolve racial distinctions, Lesser's vision also carries connotations of the white and black hats for the heroes and villains, respectively, of melodramatic cowboy films. That the "white cats" are villains may be a product of Lesser's racial guilt; this interpretation is reinforced by the further effacing of their whiteness when Lesser reveals his purpose in writing. He tells Willie that he wants "all the good people on both shores waving their little paper flags, all those grays and blacks, to admit Harry Lesser is King David with his six-string harp, except the notes are words and the psalms are fiction" (p. 49 T). By changing the whites to "grays" Lesser has made them blacker.[3] To Harry's dreams of glory, Willie replies that Lesser "can have the noise they makin but I gon shovel up the bread" (p. 49 T). Willie's mercenary desires are an obvious corruption of his art; his writing is a means to the "green power" (p. 50 T), that comes with money. But Lesser's ambition is no less crass than that

of Willie. Though "a remembrance in future time, a small immortality" (p. 50 T), is surely less materialistic than monetary profit, it is nonetheless a perversion of pure art for art's sake, Lesser's own platitude. Lesser, however, doesn't see the similarity in their ambitions. He tells Willie that "Art is the glory and only a schmuck thinks otherwise" (p. 50 T). If so, both writers, one of whom seeks the glory of fame, the other of fortune, qualify as "schmucks."

A more corrupt level of Lesser's ambition is revealed in the imagery. Though he rebukes Willie for expressing bourgeois desires for sex and wealth, Lesser's island is "flower-massed, rose-clustered" and filled with women. This is emphasized, in a play upon Irene Bell's name, by the reference to a "lilting bonging iron bell" (p. 50 T). Though Willie does not understand it, Lesser's imagery symbolizes his desire for Irene; her introduction into his cathedral of art seems a corruption of that platonic ideal.

Even the apparent camaraderie of Willie and Lesser in the position of Huck and Jim is covertly perverted. When Willie says he's "gon win the fuckn Nobel Prize," Lesser replies "After me, Willie. I've worked since the ice age, and tomorrow is another day" (p. 49 T). Their union is destroyed by a mutual egotism and ambition. Lesser's selfishness and egocentricity are particularly evident from the time of Willie's arrival in the tenement, when Lesser tells the black that he "had got used to being

the only man on the island" (p. 32 T). The combination of resenting the intrusion because of his selfishness and excusing it because of his racial guilt produces a tension in Lesser which eventually leads to violence.

The friendship of Huck and Jim was very personal, and strictly between two individuals, one black and one white. But contemporary social and racial pressures distort the relationship of Willie and Lesser, making it a confrontation between two races. This is shown not only in the characters' attitudes, but even in their appearance. Shortly before the game of "half-dozens" Willie is described, of all the blacks at the party, as "the blackest present" (p. 131 T). This refers both to his skin color and to his position as representative of his race. The isolation and racial identification of Willie is emphasized in the narration: he is often designated "the black" or, at best, "the black writer." Lesser, in comparison, though he is both white and Jewish, is never distinguished as either, in a narrative epithet; yet he is often called "the writer"--as if the only one.

Though the inter-racial friendship of Jim and Huck may be postulated by Malamud as a positive ideal in The Tenants, the relationship of Willie and Harry is hardly a suitable illustration of it. Indeed, the inadequacies may rest as much in the ideal as in Malamud's characters. A contemporary inter-racial association is necessarily fraught with historic and social tensions, none of which

are present in Huckleberry Finn. Twain's innocent pair seem naive and unrealistic by modern standards. Perhaps this explains the character of Sam Clemence, Malamud's reincarnation of Samuel Clemens; when Willie invites Lesser to the second party, Sam asks "what for this ofay type?" (p. 122 T). But Sam is too lenient and clement in his objections, and too naive and weak to take positive action against Lesser's intrusion. As a result, he is sexually betrayed by Mary with a white, and must allow Willie to reclaim his pride by shaming Lesser in "half-dozens." Sam's ineffectiveness is stressed at both parties. When Lesser and Mary are tentatively beginning their affair, Sam is obliviously and impotently "pissing out of a window at the blizzard" (p. 49 T). While Lesser and Mary consummate their affair at the second party, Sam is "out in the hall, kneeling by the keyhole and crying" (p. 129 T).

Mark Twain's influence is found elsewhere in the novel as well. He is mentioned parenthetically by name early in the novel as possibly having lived in "the skinny house on the right" of Lesser's building, described as "ten thin stories from the 1880's" (p. 7 T). Twain is associated with the "stories" as if they were fiction, and Lesser apparently has an affinity for Twain as another writer in the neighborhood. Twain is also alluded to when Lesser fantasizes that Levenspiel is burning the building down. In Lesser's imagination, the landlord, "resembling

mysterious stranger if not heart of darkness, starts this tiny fire in a pile of wood shavings in the cellar" (p. 23 T). This reference to Twain's tale, The Mysterious Stranger, is extremely important; incidents from that story seem to appear regularly in The Tenants. But if the reference is clear, the description is not. The landlord is hardly a stranger in his own building, nor does he seem to have much in common with Satan, the stranger of Twain's novel. That stranger is a young angel, named after his uncle before the famous fall; the young Satan, however, is apparently not a fallen angel. Discussion of the Twain novel recalls to mind one of S. Levin's topics, in A New Life, for a critical essay, "The Stranger as Fallen Angel in Western Fiction" (p. 267 NL). Mark Twain, in his essay "Concerning the Jews," sees the Jew as a perpetual stranger: "by his make and ways he is substantially a foreigner wherever he may be. . . . I am using this word foreigner in the German sense--stranger."[4] Malamud himself has written a story of a stranger as a probationary angel, "The Angel Levine" (MB). In that story, the unlikely combination of being black, Jewish, and a probationary angel, characterizes Alexander Levine. Only "recently disincarnated into an angel" (p. 46 MB), Levine returns to the earth, assigned to help Manishevitz, a tailor and modern Job. The tailor, despite his suffering, has difficulty in accepting the black as a Jew, and the black Jew as an angel of God. But just as the angel must

gain the tailor's confidence to earn his wings, Manishevitz has no other avenue of relief from his miseries but Levine. He eventually comes to believe in Levine, and the angel alleviates the tailor's misfortunes.

Willie, and not Levenspiel, seems to be the obvious choice to replace Levine as a mysterious stranger. He is black, a stranger, and wants others to believe in him; yet Willie has only half of Levine's characteristics. Levenspiel has the other half, being Jewish and described as the proper stranger, and even his name is similar to that of the angel. Lesser is apparently caught between two halves of a mysterious stranger. Like Twain's Satan, neither Willie nor Levenspiel intend to do harm by their actions; ironically, the suffering in the novel is mostly caused by misunderstandings.

In Lesser's fantasy, Levenspiel is also termed the "heart of darkness," and in this reference to Joseph Conrad's short novel there is also an implict connection drawn between Lesser and Levenspiel. Kurtz, in Heart of Darkness, can be seen as a reflection of something within Marlowe, the narrator; the writer's fantasy implies that Levenspiel plays Kurtz to Lesser's Marlowe, and that, as the name indicates, Lesser and his lessor are doubles.[5] Similarly, in a later scene, Willie and Lesser are related through a different work by Conrad. When the landlord finds Willie's study, and returns with a policeman to search Lesser's apartment, "Lesser advised Bill to hide

in the bathroom" (p. 96 T). This, of course, if precisely the advice given by the narrator to his double in Conrad's The Secret Sharer.[6] Though there is possibly a difference between the types of doubles presented in Conrad's works, the repeated reference to Conrad establishes the similarity of Levenspiel and Willie as both reflections of Lesser.[7]

The emphasis of The Tenants, however, is primarily centered on the relationship of Willie and Harry, the writers; the sense of the double is established from the time of Willie's first appearance. Immediately before Lesser discovers Willie in the building, he feels in the deserted apartment house "stronger than every before, a presence other than himself" (p. 25 T). This recalls his reverie of the black intruder, whom he asks, "Who you looking for, brother?" The intruder retorts, "Who you callin brother, mother?" (p. 4 T). With the hostility of this reply in mind, Lesser visualizes a world "full of invisible people stalking people they don't know. More homeless strangers around than ever before. God since the dawn of man should have made it his business to call out names: Jacob meet Ishmael. 'I am not my brother's brother'" (pp. 25-26 T). The final statement affirms the intruder's sentiments in Lesser's fantasy; it is also a paraphrase of the biblical question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" But there is a subtle shift of meaning in the paraphrase. A "brother's keeper" implies only a responsibility for the whereabouts and wellbeing of another; a "brother's

brother" suggests love, devotion, and compassion absent in the perfunctory role of a guardian. The implication is that, regardless of his duties as a keeper, one need not care about his brother. The concept of brotherly love and humanity is apparently lacking in Lesser at this point.

Lesser, however, does exhibit some compassion for the condition of others. This is exemplified by his treatment of the "wet dog with a bleeding eye" (p. 24 T), that introduces the chapter in which Willie appears. The dog is a creature out of The Mysterious Stranger, where Hans Oppert, the village loafer, struck his dog "with all his might and knocked one of his eyes out."[8] Lesser "succeeded in enticing" the dog out of the building, "although it made piteous noises" (p. 24 T). Though the dog's suffering fails to affect Lesser's desire to be rid of it, he is at least humane enough not to add to the dog's misery by brutally expelling it.

The phrase "Jacob meet Ishmael" is surprising in its choice of names. The next statement, about a "brother's brother," is a paraphrase of Cain's question, delivered generations before the existence of the descendants of Abraham. Further, Jacob is not Ishmael's brother, but his nephew. Ishmael is Isaac's half-brother, and Esau is Jacob's twin. Ishmael, as father of the Arabs, is the archetypal enemy of Israel, another name for Jacob and later adopted as the name of his descendants. But if

Ishmael is only being used as a generic term for an enemy of Israel, Esau would have been just as fitting, and in fact preferable in view of the brother metaphor. An allegorical reading of Ishmael and Jacob as the Arabs and Israelis in their contemporary conflict is totally out of place and meaningless in The Tenants. Thus Ishmael can only have been used to imply the black race, and Jacob to refer to the Jews; though this metaphor may be obtuse, the allusion is precise for the novel's symbolism.

Indeed, similar allusions are made later in the novel. At one point, Willie remarks that there "might be a diddle of black in Lesser's blood" and this induces a fantasy in Harry's mind that "in the Babylonian past a black slave socks it to a white bitch from the Land of Israel" (p. 100 T). The fantasy does not deal with Ishmael merely meeting Israel, but with a more fundamental intercourse. Willie's statement blurs the racial distinctions which plague the writers' friendship. At this point, Willie and Lesser are probably as close as at any other time in the novel. To reflect this intimacy, the fantasy is set in a time when an enslaved black and an exiled Jewess would have more in common than just sex drives.

Ishmael and Jacob surface again at the end of the long reverie of the double marriage. At the conclusion of that ceremony, the rabbi tells Irene and Willie that "someday God will bring together Ishmael and Israel to live as one people. It won't be the first miracle"

(p. 216 T). This prophecy is partially fulfilled in the fantasy itself, where two blacks (Mary and Willie) marry two Jews (Lesser and Irene, respectively). But this is only a dream, and in the reality of the novel, the enmity between Israel and Ishmael continues unabated..

Though identifying Ishmael is a problem only in The Tenants, defining the Jewishness of the author, his work, and his characters, is always as arduous as achieving any consistently acceptable definition of Jewishness in general. For Malamud, though, the question is more literary than historical, sociological, or religious.[9] The confusion begins with his first novel, The Natural; already known for his Jewish short stories, Malamud scrupulously avoided Jewish characters in his first novel. Indeed, only an occasionally discordant phrase reminds the reader of the author's preoccupation with Jewish subjects in his other works. Judge Banner is described, for example, as "counting his shekels' (p. 139 N). Similarly in A New Life, where Levin patently ignores his Jewish origins, others are given lines that sound disturbingly wrong for the character and situation. Bullock, for instance, says once that he will "bet lox to bagels" (p. 108 NL) that Gerald would make a better department chairman than Fabrikant. Since The Natural has the nature of a tour de force, combining some of the basic myths and folklore of Western civilization and American culture, the disruptive quality of such passages is largely unnoticed, as in

A New Life, where ironic discord is the norm. Nevertheless, through such passages, Malamud's preoccupation with Jewish subjects impinges on these novels.[10]

Except for The Natural, each of the other novels preceding The Tenants is predicated upon the protagonist's eventual acceptance of his Jewishness. For S. Levin, who ignores his origins throughout the novel, this is only ironically suggested. Levin arrives, like Duffy, wearing a beard in what Gilley describes as "a sort of beardless town" (p. 23 NL). But in the photograph he sent with his application, Levin is clean shaven. At the end of the novel, Levin asks Pauline "why she had picked his application out of the pile Gilley had discarded." Pauline answers that "your picture reminded me of a Jewish boy I knew in college who was very kind to me during a trying time in my life" (p. 361 NL). Only then does Levin realize that the entire episode in Cascadia resulted from that Jewish identity he had sought to bury forever. With an allusion to the Chosen People, Levin replies "so I was chosen" (p. 361 NL).[11]

S. Levin's rejection of his Jewish identity in A New Life is only implicitly revealed; Malamud deals with the same theme more explicitly in "The Lady of the Lake" (MB). In that story, another Levin travels from his New York home for a vacation in Europe, "seeking romance." In Paris, "although he had signed the hotel register with his right name, Levin took to calling himself Henry

R. Freeman" (p. 105 MB). Like other Malamudian characters, with the loss of his name, Freeman loses his identity; "Freeman" is of course an ironic name for a man who cannot make peace with himself and his heritage. In Italy, Freeman has "a quick, astonished look at Lake Maggiore" (p. 105 MB), and decides to stop off there. In Stressa, a town on the lake, Freeman is bored until, rowing out to the Isola del Dongo in a rented boat, he sees from a distance that "a woman was standing this side of a low marble wall, watching the water. He could not, of course, make out her face, though he sensed she was young; only the skirt of her white dress moved in the breeze. He imagined someone waiting for her lover, and was tempted to speak to her, but then the wind blew up strongly and the waves rocked the boat" (p. 109 MB). Freeman returns to the island in search of the girl, and finds her swimming in the lake. Falling in love, Freeman approaches her. The girlasks him if he is an American, and Freeman answers "That's right."

> The girl studied him for a full minute, and then hesitantly asked, "Are you, perhaps, Jewish?"
>
> Freeman suppressed a groan. Though secretly shocked by the question, it was not, in a way, unexpected. Yet he did not look Jewish, could pass as not--had. So without batting an eyelash, he said, no, he wasn't. And a moment later added, though he personally had nothing against them. (p. 113 MB).

Freeman's blatant denial of his Jewish identity secures his fate. Although he returns several times to the island, and falls in love with Isabella, he never understands her hints. When she likens seven mountains in the distance to

a menorah, "a seven-branched candalabrum holding white candles in the sky," Freeman is only able to think she saw his circumcision while they were swimming nude, and to feel "constrained to tell her that circumcision was de rigueur in stateside hospitals" (p. 128 MB).

Finally Isabella reveals that she is not the daughter of the del Dongos, owners of the island, but of their caretaker. Disturbed, Freeman still professes his love, and returns to marry her. At this, Isabella again asks him if he is a Jew. When Freeman reiterates his denial, Isabella bares her breasts, and "to his horror he discerned tatooed on the soft and tender flesh a bluish line of distorted numbers" (p. 132 MB). The tatoo is a legacy from Buchenwald. Then Isabella tells him, "I can't marry you. We are Jews. My past is meaningful to me. I treasure what I suffered for" (p. 132 MB). And though Freeman reaches out to hold her, and tell her the truth, she is gone.

Like S. Levin, Henry Levin/Freeman finally realizes that denying one's heritage or one's name is tantamount to denying oneself. Freeman is in search of love, but to love another one must first accept her; to accept someone else, one must accept oneself. Unable to reconcile himself to the responsibilities and limitations of his Jewishness, Freeman is unable to accept himself.

In The Assistant, the theme of Jewishness is more developed and complex. Unlike the Levins, Morris Bober neither ignores nor denies that he is a Jew; one of

Frank's first questions, to which Morris responds affirmatively, is if "you people are Jews" (p. 38 A). Morris' Jewishness is difficult to define. At the funeral the rabbi attempts to explain it:

> "When a Jew dies, who asks if he is a Jew? He is a Jew, we don't ask. There are many ways to be a Jew. So if somebody comes to me and says, 'Rabbi, shall we call such a man Jewish who lived and worked among gentiles and sold them pig meat, trayfe, that we don't eat it, and not once in twenty years comes inside a synagogue, is such a man a Jew, rabbi?' To him I will say, 'Yes. Morris Bober was to me a Jew because he lived in the Jewish experience, which he remembered, and with the Jewish heart.' Maybe not to our formal tradition--for this I don't excuse him--but he was true to the spirit of our life--to want for others that which he wants also for himself. He followed the Law which God gave to Moses on Sinai and told him to bring to the people. He suffered, he endu-red, but with hope. Who told me this? I know. He asked for himself little--nothing, but he wanted for his beloved child a better existence than he had. For such reasons he was a Jew." (p. 229-230 A)

Earlier, Morris discusses some of these topics when Frank asks him, "what is a Jew anyway?" (p. 123 A). Morris first tells Frank that his "father used to say to be a Jew all you need is a good heart" (p. 124 A). But Frank isn't satisfied with this; he asks Morris if a good heart makes a man a "real Jew" if he doesn't keep kosher, or say prayers, or cover his head, or close his store on holidays as the law requires. Morris responds that sometimes "to have to eat, you must keep open on holidays. On Yom Kippur I don't keep open. But I don't

worry about kosher, which is to me an old-fashioned law. What I worry is to follow the Jewish Law" (p. 124 A). For Morris, that law "means to do right, to be honest, to be good. This means to other people. Our life is hard enough. Why should we hurt somebody else? For everybody should be the best, not only for you or me. We ain't animals. This is why we need the Law. This is what a Jew believes" (p. 124 A).

The character of Morris Bober is a realization of Malamud's philosophy of man, a philosophy very similar, as the name "Morris Bober" implies, to the humanism of Martin Buber.[12] Though Morris is, after all, human and can be tempted even into burning down his store for the fire insurance, he still represents an ideal to which both Frank Alpine and the reader are meant to aspire. But his general humanity is not unique to Judaism, or to Jews; even his Law is only a restated golden rule, and as Frank recognizes, "other religions have those ideas, too" (p. 124 A). Morris does more than follow this golden rule, though; he suffers for it and empathizes with the suffering of others. As it says at the novel's beginning, "The world suffers. He felt every schmerz" (p. 7 A). Suffering is the key word in describing the human condition. Morris, who humbly defines others by himself, believes that Jews "suffer because they are Jews" (p. 125 A). Indeed, in the decades following the Second World War and the Nazi destruction of European

Jewry, Jews became a symbol for suffering humanity, capping the longest continuous history in Western civilization--a history filled with miseries inflicted by others--with their worst holocaust since the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the beginning of the diaspora.

Ironically, Morris' definition is hardly distinguishable from one Frank himself constructs, in a momentary outbreak of anti-Semitism: "That's what they live for, Frank thought, to suffer. And the one that has got the biggest pain in the gut and can hold onto it the longest without running to the toilet is the best Jew" (p. 88 A). Frank ascribes the suffering of the Jews to a perverse masochism, which is truer of Frank himself than of any of the novel's Jews. Morris views it differently; he tells Alpine that "if you live, you suffer. Some people suffer more, but not because they want" (p. 125 A).

If the Jews are a "chosen people" perhaps they were chosen to suffer; regardless, this seems to be the reason Malamud has selected them. His early work concentrates primarily on Jews, or other immigrants co-existing with Jews in the squalid ghetto of the author's imagination,[13] and those characters endure dreadful misery and deprivation. Surely Malamud acknowledges that all people suffer, not just Jews. But he exploits the Jews' history as a symbol for the suffering of mankind. In The Fixer, for example, Bok hallucinates that his cell is filled with other prisoners. He asks if they are "Jews or Russians?" They

reply, "We are Russian prisoners," but to Bok they still "look like Jews."[14]

The Jews are more than a symbol in Malamud's work; they are the guardians and preservers of a cultural tradition, based largely on this history of suffering, which no Malamudian character successfully repudiates or rejects. Helen Bober is one who must choose, in a sense, between fidelity to her Jewish heritage and honesty with herself; she realizes that "although she had only loosely been brought up as Jewish she felt loyal to the Jews, more for what they had gone through than what she knew of their history or theology--loved them as a people, thought with pride of herself as one of them" (p. 132 A). Yakov Bok is also placed in a position where defection from the Jewish people would be easy and advantageous. In an interview with Bibikov, Bok claims to be a freethinker and an agnostic, but the Investigating Magistrate explains to him that "legally you are a Jew. The Imperial Government considers you one even though you twist and squirm. You are so recorded on your passport. Our laws concerning Jews apply to you. However, if you are ashamed of your people, why don't you leave the faith officially?" Though such a move would be very beneficial to the prisoner's case, Bok answers, "I'm not ashamed, your honor. Maybe I don't always like what I see--there are Jews of all sorts, as the saying goes, but if I'm going to be ashamed of anyone, it might as well be myself"

(p. 87 F).

In Malamud's fiction "there are Jews of all sorts." Often they are found in diametrical pairs: Karp and Bober, Gronfein and Bok, Levenspiel and Lesser. Except perhaps in the last pair, the overt egocentrism of the first character contrasts with the relative selflessness of the second. This distinction is indicative of the two types of Jews found most often in Malamud's work. The first kind are Jews by virtue of their birth, the second by virtue of their enlightenment. The latter are only metaphoric Jews, and the metaphor works best when combined with the former category of genetic Jews, as in the character of Morris Bober.[15] The concept of metaphoric Jewishness is perhaps best illustrated by the conversion of Frank Alpine. The final line of The Assistant related simply that after the Passover, Frank "became a Jew" (p. 246 A). Malamud does not, in fact, present this as a religious conversion. Though such a convert cannot be termed a genetic Jew--he couldn't, for instance, adopt a Yiddish accent or a Jewish mother--a convert according to the religious law would be the next closest category. Frank, however, has more likely become a metaphoric Jew only, and this is accomplished not suddenly in the last line, but gradually as documented in the novel. Under the tutelage of Morris Bober, Frank slowly learns the art of suffering, and as a sufferer he evolves, in Malamud's metaphor, to be a Jew. This

evolutionary conversion is first recognized by Ward Minogue, the novel's arch-anti-Semite. To keep Ward from blackmailing him, Frank threatens to telephone Ward's father "at the police station and tell him under which rock he can find" his son. Ward bitterly retorts that Frank is a "stinking kike" (p. 145 A). Though Frank may already be a Jew in the eyes of an anti-Semite, to the Jews he is still a gentile outsider. Indeed, he reverts to a character similar to Ward when he prevents the other from raping Helen in the park, and then finishes the attempt himself. Helen, until then nearly in love with Frank, calls him an "uncircumcised dog" (p. 168 A); this serves as a reflection of Helen's repulsion at Frank's animality in raping her, and also as a reminder that, despite Ward's appraisal, Frank has not suffered enough for others to be a Jew.

Much of Frank's misery in the novel arises from being suspended in this limbo; neither a Jew to Jews nor a gentile to gentiles, Frank is an archetypal outsider. When Morris dies, however, the prospect of a gradual transition evaporates for Frank. He can no longer be the assistant, an apprentice in suffering to Morris. The grocer, the symbol of suffering for others, is buried, and like the phoenix Frank literally emerges from that grave the new grocer, sufferer, and metaphoric Jew. The change is recognized by Helen, who think that Frank is "not the same man" he was before her father died (p. 243 A).

Frank adds all Morris' old burdens to his own miseries, including the support of Ida and Helen, and even begins to duplicate the deceased grocer's way of life. He opens up for the old Polish woman in the morning, drinks tea with Breitbart in the back room, and peers into his competitors' windows at night. In his new identity as a metaphoric Jew, Frank thinks "of growing himself a beard, but was afraid it would scare some of the customers away, so he settled for a mustache" (p. 245 A). His circumcision is, like the beard or mustache, another symbol of his new identity; it also dispells at least part of Helen's haunting epithet, "uncircumcised dog." Nevertheless, the circumcision was performed in a hospital, and there is no hint of any religious ritual involved. Indeed, the circumcision, like the conversion, is a metaphoric expression of the pain and suffering which have made Frank a Jew. The Assistant concludes on that note:

> One day in April Frank went to the hospital and had himself circumcised. For a couple of days he dragged himself around with a pain between his legs. The pain enraged and inspired him. After Passover he became a Jew. (p. 246 A).

Frank himself recognizes the relationship between suffering and the metaphor of being a Jew, at Morris' funeral. "Suffering, he thought, is like a piece of goods. I bet the Jews could make a suit of clothes out of it. The other funny thing is that there are more of them around

than anybody knows about" (p. 231 A). Frank is one of those no one knows about, a Jew not by virtue of birth or religion, but because, in Malamud's metaphor, he suffers.[16]

Though a material failure, Morris Bober remains Malamud's preeminent paragon of compassion and genuine suffering. Other characters must be judged against his standard, and especially in terms of his innocently sincere question, "Why should we hurt somebody else?" (p. 124 A). S. Levin, for example, exhibits some measure of pity when he decides not to take advantage of Avis in his office. "Poor dame, he though. She has little, why should I make it less?" (p. 133 NL). Lesser calculates the effect of his affair with Irene on Willie in precisely the same terms, thinking Willie "has little, why should I make it less?" (p. 137 T). But unlike Levin, and in contradiction with Bober's Law of compassion, Lesser does become involved with Irene, and Willie does suffer as a consequence. Lesser violates the laws of religious, as well as metaphoric, Judaism; his day of rest, for example, is Sunday not Saturday, and the party he gives for Willie and his friends is on Friday night. As a Jew, Lesser is unacceptable under Bober's Law as well as the Law of Moses.

Frank Alpine's revelation that there are more Jews "around than anybody knows about" is echoed by Manishevitz, the tailor rescued by the angel Levine. Returning to find

his wife miraculously recovered, Manishevitz tells her that "there are Jews everywhere" (p. 56 MB). Both characters are referring to unlikely Jews of Malamud's creation: Frank is Italian and a Catholic, Levine is black and dead. Willie Spearmint, in The Tenants, seems to be a character of the same mold. Though black and gentile, Willie's suffering is as genuine as any in Malamud's fiction; and yet Willie is never presented, even in the remotest metaphor, as a Jew. Indeed, Willie and the other blacks in The Tenants differ markedly from the characters of "The Angel Levine" in several respects. For example, they are not comic figures who spend their days jiving at Bella's and speaking what Willie calls "nigger talk" (p. 103 T). Though Willie does speak with an urban ghetto slur, the dialect is presented seriously, unlike the speech of Levine, which changes from grammatical precision to ghetto jargon and back again, reflecting the angel's success with the tailor.

The Jews of The Tenants, like the blacks, have changed from Malamud's former presentations. With the possible exception of Levenspiel, they do not suffer in the same way as Bober or Manishevitz does. Sociological changes have altered New York City since The Assistant, and the Jew is no longer viable as a universal symbol of suffering humanity.[17] Lesser's suffering, for example, is artistic; the money he makes from the movie rights to his second novel is enough, in Willie's words, to "be King of Shit

Mountain" (p. 36 T). Though he struggles for a decade on his third novel, that money preserves Harry from any physical or financial difficulties.

Willie is perhaps a more likely example of suffering. He has the same difficulty as Lesser in achieving an artistic expression, and is financially impoverished as well. But Willie fails to bear his destitution with pride; he willingly lives off Irene's generosity, and trespasses by writing and living in Levenspiel's building. Further, he seems to expect special dispensation. Even when he no longer lives with Irene, he stops by to take money out of her "loose change" (p. 153 T), and he cannot believe that Levenspiel really begrudges his presence "in this smelly joint" (p. 93 T). Lesser, by comparison, tells Irene that "he had worked part-time in a factory when he was on his first novel." Irene, like Willie, seems to blame the black's troubles on racial discrimination. She tells Lesser that "any factory would probably pay him half of what they paid you and expect him to do twice the amount of work." Whether this is true or not, Irene correctly recognizes Willie's recalcitrance toward whites and work when she predicts that he would "tell them to shove it" (p. 148 T).

Only Levenspiel, with his pregnant teen-age daughter, sick wife, and crazy mother, seems to be afflicted with the type of suffering that characterizes Malamud's early protagonists. But as with Willie and Lesser, changing

times have altered the conception of suffering for the landlord, too. Levenspiel himself suffers nothing, nor would the financial prosperity of his new building alleviate the condition of any of the women. Indeed, Levenspiel's self-pitying complaints and attempts to move Lesser by sympathy for his family make the landlord a very unattractive, opportunistic figure. The Jew, represented by Lesser and Levenspiel, is only an ethnic identity; he is no longer a universal symbol of suffering. The black, however, is not the new heir to the world's pity, as Willie seems to believe. Instead, the blacks and Jews of The Tenants are merely Ishmael and Israel, two groups attempting, as the rabbi says in Lesser's dream, "to live as one people" (p. 216 T). The failure of the main doubles, Willie and Lesser, who share love, hate, art, and even personality traits, to achieve this simple coexistence suggests the author's bleak prediction for the future of mankind.

In the dream of the double marriage, Ishmael and Israel do begin to live together, but this is only a dream. In the reality of the novel, or of Lesser's imagination, the writer forgets Mary as soon as he sleeps with her, and concentrates on taking Irene away from Willie. When he meets Irene by accident in front of the art museum, Lesser greets her with "Shalom." Irene "looks at him oddly, coldly," and asks why he used the Hebrew word. Lesser "fumbles, says he isn't sure.

'I never use the word'" (p. 113 T). Shalom is a rare word in Malamud's writing; he uses it infrequently, as an almost clandestine password for one Jew to identify himself to another. In "The Last Mohican," Susskind uses it to approach Fidelman at the train station, and the ex-painter returns the greeting, though it means "uttering the word--so far as he recalled--for the first time in his life."[18] Gronfein, too, says "Shalom" when introducing himself to Yakov Bok in prison (p. 157 F), before betraying the fixer to the authorities. Levitansky, the Russian Jewish taxi driver in "Man in the Drawer," hesitantly uses the greeting to identify himself to Harvitz, an American Jew on vacation in Moscow.[19] In each case, shalom is used not only to identify the speaker as a Jew, but to establish an affinity through ethnic and experiential bonds. The hope is that such an affinity will predispose the person to grant the request for which he was originally approached. Susskind needs a suit of clothes, Gonfein hopes to trick Bok into entrusting an illegal letter to him, and Levitansky wants Harvitz to smuggle his stories out of the Soviet Union.

Had Lesser greeted Irene with the English translation, "peace"--a greeting he expects to hear in Harlem, for example, when he descends "by parachute into Soul City by himself" (p. 89 T)--the same sentiment would not have carried a covert attempt to establish ethnic ties. When Lesser comes to visit her at her apartment, Irene, aware

of the implications of the word, "wants to know why he had said shalom that day, meeting her outside the museum." Lesser says that he "meant don't be a stranger." Irene, unsatisfied by this explanation, suggests "Be white? Be Jewish?" Harry replies that "be close is better" (p. 139 T). All these explanations are relevant; Willie, for example, is neither white nor Jewish, a stranger to the world implied by Lesser's shalom. The greeting, therefore, appears to have been intended as a way of removing Willie from Irene's affections, and ingratiating Lesser with her as a co-religionist. Levenspiel, another "stranger," though like Irene both white and Jewish, is hardly close to Lesser, and Harry's explanation intimates a better relationship with Irene than with his landlord. Regardless of the precise interpretation given the greeting, it must be considered an example of Harry's manipulative prejudices.

Interestingly, the greeting is echoed later, when Jacob 32 says "A Salaam Aleikum" to Lesser (p. 129 T), after the writer returns from making love with Mary at the second party. Like shalom among the Jews, a-salaam aleikum--Hebrew and Arabic forms of the same greeting--is normally used only among Muslims. Not only does Jacob 32's greeting transgress religious or racial boundaries, but his name blurs the distinctions between Ishmael and Israel, formerly Jacob. Further, his speech to Lesser after the Arabic greeting twists the difference between

white and black. If Lesser could see Jacob 32 correctly, the latter tells the writer, then "you would see me white in the manner which I see you black" (p. 130 T). Indeed, as an adherent of the Black Muslim sect, Jacob 32 is a racial separatist. Irene, for example, thinks "it was Jacob" who convinced Willie not to bring his white chick to Harlem any more (p. 154 T). Jacob 32's sentiments probably mirror Lesser's own latent racism. When they first met, "Lesser was not comfortable in his presence," and Jacob 32 "was not comfortable in Lesser's presence" (p. 98 T). At the party, Jacob tells Lesser that "this is a eye-to-eye confrontation of the force of evil versus good . . . and it ain't up to me to reveal to you which is the which" (p. 130 T). Actually, since Jacob's name and greeting suggest similarities between him and Lesser, there apparently is evil and good on both sides. The confrontation becomes more coherent when Irene's name is considered. Like <u>shalom</u> in Hebrew and <u>salaam</u> in Arabic, "Irene" comes from the Greek word for peace. When Lesser says "Shalom" to her, it is as if he were calling out her name in Hebrew; similarly, when Jacob 32 says "A Salaam Aleikum" to Harry after he has slept with Mary, it is as if Jacob, whose disapproval of Willie's affair with a white woman has already been noted, were ironically saying to the writer, "Irene is for you"; the irony is clearly Malamud's. The subsequent game of "half-dozens," and the potential danger it reveals to Lesser in continuing

an affair with Mary, serves to convince Harry of the logic of this choice. Irene and Lesser later betray Willie, and as a result the black joins Jacob's separatist camp. Lesser leaves the party, like the Harry of Willie's fifth story (p. 65 T), as a "white spook" (p. 135 T), affirming Jacob 32's vision of the races.[20] The effective rejection of inter-racial love, implied by Jacob 32's greeting, draws figurative battle lines between black and Jewish factions in the novel. The subsequent struggles between Harry and Willie are direct results of this division, though ironically their conflict occurs over a mutual love for art and "peace."

Willie and Lesser battle as representatives of Ishmael and Israel.[21] Willie seems appropriately chosen for this role; "of the blacks he was the blackest present" in the novel (p. 131 T). His extreme blackness includes his skin color, his cultural background, his writings, and his racism. Lesser, by contrast, is both an unlikely and unwilling combatant. He is not especially Jewish, nor the whitest of the whites. Nevertheless, he is forced into the conflict because of his affair with Irene; this seems to suggest a covert racism on Lesser's part, since initially his interest in Irene is sparked by the combination of her Jewishness and having a black lover. Willie's love for Irene is significant in this respect, too. She admits that "outside his love for black people I don't really think he loves anything but his work. . . . A white

chick is no longer such a hot thing for a black man, especially the activists" (p. 119 T). Willie's fighting against Lesser over Irene, therefore, is partly a contradiction in his position as representative of the blacks.

Malamud has portrayed unwilling representatives of Israel before. Sobel, the shoemaker's assistant in "The First Seven Years," and a protoype for Frank Alpine, works five years for Feld at a poor wage without complaint. "Though Feld frequently asked himself what keeps him here? why does he stay?" the shoemaker cannot understand until he tries to interest his daughter Miriam in a young student. Only then does Sobel reveal that he has been working "for Miriam" (p. 14 MB). Though her father says bitterly that "she will never marry a man so old and ugly" as Sobel (p. 14 MB), he realizes that the two are in love, and only asks his assistant to delay two years because of Miriam's youth. In working seven years for Miriam, Sobel is a modern Jacob, who labored that length of time for Rachel. But the title of the story is perhaps ironic; after Jacob's first seven years of servitude to Laban, he was tricked into marrying Rachel's sister Leah, and had to labor another seven before he gained the hand of his beloved. Sobel is a refugee from the Nazi holocaust; in the story he represents Israel, and as a Jew, Sobel is fated to work hard for a doubtful future. In *The Fixer*, Bok--another Jacob--fantasizes a reenactment of that patriarch's struggle with the angel that named him Israel.

"Yakov saw himself locked in combat with the Russian Emperor. They wrestled, beard to beard, in the dark until Nicholas proclaimed himself an angel of God and ascended into the sky" (p. 227 F). This dream is one step in Yakov Bok's evolution from an apolitical man to one who realizes that "there's no such thing as an unpolitical man, especially a Jew. You can't be one without the other, that's clear enough. You can't sit still and see yourself destroyed" (p. 335 F). The Tsar returns in Yakov's imagination, in the last pages of the novel, to ask the fixer if all his suffering has taught him "the meaning of mercy." Yakov replies that "what suffering has taught me is the uselessness of suffering. . . . mercy, one oughtn't to forget it, but one must also think how oppressed, ignorant and miserable most of us are in this country" (p. 333 F). For his suffering and his fellow sufferers, Yakov dreams of committing the ultimate political act: assassinating the Tsar. The murder is neither moral nor ethical--and therefore Bibikov, the novel's ethical man, "cried no no no no" (p. 334 F)--yet the act is a product of the anguish of the oppressed, vicariously effected by Yakov, the archetypal sufferer of the novel.[22]

Like Bok and the Tsar, Lesser and Willie wrestle after Harry tells the black the true situation with Irene; but unlike the fight in Bok's dream, the adversaries are not the oppressed and the oppressor. The writers, both struggling to achieve their art, are too similar to be

distinguished by those terms. Their similarities are developed during the fight: Willie, for example, first "hit his head against the wall," and then he catches Lesser "in a headlock and slammed his head into the wall" (p. 167 T). By his actions, Willie apparently blames both Harry and himself; indeed, the fight is a tragic consequence of the mutual culpability of the writers. During the fight, however, the conditions alter. Before revealing his affair with Irene, Lesser regrets his disruptive influence on Bill's writing, and tells him to "forget what I said and write the way you have to" (p. 166 T); in this Lesser acknowledges Bill's status as a writer, and the name of the black in the narration and in Lesser's speeches in "Bill." But when Lesser retaliates to avoid his own defenestration by jamming "his heel down on Willie's foot" (p. 168 T), the black's name has suddenly reverted to "Willie," and remains so for the rest of the scene. When Lesser's mind turns to self-preservation, he views his enemy as "Willie," a savage nigger, rather than the civilized writer "Bill," who is so similar to Harry himself, and deserves better treatment than Lesser accords him. In a pre-figurement of the final scene, Levenspiel discovers the brawl, and this time his presence ends the fighting. But the interruption does not end the hatred which reduces Bill to Willie in Lesser's view, and enduces the black to tell Harry that "now I hate you till your death" (p. 169 T).

The battle is rejoined at the climax of the novel. In the interim, Willie has destroyed Lesser's manuscript, Lesser has smashed Willie's typewriter, and Irene has abandoned both writers, disappearing from the novel. Though they try to continue their writing, Willie and Lesser find their creative powers gone, consumed by the destructive powers of hate. The writers spend their time searching through each other's garbage for glimpses of their enemy's work. Lesser sneaks close to observe Willie at work, and then imagines the black is watching him write. The writers mirror each other to the end, proving the inseparability of their fates. Harry realizes this, knowing that Willie is listening for the end of Lesser's book: "He lacks belief in his work and listens to mine for the promised end. If Lesser can make it, then so can he" (pp. 222-223 T).

Finally, they meet on the stairway of the abandoned building one night, armed with weapons and hatred. Each has degenerated into a vicious bigot, Willie hating Lesser as a Jew and Lesser hating Willie as a black. Ironically, they rationalize their hatred as a justifiable response to the bigotry they find in each other. In the final confrontation, Willie calls Lesser a "Bloodsucking Jew Niggerhater," and Lesser retorts that Willie is an "Anti-Semitic Ape" (p. 229 T). Nevertheless, their degeneracy is based on something quite different: they fear each other for the threat each has posed by invading the realm

of the other's mythic stereotype. Lesser hates Willie for being a writer, for having a brain able to challenge the mythic cerebral supremacy of the Jew. Willie hates Lesser for stealing his lover, for besting him sexually with a woman, for challenging the mythic sexual potency of the black. In the violent climax of the novel, Israel and Ishmael, reduced to degrading and depraved stereotypes, attempt to preserve their identities by destroying the member of the other's body that threatens them. "They aimed at each other accurate blows. Lesser felt his jagged ax sink through bone and brain as the groaning black's razor-sharp saber, in a single boiling stabbing slash, cut the white's balls from the rest of him" (p. 230 T). They deliver their mortal blows simultaneously, a last ironic affirmation that they are indeed doubles, that their fates are intertwined, and that their hatred is directed as much against themselves as against each other; this is probably also true of the suffering people the writers represent, the Jews and the blacks, history's victims now locked together in a senseless urban struggle. Yet at the moment of their mutual destruction, a total empathy is finally achieved. As Willie and Lesser slay themselves, each "feels the anguish of the other" (p. 230 T). Though their relationship concludes in death, it produces the mutual sensitivity and understanding for which they strived in life, but never could attain.

3. The Promised End

As a novel about writing a novel about writing a novel, The Tenants demonstrates the growing concern of the author in the relation of the artist's life and work. For Malamud, the adoption of this format is part of the natural and organic evolution of his art. In his early fiction there are few writers as characters; Mitka and Olga in "The Girl of My Dreams" (MB), and Ben Glickman in the dramatic scene "Suppose a Wedding" (IF), are the only writers of fiction. Beginning with The Fixer, however, Malamud's work has shown an increasing absorption with the relationship of art and life. Yakov Bok struggles to reconcile his philosophy with reality; apolitical and a freethinker, Bok is slowly forced to alter his perception of the world and his understanding of philosophy. Malamud's most introspective character, Bok spends days agonizing over the philosophic implications of suicide, mercy, forgiveness, love, and finally hate.

The theme of art and life pervades Pictures of Fidelman, the volume that follows The Fixer. Neither a novel nor simply a collection of short stories, the volume is perhaps best described by its subtitle: An Exhibition. The volume exhibits three sketches from the author's early period--stories already collected in The Magic Barrel and Idiots First--and three of a more

recent vintage. Approximately five years separate the original publication, in periodicals, of "Naked Nude," the last of the early stories, and "A Pimp's Revenge," the first of the later set. In the intervening years, Malamud published The Fixer but produced very few short stories; Pictures of Fidelman is thus the product of the author's continuous interest in a single theme over an extended length of time. Malamud's periodic revivals of Arthur Fidelman are perhaps an indication that the author recognizes the validity of that theme first used in the original story, "The Last Mohican." There, Fidelman arrives in Italy to write "a critical study of Giotto, the opening chapter of which he had carried across the ocean" (p. 11 PF). When he enters Rome, the art student is approached by the inimitable Shimon Susskind, a Jewish refugee and beggar. Though Fidelman gives him some money, Susskind is unsatisfied. "'In your luggage,' he said vaguely, 'would you maybe have a suit you can't use? I could use a suit'" (p. 19 PF). Fidelman, budgeting to make his money last long enough to finish his book, refuses to give the beggar his spare suit. Nevertheless, Susskind continues to shadow Fidelman's movements and plague his thoughts. The refugee is literally a luftmensch; when the student asks him how he lives, Susskind replies "I eat air" (p. 25 PF). After Susskind appears surreptitiously in Fidelman's room to renew his request for the suit, without success, the student discovers his

manuscript missing. He suspects the refugee, naturally, and searches Rome for him, but the formerly omnipresent Susskind has disappeared. Fidelman finally locates him months later, selling Christian religious articles in St. Peter's, and follows him to "an overgrown closet containing bed and table" (p. 45 PF), but not the manuscript. The student can hardly stomach Susskind's squalid conditions. In his dreams, Susskind accosts him with questions like "Have you read Tolstoy?" and "Why is art?" (p. 46 PF).[1] Finally, the answer comes to Fidelman as he dreams of a fresco by Giotto of Saint Francis of Assisi giving his cloak to a poor knight: "San Francesco dona le vesti al cavaliere povero" (p. 46 PF). Like Frank Alpine, Fidelman receives enlightenment from St. Francis, in this case through the agency of Giotto's painting.[2] The student immediately carries his suit to Susskind, reenacting the charity of the saint. Though the refugee suspects that the suit is being offered in trade for the manuscript, Fidelman assures Susskind that he wants "nothing at all" (p. 47 PF), and leaves the hovel. The refugee runs after him, and returns the brief case in which Fidelman had kept his manuscript.

> Fidelman savagely opened it, searching frantically in each compartment, but the bag was empty. The refugee was already in flight. With a bellow the student started after him. "You bastard, you burned my chapter."
> "Have mercy," cried Susskind, "I did you a favor."
> "I'll do you one and cut your throat."
> "The words were there but the spirit was missing." (p. 47 PF)

In the midst of the chase, these words ring true and Fidelman gives over the pursuit. Indeed, the point of the story is the same as the intent of that reply, and Fidelman, who gave away his suit out of simple charity, understands it. The relationship of art and life is at least this clear from the story: one who cannot act charitably and humanely in life cannot really appreciate--or has not sufficiently understood--great art, which has compassion at its root. Giotto's painting of the charity of St. Francis was not intelligible to Fidelman when the student refused to consider giving his suit to an impoverished beggar; the spirit of that charity was missing in the manuscript, and in the student until Susskind helped him to enlightenment. Fidelman realizes this, and calls after the fleeing refugee. "'Susskind, come back,' he shouted, half sobbing. 'The suit is yours. All is forgiven'" (p. 48 PF). The story ends with Susskind, having enlightened the student, running out of sight; Fidelman is left equipped with a genuine compassion.

Much of The Tenants operates on a similar principle, and many of the situations are repeated in the novel. Like Fidelman, Lesser is writing about a subject with which he is unfamiliar, and only the experience of life will affect the difficulties he encounters writing this novel; "the book had asked him to say more than he knew" (p. 106 T). His novel is about love, but isolated in the deserted building, doing nothing for a decade but struggling with his

writing, Lesser has cut himself off from humanity, and therefore from a knowledge of love; he is unable to translate the abstract concept into art because, like Fidelman, though he knows the words, the spirit is missing. As he begins to experience love with Irene, the labor of his writing is eased proportionally: the more he knows about love, the easier he can write about it. "Because of Irene he lived now with a feeling of more variously possible possibilities, an optimism that boiled up imagination" (p. 151 T). Lesser realizes that this change within himself, catalyzed by his affair with Irene and in sympathy with the budding fertility of spring, is "Love's doing. It helped him write freely and well after having to press for a while" (p. 151 T). Like Fidelman, Lesser learns to recognize the basic relationship between art and life; the writer's art is limited by his experience of love and life. Yet there remains a fundamental variation between Fidelman's story and that of Lesser. Fidelman's manuscript is burned by Susskind because it was written before the student had gained a spirit of charity; Lesser's manuscript, however, is destroyed by Willie only after the writer has recognized the value of love to his writing.

The manuscript which Willie burns is a novel about a writer. "His name, in the first draft, was Lazar Cohen" (p. 192 T). As his name implies, he has been modeled after Lazar Kohn, who "had been a friend of Lesser's

for a short time in their early twenties" (p. 109 T). Kohn was a painter who became "successful too soon for the continuance of their friendship" (p. 109 T). But Kohn's early success warped his future; by the time Lesser's second novel is published, Kohn is dead in a motorcycle accident, his creativity ultimately frustrated. "His work, it was said, had been going badly" (p. 110 T). At the point where his novel offers the greatest resistance, Lesser goes to the Museum of Modern Art to see a painting by Kohn entitled "Woman." Looking at the unfinished portrait, Lesser realizes that there are similarities between Kohn and himself; artists with early successes, both find themselves stymied by a work "for no reason you can give or guess, except that it means so much to you to do it as it should be done" (p. 110 T). Though Kohn couldn't finish the portrait, he released it for sale, and the museum bought it. The painting, therefore, differs from the novel because "in painting, Lesser thought, you could finish off, total up, whether done or undone, because in the end (the end?) you hung a canvas object on the wall and there was no sign saying 'Abandoned, come back tomorrow for more'" (p. 111 T). The novel, to be a novel, must be completed; understanding this, "Lesser then vowed, as he often had, that he would never abandon this novel, never, for whatever reason" (p. 112 T).

In Lazar Cohen, Lesser's character, the basic

resemblance between the novelist and the painter is emphasized; even their names, Lazar and Lesser, are similar, and Cohen becomes, in Lesser's novel, an autobiographical figure. Like Harry, Cohen has difficulty giving love. "He has always been concerned with love, and has often felt it for one or another person, but not generously, fluently, nor has he been able to sustain it long" (p. 192 _T_). Cohen decides to write a novel about love in order to "teach himself to love in a manner befitting an old ideal. . . . He will learn through some miracle of transformation as he writes, betrayal as well as bounty, perhaps a kind of suffering" (p. 192 _T_). Cohen's aim is the same as his author's; as Lesser himself thinks, "I write about love because I know so little about it" (p. 124 _T_). Lesser's character hopes that somehow he can learn in art what has escaped him in life; Lesser, too, though perhaps only subconsciously, hopes for the same result once removed: if Cohen's novel can teach Cohen to love, then Lesser's novel, about Cohen, can teach Lesser. The novel is difficult to write because each change in Cohen's protagonist ultimately affects Lesser, and in turn he, in his writing, alters Cohen and Cohen's character in accordance with this change. "Thus Lesser writes his book and his book writes Lesser" (p. 193 _T_).[3]

Fidelman acknowledges a similar sentiment in "A Pimp's Revenge." Being interviewed by Ludovico, Fidelman says that "art is my means for understanding life and

trying out certain assumptions I have. I make art, it makes me" (p. 138 PF). In that story, Fidelman's situation is strongly analogous to that of Lesser. The writer, unable to end his novel, wonders if the inability is "some kind of eschatological dodge? Like an end is more than I can stand? Each book I write nudges me closer to death?" (p. 4 T). Fidelman approaches his painting in the same way: "F was afraid to finish it. What would he do next and how long would that take?" (p. 152 PF). Though he resists finishing the painting of "Mother and Son," Fidelman hopes that it will prove to be "a first-class work if I ever get it done. If I could complete it the way I sometimes see it in my mind's eye, I bet it could be something extraordinary. If a man does only one such painting in his lifetime, he can call himself a success" (pp. 132-133 PF). Lesser also hopes that his new novel will be a "small masterpiece though not too small" (p. 49 T); yet he is powerless to complete it. Unlike the novelist, though, Fidelman does finish his painting. As if of its own volition, "the picture was, one day, done. It assumed completion" (p. 152 PF). But it is not the painting Fidelman intended. As Esmeralda realizes, the artist was originally trying to paint himself into his mother's arms (p. 132 PF). But "the subject had changed from 'Mother and Son' to 'Brother and Sister' . . . to let's face it 'Prostitute and Procurer'" (p. 152 PF). Though Fidelman claims that

"art isn't life" (p. 133 PF), the inherent relationship between the two affects his work throughout the story. Not only is the artist unable to paint himself into his mother's (or sister's) arms, but when the proprietor of a woodworker's shop offers a destitute Fidelman five hundred lira extra if, on a wooden statue the artist carved to sell to tourists, he would "put a bambino in the poor Madonna's arms" (p. 111 PF), Fidelman refuses. Any form of a mother and child is impossible for Fidelman in his art, because he only remembers his own mother's "death, not even the dying, just the end mostly, after a sickness they easily cure nowadays with penicillan" (p. 126 PF). Ironically, since his mother apparently died of a venereal disease, Fidelman is particularly susceptible to Esmeralda, a whore who offers to live with him. Fidelman is repulsed by Ludovico, her former pimp, a man who, in the artist's words, was "actually living off the proceeds of a girl's body." When the pimp asks in reply if the painter thinks himself "a moral man," Fidelman answers, "In my art I am" (p. 120 PF). Fidelman constantly makes such distinctions between art and life; eventually he too becomes Esmeralda's pimp, and yet he continues to expect morality in his art. Thus it is ironic that Fidelman ruins the painting while working on the prostitute's face, trying "to make her expression truer to life" (p. 156 PF). When he realizes that he has ruined the portrait, Fidelman takes a bread knife, "and

in anguish lifted the blade into his gut." The story ends with Ludovico's pronouncement that the suicide was "a moral act" (p. 157 PF). Like The Tenants, this story in concerned with the relationship of art and life. Fidelman is wrong in considering the two mutually exclusive, and yet ruins his painting attempting to make the art too much like life. In the end, Fidelman realizes that one's art is a reflection of one's life. Morality and motherly love, absent in the painter's life, cannot be expressed in his art; only with his attempted suicide, as Ludovico's judgement intimates, does Fidelman begin to develop a sense of morality.

The final exhibit in Pictures of Fidelman is entitled "The Glass Blower of Venice," and in the story Fidelman again believes that "art isn't life" (p. 207 PF). The artist becomes involved with a married woman, Margherita, whose husband, Beppo, is homosexual. Finding the lovers, in bed, Beppo sexually assaults Fidelman, while murmuring to him "think of love . . . you've run from it all your life." After their coupling, Fidelman "stopped running" (p. 209 PF). In contrast to Lesser, who hopes to learn about love through his writing, Beppo advises Fidelman that "if you can't invent art, invent life" (p. 209 PF). Fidelman becomes Beppo's apprentice in glass blowing; his situation appears similar to that of Frank Alpine, except that both Morris, the master, and Helen, the lover, are combined in one character, Beppo. Inspired by love,

Fidelman attempts glass-blown art, but fails. As Beppo tells him, "you're doing the same things you did in your paintings, that's the lousy hair in the egg. It's easy to see, half a talent is worse than none" (p. 216 PF). Though inspired by love in life, Fidelman's art remains a failure, and he abandons it. One day, however, he meets Margherita by accident, and she begs him to "leave Beppo and go some place else" (p. 217 PF). Because of his affair with Fidelman, Beppo is rarely around the house; without him, Margherita has difficulty controlling their children, and her life is devoid of all pleasure. Fidelman, troubled by the suffering he is causing, decides to forsake Beppo. "In despair Fidelman rowed back to the factory and blew a huge glass bubble, larger and thicker than any he had blown before" (p. 217 PF). He works feverishly on his new creation for several nights, and then "he showed the bowl to Beppo, who said it was a good job, beautifully proportioned and reminding him of something the old Greeks had done" (p. 218 PF).

At the end of the exhibition, Fidelman has finally achieved a beauty in art indicative of a beauty in his life. This goal is first posited in the epigraphs of the volume. According to Yeats, "The intellect of man is forced to choose/ Perfection of the life, or of the work . . ." But, in the next epigraph, Fidelman is quoted as requiring the perfection of "Both." In "The Glass Blower of Venice,"

Fidelman achieves perfection in his art by perfecting his life.[4] The love he finds with Beppo is insufficient for that achievement; only the combination of sensual love for an individual and platonic, humane love for the rest of the world--a love based upon mercy and compassion for the suffering of others--is a perfection of life. The story ends with the ambiguous note that, after leaving Beppo and returning to America, Fidelman "worked as a craftsman in glass and loved men and women" (p. 218 PF). This is not merely a reference to his bisexuality; rather, Fidelman is at last able to love all men and women with humanity and mercy.

Above, in comparing The Tenants and "The Last Mohican," it seemed paradoxical that Willie should burn Lesser's manuscript after Harry falls in love with Irene. By Fidelman's example, the manuscript should be burned because the spirit of the art is missing from the writer's life. But the love Lesser feels for Irene is not the perfection of that sentiment; though he loves Irene, Lesser has not yet learned to love all men and women. Whereas Fidelman chooses to end Margherita's suffering by leaving his lover, Lesser injures Willie by stealing Irene away from him. The writer himself formulates the question: Bill, he thinks, "has little, why should I make it less" by taking Irene from him? But take her he does, violating Bober's Law of compassion and revealing that he can only attain a limited love, a

sensual love for a woman. Though Lesser claims that he treated Willie "like a man" (p. 191 T), he never treats him with dignity. The more complex and difficult variety of love, humanity and brotherhood, still eludes Harry. Absent from his life, this love must be absent from his work, and his manuscript is destroyed for its own deficiencies in this respect. Though Fidelman, in most of the stories, learns the lesson of mercy and compassion, Lesser only seems to acquire this enlightenment in the moment before his death.

Although Lesser cannot create a conclusion for his novel, there are at least four endings in The Tenants; the irony of this is emphasized by the title of Harry's novel, The Promised End. In King Lear, when Lear enters at the end with Cordelia in his arms, Kent wonders "Is this the promis'd end?"[5] The grim scene reminds Kent of the Last Judgement, but Malamud uses "the promised end" as a synonym for "the new life" sought in his previous novels.[6] That goal, originally enunciated by Frank Alpine, is a translation of the title of Dante's La Vita Nuova. Like that work, the enlightenment of Alpine, Levin, and Lesser is marked by the degree to which they can spiritualize their love for a woman.[7] As Martin Buber notes in I and Thou, "the lover in the Vita Nuova rightly and properly says for the most part Ella and only at time Voi." This is because, as Buber states, "only one Thou never ceases by its nature to be Thou

for us"--God.[8] As Buber recognizes, Dante's spiritualization of the lover can be read as a religious allegory, like the Song of Songs. In this sense, the "new life" of transcendent spirituality is as close as Malamud seems to come to positing a religious, rather than humanistic, system.

There is, however, a subtle nuance of difference between the implications of "the new life" and "the promised end." The latter is also a play upon the biblical "promised land," where the new life for Israel would begin; this implies a promised beginning, but the promised end connotes a certain decisive finality, a terminal achievement. Indeed, though Malamud's early protagonists, Hobbs, Alpine, and Levine, appear to be on the verge of a new existence at the end of their respective novels, the emphasis for Bok and Lesser is more on the moment of their enlightenment. The Fixer, for example, ends with Bok's understanding of the suffering of humanity, his rejection of oppression, and his affirmation of mercy for the oppressed. Whether Bok will be convicted of a ritual slaughter and die a martyr, or--as in the historic Beilis case--he will be acquitted and begin a new life with his new beliefs, is not pursued because it is anti-climactic and incidental to the discovery of those beliefs. Like the conclusion of The Fixer, the multiple endings of The Tenants take the form of a series of epiphanies.[9] Like the puns,

the alternations of present and past tense in the narration, and several of the other post-modern techniques of The Tenants, these epiphanies can be numbered among the influences of James Joyce on Bernard Malamud's art. Three of the epiphanies culminate with "END OF NOVEL" or "THE END," capitalized and set apart from the text. Whatever else they might signal the end of, none of these lines concludes The Tenants; since Malamud never ends a work with an unnecessary announcement of that fact, these three may be supposed to be endings of an entirely different nature.

The first ending comes scarcely twenty pages into the novel, and is the only one to be followed by "END OF NOVEL" (p. 23 T). Lesser, having difficulty writing, has been further frustrated by a visit from Levenspiel. After the landlord's departure, Harry finds that he cannot concentrate, and decides to stop for the day, thinking that it is best to "pretend you have stopped writing of your own accord" (p. 23 T). Then Lesser drifts into a fantasy: he is standing on the roof, and all Manhattan is his island. He senses that "Levenspiel, resembling mysterious stranger if not heart of darkness, starts this tiny fire in a pile of wood shavings in the cellar." The building burns rapidly, and the furnace explodes twice, "but Harry, at his desk and writing well, figures it's construction in the neighborhood and carries on." On the top floor, the fire reaches Lesser last. "Nobody says no,

so the fire surges its inevitable way upwards and with a convulsive roar flings open Lesser's door" (p. 23 T). What happens to Harry is left to the reader's imagination; at that point the reverie concludes simply "END OF NOVEL." The fantasy discloses several interesting points. First are the oblique references to works by Joseph Conrad and Mark Twain. Conrad's novel, Heart of Darkness, explores not only the animal facets of a man's subconscious, but also the implied similarities between the depraved protagonist, Kurtz, and the reflective narrator, Marlowe. Malamud is indebted to Conrad for his experimentation with the literary uses of the double. Levenspiel, therefore, is not only enacting the dissoluteness of his "heart of darkness" by igniting the building, but is also executing the writer's own subconscious desires; after all, it is Lesser's fantasy. By dying at his desk, Lesser would become a literary martyr, and would also avoid having to finish his novel; Harry's novel, and not The Tenants, is that for which the final line proclaims the end. Further, that novel can only die with the novelist. As Lesser realizes shortly before this fantasy, "he lives to write, writes to live" (p. 23 T). His novel's end, therefore, implies the end of Lesser. When the novel is actually destroyed by Willie, on the other hand, and the novelist survives, there is no uppercase announcement of the end.

But Lesser's fantasy also includes a cryptic

accusation: the writer is burned partly because "nobody says no," as if someone who cared could have stopped the flames.[10] Lesser is apparently sensitive to his solitary existence, and aware that no one seems to feel responsible for him. As in the philosophy of Bober, or Buber, this sense of responsibility for others is the keystone of mercy, compassion, and love; ironically, Lesser's fate is determined largely by his avoidance of such responsibility, his willingness to cause others pain for his own benefit, and his general lack of brotherly love. His fundamental position is evident from his statement just prior to meeting Willie: "I am not my brother's brother" (p. 26 T).

The reference in the fantasy to Mark Twain's The Mysterious Stranger is a bit more enigmatic. Satan, Twain's stranger, is characterized by an insensibility to human suffering; though he chides men for the misery they cause their fellows, he accepts the pain he himself creates for mankind as natural. The narrator, Theodor Fischer, is appalled at the consequences of Satan's actions, and yet considering the solipsistic conclusion of that short novel, the actions and the results all derive from Fischer himself. Like the reference to Heart of Darkness, the effect of mentioning The Mysterious Stranger is to highlight Lesser's role in his own imagined destruction. Less than a double, Levenspiel in this case is merely an agent of Lesser's subconscious will to end the tedium of his art and existence.

The second purported end of the novel comes after Harry's vision of the double wedding ceremony. In the fantasy, Lesser depicts that event as an almost perfect solution to his troubles with Willie. Lesser marries Mary, to whom he was sufficiently attracted to make love, and Willie marries Irene. The relatives and Sam seem grudgingly to accept the marriages; though not perfect, the double marriage seems to minimize the suffering for most of the characters concerned.

In performing the tribal rite, the chief dispenses a series of parables for Lesser's edification. His advice is simply stated: "Do not push your spear in the belly of them which is not your enemy. If somebody do bad it do not die. It live in the hut, the yard and the village. The ceremony of reconciliation is useless. Men say the words of peace but they do not forgive each other" (pp. 211-212 T). The chief's meaning is more complex than it appears. He does not advise Lesser never to defend himself, but indicates, as Yakov Bok learns in The Fixer, that mercy and compassion must be tempered with pragmatism for the eradication of suffering. One's true enemy (like Bok's Tsar, an enemy of mankind) can be killed, but antagonizing or hurting anyone not an enemy is an evil deed, with eternal repercussions. The chief's advice is sagacious, but comes too late. Lesser has already injured Willie, and the black has taken his revenge; though the writers later go through a ceremony of reconciliation,

they do not really forgive each other.

In the context of the dream, Lesser has understood the chief. He recognizes his own deficiencies, and to his bride he says, "Mary, I'm short of love in my nature, don't ask me why, but I'll try to give you your due" (p. 213 T). This principle, extended to all men, is Lesser's first humane sentiment. The rabbi reiterates the chief's message, in discussing what is needed for co-existence: "besides love that which preserves marriage is that which preserves life; this is mutual trust, insight into each other, generosity and also character, so that you will do what is not easy to do when you must do it" (p. 216 T). The marriages are both inter-racial, each between a black and a Jew, uniting the peoples of Ishmael and Israel. The couples are experiments in humane relations, and they will only be successful with the proper degree of responsibility and mercy for one another.

The fantasy ends when Irene asks Lesser to account for what is happening. He replies that "it's something I imagined, like an act of love, the end of my book if I dared." She retorts, "You're not so smart," and it is "THE END" (p. 217 T). Lesser's explanation is extremely penetrating. The fantasy is an act of love for all mankind, a willing of unity for the universe in general, and for Willie and himself in particular. It is also a proper ending for a novel about love, since it includes

both sexual and brotherly affection. Like the first ending, this is a possibility for Harry's novel; a happy, positive conclusion. In the first epiphany Lesser accedes to martyrdom, in the second he discovers love. But Irene knows that Harry is "not so smart," and neither the novel nor his relationship with Willie will end that happily. "THE END" seems to signify the end of any such hope for happiness in Lesser's novel; though he later feels like saying something friendly to Willie, Harry believes that "you couldn't say that aloud to someone who had deliberately destroyed the almost completed manuscript of your most promising novel" (p. 222 _T_).

A third alternative ending to Lesser's novel comes at the finish of the writers' second vicious fight. By that time, their mutual hatred has caused Willie and Lesser to degenerate into versions of their mythic stereotypes. Willie, the "potent black," emasculates Lesser to destroy Harry's challenge to his phallic superiority, while Lesser, the "intellectual Jew," crushes Willie's brain to terminate the black's cerebral aspirations. As in the first ending, Lesser's death brings "THE END" of the novel (p. 230 _T_). Immediately before that end, however, the writer sees a final and positive affirmation of humanity in the actions of the combatants. "Each, thought the writer, feels the anguish of the other" (p. 230 _T_). "The writer" usually

refers to Lesser, but the thoughts here hardly seem those of a recently castrated man on the verge of death;[11] on the other hand, if this is so, the detachment exhibited in his thoughts gives added emphasis to the moment of the epiphany that Lesser perceives and comprehends. Another possible explanation can be supported by this and other obscure hints. The characters and the plot of Lazar Cohen's novel are never revealed. "The writer" could be either Cohen or Lesser, or both, reacting on different levels to the scene depicted between the "Willie" and the "Lesser" of Cohen's book. This, while possible, is too contrived an explanation; the violence and deaths are justified and prepared for realistically on the most basic and literal level of the novel. The brutality of the climax would hardly be climactic were it not happening to Lesser and Willie in the reality of _The Tenants_. Yet on all of these levels, the promised end is still achieved in the mortal moment of the epiphany, when Willie and Lesser, for the first time, are able to understand each other's suffering.

It is the novel's level of reality, therefore, which seems suspect in light of the implication that "the writer" is somehow outside that sphere. If "the writer" is Lesser, the entire novel can be seen as a product of his "hyperactive imagination" (p. 4 _T_); this would explain why the novel's narration drifts in and out of Harry's mind. Alternately, since the characters are the imaginative

creations of a single consciousness, "the writer" may well be Levenspiel, who survives Lesser and Willie, or any of the other characters of the novel, or even Malamud's narrative persona, suddenly surfacing. The ending of Twain's The Mysterious Stranger, references to which in The Tenants have been cited above,[12] seems to require a similar interpretation. At the end of that story, Satan, the stranger, reveals to the narrator the true nature of the universe, in terms that are extremely suitable for The Tenants:

> "You perceive, now, that these things are all impossible except in a dream. You perceive that they are pure and puerile insanities, the silly creations of an imagination that is not conscious of its freaks--in a word, that they are a dream, and you the maker of it. The dream-marks are all present; you should have recognized them earlier.
>
> "It is true, that which I have revealed to you; there is no God, no universe, no human race, no earthly life, no heaven, no hell. It is all a dream--a grotesque and foolish dream. Nothing exists but you. And you are but a thought--a vagrant thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities!"
>
> He vanished, and left me appalled; for I knew, and realized, that all he had said was true.[13]

The Tenants seems to carry the same solipsistic implications: there is no world or reality, but a single consciousness, "the writer." "Dream-marks" are present throughout the novel, like the various "selves" that Lesser can greet at a party or leave behind him at work, but these are attributed to Lesser's imagination, and not to the reality he seems to be experiencing. Even if the novel is no more than the

dreams of this unique consciousness, it is nonetheless a collection of artistic, compared to Twain's "puerile," insanities.

The novel's theme of the relationship of art and life, and their mutual interaction, is reduced to the absurd by this solipsism: both art and life are only the fantasies of the greater consciousness. Yet in another sense, this solipsism clarifies their relation and interaction. That single consciousness is the mind of an artist, who creates a universe in his imagination. Whether reality exists outside, or whether it is only a division of the imagination, is unimportant: the mind continues to be concerned with art and life, each with its own reality. The implied solipsism may only be a metaphor for the ultimate problem of the artist's distinction between his life and his art.

The sudden appearance of "the writer" on the last page, and the implicit homologizing of the novel's reality and fantasy, are prepared for by the landscape in which the tenants' battle takes place. Since the early days of their friendship, the terrain of the building "had changed. The trees in Holzheimer's room had moved off the walls onto the dank floors in the flat. Taking root, they thickened there and spread into the hall and down the stairs, growing profusely amid huge ferns, sawtoothed cactus taller than men, putrefying omnivorous plants" (p. 229 _T_). This description immediately precedes

the final battle between Lesser and Willie; the change in the plants, formerly drawings on the wall of an abandoned apartment, reflects the savage change in the writers. Like the plants, Harry and Willie have grown wild, existing only to spill each other's blood. Yet the growth of drawings into plants is a flight of imaginative fancy, while the writers' fight is apparently real. By integrating the worlds of reality, or life, and imagination, or art, this passage introduces the possibility of "the writer," a superior and detached intelligence, and also solves the problem of distinguishing art and life by removing any differences between them.[14]

The artistic consciousness also continues to be concerned with love. This is perhaps absurd in a universe of a single entity, and yet love is more attractive by virtue of its impossibility. If the novel is an attempt to learn how to love, as Lesser envisions it, then this is a fitting application; Harry is a character whose ability to distinguish between the self and non-self, between reality and imagination, is impaired. In Martin Buber's classic terminology, the fundamental "I-It" and "I-Thou" distinctions are dissolved. Lesser may be Malamud's archetypal modern man, an example of the growing difficulty of making this distinction in the arts and society. The solipsistic mind is removed one step further from Lesser's dilemma; no distinction is possible where there is only self, where imagination is

reality. In a way, the struggle to find love is a struggle to prove the reality of the other. "The writer," the single consciousness, only surfaces at the moment of this proof, when Lesser and Willie are able to feel compassion and empathize with each other, because where there is no non-self there is no reason to designate the existence or identity of the self.

Thus, whether Lesser and Willie exist in a reality of the novel, or in the imagination of "the writer," the events of the novel must be considered real, if only in the sense of an attempt to prove that reality. The attempt ends, successfully, with the physicality of the final struggle between Willie and Lesser; the world which this conflict presents, of physical contact and death, is an effort to explore, or create, a reality at its most graphic and basic level.

Malamud has used a similar physical struggle before, in his early story "The Death of Me" (IF).[15] The story deals with Marcus, an aging tailor, who employs Josip Brusak as a presser, and Emilio Vizo as an assistant tailor. The two employees, for no reason Marcus is able to understand, develop a sudden hatred for one another. Their quarreling and fighting, though taking place in a back room, is both loud and violent enough to be heard in the front of the shop; as a result, Marcus' business suffers. In an attempt to make peace between them, Marcus begins to narrate a tale about his impoverished

childhood in Europe. Marcus tells them that his "father said, 'Children, we are poor people and strangers wherever we go, let us at least live in peace, or if not--'" (p. 65 IF); here Marcus is forced to stop because both his employees are overcome with emotion. Josip and Emilio promise not to fight again, and Marcus terms their decision true fellowship. Before the tailor leaves the back room, however, "the air behind him was greased with their fury" (p. 65 IF). His mediation proving futile, Marcus partitions the room to separate physically the two anatgonists. This produces quiet for a week, but violence eventually erupts again, this time lethally. At first, Marcus only fires his workers; when they continue to struggle in his back room, however, he rushes back "in again, shouting 'No, no, please, please'" (p. 66 IF). In the excitement, Marcus suffers a heart attack, and though "the old Jew's eyes were glazed as he crumpled, the assassins could plainly read in them, What did I tell you? You see?" (p. 67 IF).

The parallels between the novel's climax and this story are numerous. Like the tailor's employees, Levenspiel's tenants join battle twice. Marcus' persistent cry of "please" is almost equivalent to the landlord's wailing repetition of "mercy." Even the struggles have similar aspects: in both the knife-wielding assailant cuts into his opponent's groin. Malamud's final description of the combatants as Marcus' "assassins" coincides with the impression at the

end of <u>The Tenants</u> that Levenspiel may have been the real victim. But if the appearances of the story and the novel are so similar, the interpretation of the former must be significant to the understanding of the latter.

"The Death of Me" begins in much the same manner as Herman Melville's story "Bartleby the Scrivener." Each story focuses upon two employees with counter-productive idiosyncracies who nevertheless are found to be, by their callously business-minded employer, sufficiently effective. As Malamud has it, Marcus' "urge was to bounce them out on their behinds, but he couldn't conceive where to find two others who were such skilled, and in essence, proficient workers, without having to pay a fortune in gold" (pp. 63-64 <u>IF</u>). But no Bartleby enters Malamud's story, and Marcus remains aware of his employees' personal troubles, and yet oblivious to them. The beer-guzzling Josip, for instance, reads aloud the piteous letters his wife sends him from Poland, and Marcus, "who understood the language but preferred not to hear," is forced to hear (p. 59 <u>IF</u>).

Marcus, whose knowledge of his workers' suffering is foisted upon him, still refuses to treat them in any but an impersonal manner. Like another of Malamud's employers, Orlando Krantz in "The Maid's Shoes," Marcus probably thinks that such "people had endless troubles, and if you let yourself get involved in them you got endlessly involved" (p. 160 <u>IF</u>). Though Marcus avoids

involvement in his employees' misery while profiting from their labor, Josip and Emilio seek, in their enmity, some kind of total involvement. Thus when they are physically separated by the partition, their idiosyncracies--the physical signs of their inward misery--are repressed. After the room is partitioned, "Emilio Vizo no longer whispered to himself and Josip Bruzak touched no beer; and when the emaciated letters arrived from the other side, he took them home to read by the dirty window of his dark room" (p. 66 IF). In physical isolation, the employees can hope for no human contact or commiseration, and the outward manifestations of their spiritual sufferings are obliterated. However, the true tragedy of the story begins before this, when in physical proximity with them, Marcus denies them the least humane compassion. Though "the workers showed respect and keen interest when he spoke" (p. 65 IF), Marcus refuses to extend to them that fellowship he himself desires, for materialistic reasons, among his employees. They present him with the misery of living, and Marcus avoids contact with it until, his workers locked in mortal combat, he is forced to face their suffering or avoid not only the consequences of living but life itself. He chooses the latter option, and dies rather than become involved in the others' suffering. Though Josip and Emilio are not absolved of their responsibility in their employer's death, Marcus must also share in the

culpability for the conditions of his employees' lives and his own fate.[16]

Levenspiel is Marcus sophisticated by twenty years of urban development. While Marcus is willing never to mention his own troubles--except for an occasional reminiscence about his destitute childhood, used as a shield whenever the others' misery is too obvious to be ignored--the landlord is eternally sorry for himself, and attempts to enlist the sympathy of others for his own benefit. His extended cry of mercy for himself, long after Lesser and Willie have received their gruesome fatal blows, may be a repulsive reminder of the landlord's egocentrism, even in the face of the extreme suffering of his fellow men.[17]

There are other possible interpretations of Levenspiel's cry, which are suggested by some of the works whose influence on the novel has been previously noted. The repetition of mercy is perhaps in answer to Lear's cry, at the height of his madness, of "kill kill kill kill kill kill."[18] Indeed, Lesser and Willie seem to be enacting Lear's admonition, and the landlord's plea expresses the horror of death and murder as well as the revulsion at its form; Shakespeare, too, uses repetition for this effect, when Lear, being acquainted with the death of Cordelia, cries "Never, never, never, never, never."[19] Lear, of course, dies shortly after this pronouncement, while Levenspiel's fate is unkown. Yet they both survive a

bloody onslaught, and the repetitive lines seem to hold somewhat of the horror of that which they have seen. It may be well to note here that like Lear and Marcus, Levenspiel is in a position of official responsibility; as Lear is king and Marcus is boss, so is Levenspiel landlord to Lesser and Willie, his tenants. As in King Lear, the novel may hold the implication that in Levenspiel's misuse of his authority, the tragic deaths of the writers were foredoomed.

There is also an explanation intimated in Twain's The Mysterious Stranger. In that story, Satan reveals the coming death of one of the narrator's friends, Nikolaus. Theodor, the narrator, finds himself strongly influenced by this knowledge, and he remembers various incidents in which he had wronged Nickolaus or caused him pain. On reflection, Theodor realizes that he is acting as men often do "when we remember our unkindnesses to friends who have passed beyond the veil, and we wish we could have them back again, if only for a moment, so that we could go on our knees to them and say, 'Have pity, and forgive.'"[20] Though Levenspiel's words may seem to be of similar sentiment, the spirit is missing. The landlord would have had to understand the momentary epiphany that the writers attained in their agony to justify such a gross alteration of his personality. Yet his final words may indicate just such a change and enlightenment. The landlord's cry resembles, in form, Willie's poem

"Manifest Destiny," in which the appearance of "white" is slowly diminished until each line reads "BLACKNESS BLACKNESSBLACKNESSBLACKNESSBLACKNESS" for the rest of the book (p. 204 T).[21] At the beginning of Levenspiel's cry, there are also conflicting ideas. At first, the landlord seeks mercy for himself, apparently from Willie and Lesser: "Mercy, the both of you, for Christ's sake, Levenspiel cries. Hab rachmones, I beg you. Mercy on me" (p. 230 T). But as the cry persists, the personalities begin to be excluded, until the plea has become an affirmation of the transcendental value of "mercy mercy mercy . . ." Whether Levenspiel is merely a creation of the imagination of a unique intellect, or whether he is one of many beings in the universe, is ultimately insignificant. As Lesser and Willie have struggled to prove their individuality through love and, at the end, through hate, Levenspiel has attained, at the novel's conclusion, a comprehension of the non-self, of at least one other entity which needs or can feel the compassion and mercy he has sought only for himself throughout The Tenants.

Inevitably, the reader's consideration must return to Lesser, the novel's central protagonist. Harry is a complex, disturbed individual. He is driven to compete with others on their level: he tries to best the black sexually and the Jewish landlord economically. Yet Lesser is plagued by self-doubts. His potency is always in question, and there are many hints that he is either

undersized or slightly impotent. Dancing with Mary, Lesser does "his little thing" (p. 46 T), and in the dream of marrying her, Lesser holds "a tall rusty spear" (p. 210 T). Even when fulfilling Irene, Lesser's manliness is doubted; "she comes as though astonished" (p. 142 T), and what else is there to be astonished about but that puny Lesser could satisfy her? To compensate for these self-doubts, Lesser is intent on proving himself against Willie and Levenspiel. But the more involved he becomes, the more self-doubts are uncovered, until Lesser literally doubts the self, or the existence of anything else.

The novel can ultimately be read as a Freudian allegory. Levespiel, the landlord who embodies the conventional social pressures and goals in the novel, is the superego figure. Lesser, the main character and central "self," is the ego. Willie, the sensual, naked self that wrestles with Lesser, is the id. The abandoned tenement is the framework of the personality; the cellar, or subconscious, is filled with fearful fires and one-legged men. In such a reading, The Tenants is a portrait of a totally unintegrated personality, with each of its components trying to gain total domination of the individual. While possibly valid, such a view is encumbered by unnecessary terminology. Though a Freudian analysis would undoubtedly reveal interesting facets of each of the characterizations, it would also devolve away from the

central issue of love.

Martin Buber has written that "Love is responsibility of an I for a Thou."[22] In The Assistant, Malamud sought a spiritualized love by assuming both the I and the Thou. In The Tenants, the author has returned to a similar consideration, but has assumed nothing. In the introspective wanderings of Yakov Bok and Arthur Fidelman, Malamud has lost the assurance of a non-self. Love still remains the final goal, the ultimate expression of humanity; but to find humanity, to experience the existence of another, "the writer" has had to resort to violence. In the penultimate moment of the novel, the characters finally experience something of each other: anguish. Once safely back from the precipice of solipsism, the self can begin to feel love, compassion, and, above all, mercy.

Footnotes

Introduction

[1] Malamud's reuse of his own stories has been discussed by: Ben Siegel, "Victims in Motion: Bernard Malamud's Sad and Bitter Clowns," Northwest Review, 5:2 (Spring 1962), pp. 73-74; Mark Goldman, "Bernard Malamud's Comic Vision and the Theme of Identity," Critique, 7:2 (Winter 1964-5), p. 94; Charles A. Hoyt, "Bernard Malamud and the New Romanticism," in Contemporary American Novelists, ed. Harry T. Moore (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), p. 67; Marcus Kelin, "Bernard Malamud: The Sadness of Goodness," in After Alienation (Cleveland: The World, 1964), pp. 268, 275; and Sandy Cohen, "The Theme of Self-Transcendence in the Fiction of Bernard Malamud," Diss. Auburn University 1972, pp. 64-65.

[2] Bernard Malamud, "An Exorcism," Harper's, 237 (Dec. 1968), p. 76.

[3] Bernard Malamud, The Tenants (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971), p. 8. All further references are to this edition, hereafter cited as T, and will be found parenthetically in the text.

[4] For a negative comparison of The Assistant and The Tenants, see Marie Syrkin, "From Frank Alpine to Willie Spearmint," Midstream, 17:9 (Nov. 1971), pp. 64-68.

[5] For views of thematic and symbolic progressions from _The Natural_ to the later novels, see Hoyt, pp. 78-79; F. W. Turner, "Myth Inside and Out: Malamud's _The Natural_," _Novel_, 1:2 (Winter 1968), pp. 133-134; Fred Standley, "Bernard Malamud: The Novel of Redemption," _Southern Humanities Review_, 5:4 (Fall 1971), pp. 309 ff.; Max F. Schulz, "Bernard Malamud's Mythic Proletarians," in _Radical Sophistication_ (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1969), p. 68; and Sidney Richman's fine study of Malamud's early work, _Bernard Malamud_ (New York: Twayne, 1966), pp. 28 ff.

[6] These and other writers apparently still remain unknown to some modern critics. Ronald Weber, for example, begins his essay, "Jewish Writing in America: Jewish or American?", _Ball State Forum_, 10:3 (Spring 1969), with the ludicrous statement that "Jewish intellectual achievement in this country dates roughly from the end of World War II" (p. 40).

[7] Turner has called Malamud's presentation of baseball "a microcosm of American life" (p. 135). Norman Podhoretz in "Achilles in Left Field," _Commentary_, 15:3, (March 1953), has written that in the novel "Malamud suggests that baseball is the American way of providing for needs which our culture generally refuses to satisfy" (p. 322). Earl Wasserman, in "_The Natural_: Malamud's World Ceres," _The Centennial Review_, 9:4 (Fall 1965), has shown that the events in the novel have been derived directly from baseball's

history of facts and legends, pp. 438-439.

[8] Bernard Malamud, The Assistant (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1952), p. 29. All further references are to this edition, hereafter cited as A, and will be found in the text.

[9] As Robert Alter has written in "Malamud as a Jewish Writer," Commentary, 42:3 (Sept. 1966), "one often feels in The Fixer that for Malamud 1911 is 1943 in small compass and sharp focus" (p. 74).

[10] It may be noted here that these quotations are not exact; for example, internal punctuation is often changed or omitted. In the case of Dryden, Malamud has pluralized the verb in "None but the brave deserves the fair" (Alexander's Feast, l. 15). While this alteration is in accordance with modern usage, it also has the effect of allowing for at least two "of the brave": Willie and Lesser.

[11] Tony Tanner, in "Bernard Malamud and the New Life," Critical Quarterly, 10 (Spring-Summer 1968), has previously found a resemblance between scenes in King Lear and The Fixer, perhaps an indication that the influence of this tragedy on Malamud's writing is more pervasive than has been recognized.

[12] This is also slightly misquoted. Lear actually says: "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" (I, iv, 250).

Part One

[1] For a fuller treatment of this style, see Richman, pp. 98-100.

[2] Bernard Malamud, The Magic Barrel (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1958), p. 43. All further references are to this edition, hereafter cited as MB, and will be found parenthetically in the text.

[3] Bernard Malamud, "The Silver Crown," Playboy, 19 (Dec. 1972), p. 120.

[4] Many readers have been disturbed that an ostensibly Jewish author should occasionally use a Catholic saint in his symbolism. Klein has commented that Malamud may have chosen St. Francis in particular because he "is surely the most secular of saints and, after Santa Claus, the simplest and most available" (p. 252).

[5] See Sanford Pinsker, "The Schlemiel as Moral Bungler: Bernard Malamud's Ironic Heroes," in his excellent and witty The Schlemiel as Metaphor (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), p. 114. See also Tony Tanner, who claims to have received this insight "direct from Mr. Malamud," and connects "Levin" with the East and light as well, p. 158; as do Cohen, p. 71, and Charles A. Sweet, "Bernard Malamud and the Use of Myth," Diss. Florida State 1971, p. 93.

[6] Bernard Malamud, A New Life (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1961), p. 366. All further references are to this edition, hereafter cited as NL, and will be

found parenthetically in the text.

[7] For brief comparisons of the Levins in _A New Life_ and _Anna Karenina_, see Eugene Goodheart, "Fantasy and Reality," _Midstream_, 7:4 (Autumn 1961), p. 104; and Robert E. Ducharme, "Art and Ideas in the Novels of Bernard Malamud," Diss. Notre Dame 1971, pp. 74-75.

[8] Goldman has also noticed that "Sy," which Gilley called Levin in short for Seymour, implies Levin's "sigh" of resignation, p. 106.

[9] Pinsker writes that "evidently part of the contemporary critic's equipment is the ability to play name games with both ingenuity and endless patience" (p. 113). He then proceeds to give the following ingenious interpretation of the fixer's name:

> As the name "Bok" suggests, Yakov remains obstinate, the Yiddish translation meaning either goat or an unbendable piece of iron, while the English "balk" characterizes his reluctance to move forward. But it is only a short distance (linguistically, at least) from "Bok" to "Bog," the Russian word for Christ. (pp. 117-118)

J. M. Mellard, in "Malamud's Novels: Four Versions of Pastoral," _Critique_, 9:2 (1967), relates "Bok" to the German word for goat, and "Shepsovitch," Yakov's patronym, to "son of sheep," to produce the implication of a sacrifical scapegoat, p. 18.

[10] See Sam Bluefarb, "Bernard Malamud: The Scope of Caricature," _English Journal_, 53:5 (May 1964), pp. 319 ff.

[11] For another view of Malamud's use of stereotypes,

see Marie Syrkin, p. 64.

[12] Bernard Malamud, _Idiots First_ (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1963), p. 28. All further references are to this edition, hereafter cited as _IF_, and will be found parenthetically in the text.

[13] Bernard Malamud, _The Natural_ (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1952), p. 65. All further references are to this edition, hereafter cited as _N_, and will be found parenthetically in the text.

[14] See Wasserman, p. 446.

[15] Peter Hays, in "The Complex Pattern of Redemption in _The Assistant_," _The Centennial Review_, 13:2 (Spring 1969), relates her name to "Helle, bright goddess of death and resurrection" (p. 205).

[16] Klein gives an extended summary of the myths present in _The Natural_, p. 256-258. For a listing of various other critics and their contributions to the understanding of the novel's mythic level, see Hays, p. 200.

[17] This terms seems to introduce a debate among Malamud's critics over the proper expression to describe the author's characters. Siegel is probably correct when he points out that S. Levin is not "the comic _shlemiel_ of Yiddish literature, as some critics would have it; rather, he is close to the traditional shlimazel: the ill-starred blunderer who can expect the worst for the best intentions, evil for every kindness, punishment for every misdeed" (p. 78). This seems to apply to most of Malamud's protagonists.

Bober is here called specifically a shlimazel, and when Pauline spills "a hot glob of tuna fish and potato in his lap" (p. 10 NL), Levin is stigmatized by the traditional definition of the shlimazel. Pinsker, who has convincing arguments to classify Bok and others as shlemiels, recognizes that Levin seems to be a classic shlimazel: he argues that this apparent contradiction to his thesis is due to the lack of accidents in a "post-Freudian world" (p. 102). Without blind misfortune a shlimazel would be a shlemiel, but without even the possibility of such misfortune, as Pinsker has it, there can be no distinction between the terms at all, and they both become vague and meaningless. Alan W. Friedman's term in "Bernard Malamud: The Hero as Schnook," Southern Review, 4:4 (Oct. 1968), pp. 927-944, makes an even poorer choice; not only does Friedman fail adequately to define "schnook," but unlike the other terms in use, this carries no precise definition of its own. Robert Alter is probably the most reasonable of these critics when he characterizes Malamud's typical protagonist as "the shlemiel, the well-meaning bungler, compounded with the shlimazel, the hapless soul who is invariably at the wrong end of bungling" ("Jewish Writer," p. 72). It will be noticed that all such terms have been avoided in this paper, since their lack of critical specificity serves to blur the characterizations, and debates as above over the proper term seem a gantze kopdrayenish.

[18] For further comparisons of Ulysses and The Assistant,

see Pinsker, p. 95; Cohen, p. 51; and Norman Leer, "Three American Novels and Contemporary Society: A Search for Commitment," Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature, 3:3 (Fall 1962), pp. 73-74.

[19] This prophesy has been heard before, both in the writings of Jewish authors and their critics. One of the first was Marvin Mudrick, in "Who Killed Herzog? Or Three American Novelists," University of Denver Quarterly, 1:1 (1966), who announced that "The Jew is dead" in modern fiction (p. 97). And in Romain Gary's marvelous novel, The Dance of Genghis Cohen (Cleveland: The World, 1968), Cohen, the narrative dybbuk, and Florian, a personification of death, have the following argument:

> "Listen now!" I scream. "You don't know what you are throwing away! I'm still best-seller stuff! You know how many copies of Steiner's Treblinka sold only a year ago? And that other guy's book about Eichmann? You know that one about Eichmann and the little boy? One day Eichmann--"
>
> "Cohen, who wants to hear another Eichmann yarn? The public is saturated. They had enough of the Jewish shtik. Things're happening, you know. They want the Negro shtik and the Vietnam shtik. You can't keep six million Jews on the best-seller list forever." (p. 235)

[20] It is difficult, therefore, to understand the statement by Jacob Korg in "Ishmael and Israel," Commentary, 53:5 (May 1972), that "two racial identities are involved, not one, and whatever other risks Malamud may take, he does not try to show that they are linked to each other" (p. 82).

Part Two

[1] It should be mentioned that Pinsker has written of this and other titles that Levin considers for an essay in A New Life, that "of course, the titles are meant to be satiric, although I suspect that more than a few of Malamud's readers secretly thought that 'The Stranger as Fallen Angel in Western Fiction' might not make a bad essay" (p. 110).

[2] A paraphrase of the line in Richard II where England is called a "precious stone set in a silver sea" (II, i, 46).

[3] In a famous line from E. M. Forster's A Passage to India (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1952), Cyril Fielding recalls having made the unpopular remark that "the so-called white races are really pinko-grey" (p. 62).

[4] Mark Twain's Works (Hartford: The American Publishing Company, 1900), XXII, 273. Twain himself might have been uncomfortable with Malamud's use of the Jewish stranger as an angel. In the phrase omitted above, Twain writes that "even angels dislike a foreigner."

[5] The possible influence of Heart of Darkness on A New Life has been previously suggested by Pinsker, p. 109.

[6] After the publication of A New Life, Bluefarb noted that Malamud's characters seem to be "mirror-image doubles, 'secret sharers'" (p. 319).

[7] In "The New Nihilism in the American Novel,"

Partisan Review, 25:4 (Fall 1958), a relatively early essay in the chronology of Malamudian criticism, Norman Podhoretz suggests that the author "has travelled his own idiosyncratic road, almost as untroubled by literary influences as by the historical currents in which the rest of us are being swept away" (p. 590). More recent critics have revealed "the Malamud has mastered his craft with the aid of 'models,'" as Richman puts it, p. 100. Many readers have recognized the sources of some of Malamud's work, several of which have been mentioned elsewhere in this paper. In addtion, Robert Shulman has shown the influence of T. S. Eliot on The Natural, in "Myth, Mr. Eliot, and the Comic Novel," Modern Fiction Studies, 12:4 (Winter 1966-7), pp. 395 ff.; Friedman, pp. 72-73, and Richman, pp. 55-57, among others, have detected the effect of Dostoevsky in The Fixer and The Assistant; Goldman has identified scenes from the works of Henry James in A New Life, p. 98, and in "The Lady of the Lake," p. 100, and an allusion to D. H. Lawrence also in that novel, p. 105; Hoyt has compared A New Life with Lady Chatterley's Lover, pp. 75-76, and Klein--on Malamud's own suggestion--has compared that same work with Stendahl's Le Rouge et Le Noir, pp. 280-283; Giles Gunn, in "Bernard Malamud and the High Cost of Living," in Adversity and Grace: Studies in Recent American Literature, ed. Nathan A. Scott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), has shown the influence of Whitman in "The German Refugee" and

other works; and perhaps most significant of all, Mudrick, pp. 68-69, and Edwin Eigner in "Malamud's Use of the Quest Romance," Genre, 1:1 (Jan. 1968), p. 67, have shown the influence of Thomas Hardy--on whom Malamud wrote his Masters thesis--in the author's work.

[8] Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger and Other Stories (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), p. 54.

[9] Though Sidney Richman is probably right to assert that "it is misleading to pursue the theme of Jewishness too far" (p. 27), Jewish literary sources in the author's work have not yet been discussed enough. Malamud's critics seem to find only what they like in this aspect of his work. Most assume that the author's writing is "Jewish," and dutifully show that it is also "American." Few have actually found identifiably or demonstrably Jewish themes or influences in Malamud's fiction; two worthwhile exceptions are Pinsker in "The Shlemiel" and Alter in "Jewish Writer." Some, like Glenn Meeter, in Bernard Malamud and Philip Roth: A Critical Essay (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), and John Cuddihy, in "Jews, Blacks, and the Cold War at the Top," Worldview, Feb. 1972, have been so distracted by Malamud's often ironic use of Christian symbols and themes as to find that the author is not Jewish after all, but Christian. Tony Tanner, on the other hand, writing in England, finds that Malamud's initiation rites are rather "un-American," more like those of Europe, and presumably (though Tanner doesn't say this) almost British, p. 151.

[10] These are the types of passages I assume Samuel Bellman is referring to when, in "Women, Children, and Idiots First: The Transformation Psychology of Bernard Malamud," Critique, 7:2 (Winter 1964-5), he writes that "Malamud's diction is not seldom gratingly inappropriate" (p. 123).

[11] Some readers have apparently missed this significance altogether. Joseph Featherstone, for example, in "Bernard Malamud," The Atlantic Monthly, 219 (March 1967), says that "the hero, Levin, is a Jew, but this fact is of no particular importance in the novel" (p. 96).

[12] For a brief comparison of Buber's philosophy and Bober's Law, see Hays, pp. 209-211. Hays, however, claims to have received a letter from the author, in which Malamud says that he "did not intend to identify Morris Bober with the renowned philosopher" (p. 213). Whether this statement is credible or not, Malamud does not exclude future uses of Buber's philosophy.

[13] And as Mordecai Richler has written in his fine novel, The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (London: Andre Deutsch, 1959): "Ukranians, Poles, and Yugoslavs, with funny names and customs of their own, did not count as true gentiles" (p. 9).

[14] Bernard Malamud, The Fixer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966), p. 319. All further references are to this edition, hereafter cited as F, and will be found parenthetically in the text.

[15] Leslie Fiedler, in "Jewish-Americans, Go Home!", in Waiting for the End (New York: Stein and Day, 1964), suggests the terms de jure and de facto for what is here termed genetic and symbolic Jewishness, respectively, p. 92.

[16] Though there is a growing critical awareness that this conversion is primarily metaphorical, some readers have misunderstood it as proof of an ethnic superiority complex in the author. Leslie Fiedler, for example, has said that "what The Assistant really suggests is that, after all, Jews are the best Christians and that a good Christian might as well get circumcised and face up to this fact;" in his "Address to the Second Dialogue in Israel," Congress Bi-Weekly, Sept. 16, 1963, p. 56.

[17] Robert Alter has asserted, in "Updike, Malamud, and the Fire This Time," Commentary, 54:4 (Oct. 1972), that Willie "finally does become a 'Jew' in Malamud's special sense--a man who renounces the great world" for a personal type of suffering, p. 70. Alter is, of course, correct in his evaluation of the magnitude of Willie's misery. But what is significant here is that, unlike Alpine or Levin, there is no attempt in The Tenants to portray Willie as a Jew, metaphoric or otherwise. Malamud's values and moral ideals have not changed, but his symbolic frame of reference has been expanded beyond the concept that "all men are Jews."

[18] Bernard Malamud, Pictures of Fidelman: An Exhibition

(New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), p. 15. All further references are to this edition, hereafter cited as PF, and will be found parenthetically in the text.

[19] Bernard Malamud, "Man in the Drawer," Atlantic, 221 (April 1968), p. 70.

[20] Bellman has traced the "white Negro" in Jewish literature from Malamud's first use of it in "Naked Nude," (p. 116 IF), through Norman Mailer's well-known essay, to Franz Kafka's unfinished novel Amerika, in which Rossman uses the nickname "Negro,"pp. 130-131.

[21] John Cuddihy has found that this battle is a reflection of the contemporary "literary-cultural status-war between black and Jewish intellectual" (pp. 36-37); Cuddihy's bias as a "sociologist of literature," however, makes his interpretation rather suspect. Robert Alter, in reply, has stated in "The Fire This Time" that "there is no evidence in the novel that Lesser conceives of his relationship with Willie as a competition for literary preeminence" (p. 69). That such competition is present in the novel is evident from the time Lesser says "After me, Willie" (p. 49 T), to the black's literary aspirations. But whether this can be construed, as Cuddihy seems to imply, to be Malamud's view of contemporary literary history is extremely dubious.

[22] For a view of Bok as a Joseph figure, see Pinsker, p. 119.

Part Three

[1] The latter question is, of course, a paraphrase of the title of Tolstoy's essay "What is Art?" Marc Ratner has related the events of "The Last Mohican," and the manner of Fidelman's enlightenment, to the "infectiousness of art" which Tolstoy posits as a definition, in "Style and Humanity in Malamud's Fiction," Massachusetts Review, 5:4 (1964), p. 688.

[2] Indeed, St. Francis, Frank Alpine and Arthur Fidelman are also linked by their names. Frank sees himself as "F. Alpine" (p. 89 A), and the saint as "St. F." (p. 245 A), and in "A Pimp's Revenge," Fidelman is known simply as "F."

[3] This sort of phrase--the syntax is common in Malamud--is termed by Friedman, for no discernible reason, a "Talmudic tautology" (p. 931).

[4] In contrast, Mary Botsford Goens, in "Process and Vision in Malamud's Novels," Diss. Univ. of Calif. at Irvine 1971, finds the epigraphs and the ending inconsistent, pp. 155-156.

[5] King Lear, V, iii, 263.

[6] As early as 1968 Giles Gunn used the phrase "promised end" to describe the goal of a Malamudian character.

[7] Among the critics, only Goodheart, p. 104, seems to have any notion of the author's use of Dante's title.

[8] Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 99.

[9] Alfred Kazin, in "Bernard Malamud: The Magic and the Dread," in Contemporaries (Boston: Little Brown, 1962), has called these endings in Malamud's work, most often apparent in his best stories, moments "of ungovernable human feeling" (p. 205). Both Richman, p. 100, and Klein, p. 250, have used the term epiphany in describing such concluding scenes.

[10] The idea of someone saying no to a destructive blaze is reminiscent of The Assistant, where Morris is prevented from setting fire to the store by Frank Alpine, in the cellar of that building, too, pp. 213-214 A.

[11] As Marie Syrkin has written, "if he is really axing his adversary while being emasculated by his foe at the same time, he is not able to feel the high-minded sentiment ascribed to him" (p. 67).

[12] Though of no direct importance in the interpretation of The Tenants, there may be more similarities between the Jewish themes of this novel and Twain's The Mysterious Stranger than even Malamud realizes. As John S. Tuckey has shown in Mark Twain and Little Satan (West Lafayette: Purdue University Studies, 1963), the character of Father Adolf in the story is drawn from Dr. Karl Lueger, an anti-Semitic Viennese politician, p. 17. Tuckey goes on to show that Twain's original plan for the story included a ghetto and Jewish characters, pp. 20-22. And thus it is hardly coincidental that a passage first written in a draft of The Mysterious Stranger should appear in Twain's

essay "Concerning the Jews," written at about the same time, p. 41.

[13] Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, pp. 139-140.

[14] Jacob Korg, by comparison, has concluded that the lack of reality in the setting of a "graffiti-jungle" is an indication that the final battle is also a fantasy, p. 82.

[15] Cohen has also noted the similarity between the novel and the story, p. 167.

[16] In contrast to the interpretation here proposed, most critics have found, as Richman does, that "The Death of Me" concerns "a saintly old clothier's efforts to reconcile his two warring assistants" (p. 124). See also Ratner, pp. 679-680.

[17] Like the critical consensus about "The Death of Me," readers of The Tenants have tended to see Levenspiel, in the words of Korg, as "the authentic victim of the conflict between Willie and Lesser" (p. 84). Similarly, Syrkin sees the landlord as "the most appealing character in The Tenants" (p. 66).

[18] King Lear, IV, vi, 191.

[19] King Lear, V, iii, 308.

[20] Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, p. 90.

[21] Korg has also noticed this resemblance, p. 84.

[22] Martin Buber, I and Thou, p. 15.

Bibliography of Works Cited

Malamud's Works

"Benefit Performance." Threshold, 3 (Feb. 1943), 20-22.

"The Place is Different Now." American Preface, 8 (Spring 1943), 230-242.

The Natural. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1952.

The Assistant. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1957.

The Magic Barrel. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1958.

A New Life. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1961.

Idiots First. New York: Farrar, Straus, 1963.

The Fixer. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967.

"Man in the Drawer." Atlantic, 221 (April 1968), 70-93.

"An Exorcism." Harper's, 237 (Dec. 1968), 76-80, 85-89.

Pictures of Fidelman: An Exhibition. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969.

The Tenants. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971.

"My Son the Murderer." Esquire, 76 (Nov. 1971), 102, 104, 152.

"God's Wrath." Atlantic, 229 (Feb. 1972), 59-62.

"The Silver Crown." Playboy, 19 (Dec. 1972), 120-122, 272-274, 278.

Other Primary Sources

Buber, Martin. I and Thou. Trans. Ronald Gregor Smith. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1958.

Forster, E. M. A Passage to India. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1952.

Gary, Romain. The Dance of Genghis Cohen. Cleveland: The World, 1968.

Richler, Mordecai. The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz. London: Andre Deutsch, 1959.

Twain, Mark. "Concerning the Jews." Mark Twain's Works. Hartford: The American Publishing Company, 1900, XXII, 250-275.

_________. The Mysterious Stranger and Other Stories. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922.

Secondary Sources

(For convenience, those articles reprinted in Field and Field, ed., Bernard Malamud and the Critics, will be noted after the entry, with the abbreviation BMC.)

Alter, Robert. "Malamud as a Jewish Writer." Commentary, 42:3 (Sept. 1966), 71-76. (BMC, 29-42.)

___________. "Updike, Malamud, and the Fire This Time." Commentary, 54:4 (Oct. 1972), 68-74.

Bellman, Samuel I. "Women, Children, and Idiots First: The Transformation Psychology of Bernard Malamud." Critique, 7:2 (Winter 1964-5), 123-138. (BMC, 11-28.)

Bluefarb, Sam. "Bernard Malamud: The Scope of Caricature."

English Journal, 53:5 (May 1964), 319-326, 335. (BMC, 137-150.)

Cohen, Sandy. "The Theme of Self-Transcendence in the Fiction of Bernard Malamud." Diss. Auburn University 1972.

Cuddihy, John Murray. "Jews, Blacks, and the Cold War at the Top." Worldview, Feb. 1972, 30-40.

Ducharme, Robert E. "Art and Ideas in the Novels of Bernard Malamud." Diss. Notre Dame 1971.

Eigner, Edward. "Malamud's Use of the Quest Romance." Genre, 1:1 (Jan. 1968), 55-74. (BMC, 85-108.)

Featherstone, Joseph. "Bernard Malamud." Atlantic, 219 (March 1967), 95-98.

Fiedler, Leslie A. "Address to the Second Dialogue in Israel." Congress Bi-Weekly, Sept. 16, 1963, 56.

________________. "Jewish-Americans, Go Home!" Waiting for the End. New York: Stein and Day, 1964, 89-103.

Field, Leslie A. and Joyce W. Field, eds. Bernard Malamud and the Critics. New York: New York University Press, 1970.

Friedman, Alan W. "Bernard Malamud: The Hero as Schnook." Southern Review, 4:4 (Oct. 1968), 927-944. (BMC, 285-303.)

Goens, Mary Botsford. "Process and Vision in Malamud's Novels." Diss. University of California at Irvine, 1971.

Goldman, Mark. "Bernard Malamud's Comic Vision and the Theme of Identity." Critique, 7:2 (Winter 1964-5),

92-109. (BMC, 151-170.)

Goodheart, Eugene. "Fantasy and Reality." Midstream, 7:4 (Autumn 1961), 102-105.

Gunn, Giles B. "Bernard Malamud and the High Cost of Living." Adversity and Grace: Studies in Recent American Literature. Ed. Nathan A. Scott. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, 59-85.

Hays, Peter L. "The Complex Pattern of Redemption in The Assistant." The Centennial Review, 13:2 (Spring 1969), 200-214. (BMC, 219-233.)

Hoyt, Charles A. "Bernard Malamud and the New Romanticism." Contemporary American Novelists. Ed. Harry T. Moore. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964, 65-79. (BMC, 171-184.)

Kazin, Alfred. "Bernard Malamud: The Magic and the Dread." Contemporaries. Boston: Little, Brown, 1962.

Klein, Marcus. "Bernard Malamud: The Sadness of Goodness." After Alienation. Cleveland: The World, 1964, 280-293. (BMC, 249-260.)

Korg, Jacob. "Ishmael and Israel." Commentary, 53:5 (May 1972), 82, 84.

Leer, Norman. "Three American Novelists and Contemporary Society: A Search for Commitment." Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature, 3:3 (Fall 1962), 67-85.

Meeter, Glenn. Bernard Malamud and Philip Roth, A Critical Essay. Grands Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968.

Mellard, James M. "Malamud's Novels: Four Versions of

Pastoral." Critique, 9:2 (1967), 5-19. (BMC, 67-84.)

Mudrick, Marvin. "Who Killed Herzog? Or Three American Novelists." University of Denver Quarterly, 1:1 (1966), 61-97.

Pinsker, Sanford. "The Schlemiel as Moral Bungler: Bernard Malamud's Ironic Heroes." The Schlemiel as Metaphor. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971, 87-125.

Podhoretz, Norman. "Achilles in Left Field." Commentary, 15:3 (March 1953), 321-326.

________________. "The New Nihilism in the American Novel." Partisan Review, 25:4 (Fall 1958), 576-590.

Ratner, Marc L. "Style and Humanity in Malamud's Fiction." Massachusetts Review, 5:4 (1964), 663-683.

Richman, Sidney. Bernard Malamud. New York: Twayne, 1966. (Chapter Five reprinted in BMC, 305-331.)

Schulz, Max F. "Bernard Malamud's Mythic Proletarians." Radical Sophistication. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1969, 56-68. (BMC, 185-195.)

Shulman, Robert. "Myth, Mr. Eliot, and the Comic Novel." Modern Fiction Studies, 12:4 (Winter 1966-7), 395-403.

Siegel, Ben. "Victims in Motion: Bernard Malamud's Sad and Bitter Clowns." Northwest Review, 5:2 (Spring 1962), 69-80. (BMC, 123-136.)

Standley, Fred. "Bernard Malamud: The Novel of Redemption." Southern Humanities Review, 5:4 (Fall 1971), 309-318.

Sweet, Charles A. "Bernard Malamud and the Use of Myth."

Diss. Florida State 1971.

Syrkin, Marie. "From Frank Alpine to Willie Spearmint." Midstream, 17:9 (Nov. 1971), 64-68.

Tanner, Tony. "Bernard Malamud and the New Life." Critical Quarterly, 10 (Spring-Summer 1968), 151-168.

Tuckey, John S. Mark Twain and Little Satan. West Lafayette: Purdue University Studies, 1963.

Turner, Fred W. "Myth Inside and Out: Malamud's The Natural." Novel, 1:2 (Winter 1968), 133-139. (BMC, 109-119.)

Wasserman, Earl R. "The Natural: Malamud's World Ceres." The Centennial Review, 9:4 (Fall 1965), 438-460. (BMC, 45-66.)

Weber, Ronald. "Jewish Writing in America: Jewish or American?" Ball State Forum, 10:3 (Spring 1969), 40-46.

Vita

David R. Mesher

Born: in Portland, Oregon, December 10, 1949.

Attended: the University of Washington, 1967-1969 and 1970-1971; the University of Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1969-1970; the University of Victoria, 1971-1973.

Received: B.A. in English, 6/71, and B.A. in Near Eastern Languages, 8/71, from the University of Washington.

Awarded: 1971-72 Graduate Scholarship, 1972 Graduate Summer Scholarship, 1972-73 Macleans Foundation Fellowship, at the University of Victoria.

Partial Copyright License

I hereby grant the right to lend my thesis (the title of which is shown below) to users of the University of Victoria library, and to make single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or similar institution, on its behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or a member of the University designated by me. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title:

The Tenants in the Evolution of Bernard Malamud's Art.

David R. Mesher

March 19, 1973