

Holocaust Memory and Exhibitionists in *Mr. Sammler's Planet*

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Introduction

During his long career as a novelist from 1944 to 2000, Saul Bellow (1915–2005) did not write a lot about the Holocaust explicitly while he repeatedly expressed his frustration at his failure of moral and literary courage in incorporating it into his works. The information the European Jews were killed by the Nazi genocide was reported widely in the American press in 1942, but Bellow did not refer to it in his first novel, *Dangling Man* (1944). It took twenty-five years for him to go deep into the Holocaust until his seventh novel *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970). Bellow deals with a Holocaust survivor's traumatic memory in this fiction although he never stops expressing his regret that he has evaded “the central event” of his time, that is, “the destruction of European Jewry” (*Letters* 439). This background reflects his inner conflicts between the responsibility as a Jewish-American writer and difficulties of writing about the Holocaust. Analysis of the long-term effort at representing the Holocaust demonstrates his attempt on the art of fiction as a novelist. Since it is determined in my previous article “The Struggle for a Voice in Saul Bellow’s *Dangling Man*” that his first novel ingeniously expresses the struggle for his voice which has been suppressed in wartime, this paper aims to clarify how Bellow reaches his initial holocaust representation through examination of his first Holocaust novel *Mr. Sammler's Planet*.

This novel has drawn attention as the one “that has given rise to the most diverse readings and has provoked the most controversial critical responses” (Bigler 121). Yet the discussions have been focused on the narrative’s political position. Some critics observe it is not a Holocaust novel but “a novel about its own time and place” (Kirsch). Previous critiques have discussed Bellow’s political and moral view and belittled his artistic aspect for the story. It is true

that this book depicts the chaotic state of New York in the 1960s. When this was published, American people were confronted with the escalating violence. They witnessed crimes, assassinations and riots in the cities and watched the ugly news about Vietnam war. As well as sexual hedonism of the counterculture these violent acts are displayed throughout the pages. However, this work also deserves a study of its representation of the Holocaust by a novelist. Victoria Aarons's discussion in her essay "Bellow and the Holocaust" is suggestive as for the comprehensive study on Bellow's Holocaust novels. Particularly focusing on the victims of anti-Semitism, Aarons displays a shift in Bellow's mindsets and clarifies that the past finally becomes negotiable for Bellow. This perspective about his attitudes toward the Holocaust should be further examined in order to illustrate his struggle to represent it. The actual events illustrated in the pages not only tell what is really going on but also express a response to the Holocaust writing as a novelist. From this aspect, the ultimate goal of this paper is to explore Bellow's representation of the Holocaust by analyzing the exhibitionists' flashy actions of that time demonstrated in this book.

1.

Saul Bellow is not the only one who has avoided writing about the Holocaust. Concerning the representation of the Holocaust, it has been widely discussed that this is a matter of the unspeakable. Although the memory of the Holocaust should be transmitted to future generations to make its recurrence impossible, it is unspeakable in the sense that the horrors of the carnage are impossible to imagine, as well as that the victims' suffering is morally inappropriate as the subject of artistic production. In addition to Theodor Adorno's frequently cited dictum "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (*Prisms* 34), Harold Kaplan finds it remarkable "how many of those who have addressed the Holocaust with eloquence have almost simultaneously recommended silence and done penance for speaking" (ix). While describing a difficulty to have a voice which was shown in *Dangling Man*, Bellow also cast doubt in *Mr. Sammler's Planet* about splashy expression about the Holocaust. In order to look at his practice of representing the Holocaust, the role of several exhibitionists portrayed in this novel should be analyzed.

Sammler who has kept silent about the Holocaust is moved to express his

memory of the Holocaust every time he encounters the eccentric figures in New York. Peter Hyland labels these people as “grotesque” and “childishly self-absorbed” figures (69). Martin Urdiales-Shaw maintains that these people act in ways that “lead the highbrow and morally authoritative Sammler into lengthy intellectual reflections on the decadence of American civilization, symbolized by New York life” (125). However, their roles are not limited to Sammler’s meditation on America. Those who affect Sammler’s feelings have something in common: they are all exhibitionists. It is noteworthy that Sammler is attracted by the exhibitionists although they have often been categorized as egoists in previous studies.

The novel begins with a silence surrounding the protagonist Arthur Sammler. This seventy-plus man is alone in his room with some books and only enjoys “watching the changes of the ashen wires” of the electric coil with his bushy eyes (1). However, in spite of his “mouth determined to be silent” (11), he firmly declares his objection to speaking of the Holocaust as the survivor. His dissatisfaction with talking about it is explained thorough his following harsh denunciation:

Arguments! Explanations! thought Sammler. All will explain everything to all, until the next, the new common version is ready. This version, a residue of what people for a century or so say to one another, will be, like the old, a fiction. More elements of reality perhaps will be incorporated in the new version. (14)

This criticism is directed at Hannah Arendt. Sammler reveals his disagreement with the idea “there is no great spirit of evil” in Nazis (11), that is what Arendt refers to in *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. He considers that this “woman professor” makes use of a tragic history to attack the modern civilization of the twentieth century and denounce it in terms invented by Weimar intellectuals (13–4). Besides, Arendt is a member of the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago in the 1960s as well as Bellow and she is a woman in the spotlight at that times just as Sammler’s niece Margotte is attracted to her. Yet while Margotte relies on Arendt’s idea, he cannot approve the Holocaust being treated as a topic for discussion because he protests against her treating human life lightly. Sammler is as an intellectual and

migrant writer from Europe as Arendt, but unlike her he has kept silence about the Holocaust while living in the United States, for he refuses to allow his Holocaust memory to be used for self-satisfied theorization in vain and arousing public interest.

The exhibitionist to be discussed first is a pickpocket whose crime Sammler witnesses in a Manhattan bus. He appears as an eccentric attacker of Sammler who keeps silent when this young man robbing other passengers of their dollars. Although Sammler does not accuse the pickpocket, he is threatened thereafter by the man, because he notices Sammler watching. It seems strange when the man attacks Sammler after chasing Sammler to his apartment by exhibitionism exposing his penis.

The pickpocket is characterized as a virile and intimidating figure although such a racist depiction has justly got criticized. He is portrayed as a “Negro, about six feet tall, about two hundred pounds, about thirty-five years old, very good-looking, very well dressed” (9). Still this paper never stops examination because this is regarded as “a bad racist novel” (Finklestein 12). His commanding and powerful appearance is important. He succeeds in forcing Sammler into the corner in the building without words or violence. He does not lift his hands but only pushes to drive Sammler to the wall and removes the smoky glasses from Sammler’s face, and thereby Sammler is required to gaze at this organ displayed before his eyes. The intimidating appearance of the exhibitionist deserves notice as a pressure on Sammler who is the silent witness of the crime to open his eye. Besides, this leads Sammler to recover his voice through explaining the crime to other people.

The significant role of this exhibitionist is proved more clearly in his encounter with a heckler, the next exhibitionist in the novel. Sammler is actually confronted by two exhibitionists in one day. He has been assaulted by a student’s aggressive abuse just before he encounters the pickpocket. The heckler’s attack on Sammler is represented by a voice with exaggerated gestures. When lecturing at a seminar at Columbia University, Sammler is suddenly interrupted by the “clear loud voice” of a “thick-bearded but possibly young” man (33). Sammler cannot identify his face but hears the voice distinctly. The student shouts at Sammler, “Hey! Old Man! . . . , what you are saying is shit” (33–34). The exaggerated gestures and abuses of the student are described by

the narrator:

Turning to the audience, extending violent arms and raising his palms like a Greek dancer, he said, "Why do you listen to this effete old shit? What has he got to tell you? His balls are dry. He's dead. He can't come." Sammler later thought that voices had been raised on his side. Someone had said, "Shame. Exhibitionist." (33–34)

Not only is his extravagant behavior emphasized, but the heckler is clearly named by the exhibitionist. Moreover, as well as the heckler's loud clear voice, the term "exhibitionist" echoes in Sammler's ears after the lecture. In other words, it is stressed that the furious heckler gives a strong impression to Sammler of being an exhibitionist. This emphasis is noteworthy when the exhibitionism by the pickpocket is waiting for Sammler on the way home.

The reason for this heckler's claim on Sammler offers suggestions to comprehend the role of exhibitionists in the novel. It is effective to examine by comparison with Bellow's actual experience. As more than a few critics have discussed, Bellow was inspired by his experience at San Francisco State University when he was writing this novel. He was abused in 1968 by Floyd Salas there. It was not only in the setting, from the West coast to the East, that Bellow made changes to adapt his experience into the novel. To clarify the distinction between Bellow's creation and his actual experience indicates the novel's intention more clearly.

The purpose of lecture and the characterization of heckler determines the characteristics of Sammler's case. Bellow's subject was "What are writers doing in the universities?" (Atlas 387), and thus Salas's question was directed to Bellow's situation as a novelist who works at the university. He said, "Are you saying the university should offer writers a haven from the vulgarities of the contemporary world?" (Atlas 375). Salas was "a Mexican American ex-con, ex-boxer, a San Francisco Bay Area political activist, novelist, and teacher of creative writing" (Gordon 157). That is, he made an insinuating remark about Bellow's privileged ivory tower status and his foul curse is almost in accordance with the student's to Sammler in the novel. Salas shouted at Bellow, who avoided the answer to this question, "You're a fucking square. You're full

of shit. You're an old man, Bellow. You haven't got any balls" (Atlas 375). Considering their ages; Salas was thirty-seven and Bellow was fifty-five, Bellow was termed an old man because his attitude looked conservative to the radical New Left of the 1960s.

On the other hand, Sammler is seventy-plus years old, and he is abused by a mere student, who is "possibly young" (33). The target of the student's attack is not so political as Salas's. As Beverly Gross notes, the heckler becomes recognizable only "as a nasty caricature" unlike Salas (154). Sammler's lecture represents his lack of understanding about both the demands of the day and his mission. First, he does not understand what he should say to the youth. The subject of Sammler's lecture is "British Scenes in the Thirties" (31), and it sounds irrelevant for them. When he is asked to give a speech, Sammler hardly knows what the audience wants to hear. He chooses to talk of "the mental atmosphere of England before the Second World War (32)" because he is acquainted with post-war London, where he worked as a journalist until his arrest by the Nazis. However, his lecture's subject is neither a "trendy" nor "hot" topic for the youth of America in the 1960s, as Andrew Gordon points out (162). This allows the student view Sammler as a lifeless old man. The heckler's furious voice and manner are directed to the old man's irrelevant idea, instead of the prominent novelist's political judgment.

The student also protests Sammler's remarks about George Orwell. Sammler provokes strong opposition to his quoting: "I believe he [Orwell] did say that" (33). When he hears this statement, the student suddenly shouts at Sammler. What Sammler intends to speak is Orwell's criticism of the western intellectuals because he believes it infers the current situation around them. As Victoria Aarons points out, Sammler exists uneasily with the breath of war-time Poland while he is absorbed in meditation on America in the late 1960s ("Bellow and the Holocaust" 58–59). Orwell accused H. G. Wells as a writer behind the times who was incapable of understanding the nationalism and belittled the threat of Nazi (Orwell). Orwell's criticism of H. G. Wells is consistent with Sammler's of Arendt criticized for him. The student's shout however shows the claim that Sammler has another role to play in the speech. This lecture is organized by Lionel Feffer, an assistant because of Sammler's visual impairment. Feffer has seen the wound on Sammler's left eye which has been

damaged by a Nazi soldier's violence. Summoned by Feffer, a large number of audience members have assembled in the lecture hall at Columbia University. In other words, Sammler is invited there not to deliver the speech to young people as a victim and witness of the Holocaust instead of making political statements.

Bellow's characterization of the heckler has also aroused criticism. Gross maintains Bellow does not give "credibility to the opposition" (154). Gordon asserts "Bellow turns the heckling of Mr. Sammler at Columbia University into a senseless assault" by ignoring the context and framing him as "the innocent victim" (164). However, Bellow's retelling is not his private revenge on Salas. It is not a certain figure's political discussion but an anonymous student's warning with exhibitionistic behavior that Bellow emphasizes. As a novelist, Bellow discloses Sammler's lack of understanding about his mission. Sammler is not the innocent victim of "an assault by a disturbed individual with 'violent arms'" (Gordon 163). Instead, he is the innocent victim in the sense that he has little knowledge of what he should be said. Sammler is not expected to give an irrelevant lecture with the prevalent book knowledge, but he appears as a rare witness to the Holocaust for the young students. The actual experience is adapted to exhibit the Holocaust survivor's inevitable state as a witness to the crime. Making a change in the lecture's subject, and in the heckler's characterization and words, as well as adding exhibitionism, the context of abuse is transformed from a political issue in 1960s America to the wider issue of the unspeakableness in *Mr. Sammler's Planet*.

Sammler is characterized as a crucial witness to the Holocaust. He saw the bloody murder of his wife in the concentration camp with his eyes. Also, he remains the scene of the Holocaust in his damaged eye. His left eye distinguishes only light and shade now (2). While his good eye gazes at the landscape of New York, the other cannot escape from the vivid scene of piled bodies of the dead including his wife at the camp. His left eye never allows Sammler to flee from Europe completely, despite his living in the New World for almost twenty-five years. Moreover, he appreciates visual images. The novel begins with a description of Sammler reading books and introduces him as a man who likes "to watch the changes of the ashen wires" which come "to life with fury, throwing tiny sparks and sinking into red rigidity under the Pyrex

laboratory flask” when the electric coil is plugged in (1–2). By repeated highlighting of his careful observation throughout the pages, Sammler is depicted as an important witness of the Holocaust to give a statement.

The exhibitionists’ influence on Sammler is also shown in the conflict with the pickpocket. While Sammler watches his crime in the bus, he pretends not. His smoky glasses are the protection for Sammler who worries whether he is also seen his seeing by the pickpocket (2). This response shows Sammler’s tendency to give up his position as a witness. It is true he has once tried to notify the police about the crime, but he gives it up when a policeman seems to be in despair of recovering peace. Since then he has kept silence although he has observed crimes repeatedly. Attacked by the pickpocket with exhibitionism, he is ironically taught that he is a witness to the crime. This is why he recognizes a positive impact of the pickpocket as follows.:

[Sammler] nevertheless received from the crime the benefit of an enlarged vision. The air was brighter — late afternoon, daylight-saving time. The world, Riverside Drive, was wickedly lighted up. Wicked because the clear light made all objects so explicit, and this explicitness taunted Mr. Minutely-Observant Artur Sammler (8).

The encounter with the pickpocket regives an opportunity for him to be a witness and enlarge his vision. These two exhibitionists plays a role to remind Sammler of his role as they oppose to his behaving as if he were not the witness.

2.

In this context, Walter Brunch is also characterized as an exhibitionist who has an influence on the problem of the unspeakableness for Sammler. Brunch is Sammler’s distant relative, and he is introduced as the very image of a portrait of “a Rouault exhibition” at the museum (45). When a detail of the picture is undescribed, it is hard to find a coherence in this association. Brunch is associated with the portrait at the exhibition by Sammler himself just after his encounter with the two exhibitionists. Brunch is emphasized his inseparable image from a portrait at the exhibition. He is a baritone and musicologist, and

"a voice-man, from the soul barrels" (45). With his deep and resonant voice, Brunch shares his memories in wartime with other people by his comic performing. He loves to make a show of "playing corpse" and "ranting like Hitler and interrupting himself to cry *"Sieg Heil!"*" (46). Unlike Sammler, Brunch often talks about his experience as a Holocaust survivor with exaggerated gestures. Brunch is emphasized as the exhibitionistic performer who expresses his terrific experience of the Holocaust showily.

Brunch's exhibitionistic expression stimulates Sammler to utter his Holocaust memories. Sammler is impelled to repeat memory of Brunch who repeats his performance so often (47). Sammler sympathizes with him while trying to stop his repetition. "Unfortunately, Brunch was obliged to repeat, and Sammler was sorry. He was annoyed and he was sorry" (47). Sammler gradually memorizes Brunch's repetition and able to actualize it:

How, suddenly, in 1937, saucepans were offered to the prisoners for sale. Hundreds of thousands, new, from the factory. Why? Brunch bought as many pans as he could. What for? Prisoners tried to sell saucepans to one another. And then a man fell into the latrine trench. No one was allowed to help him, and he was drowned there while the other prisoners were squatting helpless on the planks. Yes, suffocated in the feces! (46–7)

Sammler does not talk of his own memory but Brunch's. He remembers and repeats what Brunch expresses with his whole body as his practice before he begins talking of his memory.

Brunch's talk encourages Sammler to protect Holocaust memories. Until the appearance of the pickpocket and the heckler, the Holocaust cannot be the subject to talk for Sammler. He always feels it unbearable about the topic. Unlike Brunch "Sammler never enjoyed this fun. It led, soon, to Brunch's reminiscences in the Nazi concentration camp. All that dreadful, comical, inconsequent senseless stuff" (46). However, after challenged by the exhibitionists, Sammler gains a new perspective on Brunch's expression of his memory. This is shown in his meditation on the meaning of memory:

If you had the comparative or historical outlook you would want only the most noteworthy, smashing instances. When you had those you could drop, junk and forget the rest, which were only a burden or excess baggage. If you considered what the historical memory of mankind would retain, it would not bother to retain the Bruch; nor, come to that, the Sammlers. Sammler didn't much mind his oblivion, not with such as would do the remembering, anyway. He thought he had found out the misanthropy of the whole idea of the "most memorable." (50)

Sammler recognizes that some memory is going to be jettisoned while others are memorized by those who choose it as the most noteworthy. He sarcastically criticizes about this unreasonable outlook which leads people "to dismiss the majority of instances. In other words, to jettison most of us" (50). Every memory should be appreciated equally for him. His sympathy with Brunch's memory arouses the deep concern for the current situation, in which most of memories are going to be abandoned.

His sympathy for Brunch's unblessed circumstances urges Sammler to confirm his identity. Sammler's faith as a Jew has been shaken since the Holocaust thinking he does not have "any God" and there is "no judge but himself" (115). However, Sammler suddenly feels an impulse to pray for Brunch when he hears his talk as usual:

"Walter, I'm sorry — sorry to see you suffer."

The odd things occurring in Sammler's room, with its papers, books, humidior, sink, electric coil, Pyrex flask, documents.

"I'll pray for you, Walter."

Brunch stopped crying, clearly startled. "What do you mean, Uncle Sammler? You pray?" (51).

As his surprise shows, Brunch is also uncertain about his faith. Like Sammler, he has tried to reject God and Judaism. Brunch is sixty years old and he suffers from his paraphilia after his loss of all his beloved family by the Holocaust. Brunch embodies a hopeless state of the victimized Holocaust survivors in the novel. As Lillian Kremer views, Bruch "explores the serious implications of Holocaust-inspired Jewish doubt of God" (223). Although other critics have

paid little attention to his role, Brunch displays the critical state of Holocaust survivors toward Sammler. Kremer analyzes the meaning of Bruch's name in both Hebrew and Yiddish, and she concludes that Bruch is symbolically represents "the concept of disrupted or incomplete blessing" from "the destruction of the Holocaust" (224). Brunch's exhibitionistic behaviors not only encourage Sammler to restore his memory but also to pray for a victim who is to be blessed. When he prays for the other, Sammler recovers his identity, namely the Jewish faith.

Lionel Feffer's exhibitionistic attitude is also emphasized in the novel. Sammler is attracted by Feffer because of his oddity. He feels "great pleasure to see Lionel Feffer working out in his peculiar manner, to hear the fizzing of his vital gas, his fuel" (30). Also, Feffer is characterized as a showy organizer. He has arranged Sammler's lecture at Columbia University as discussed above, but actually he himself does not attend it. Feffer is an "ingenious operator, less student than promoter" (30). His brash and assertive expressions are shown in his arrangement of the enormous audiences in the large hall. Moreover, his scheme is bombastic. When he hears about the pickpocket's exhibitionism, he indicates Sammler to show off a gun as a solution. This is his suggestion to Sammler to fight against the criminal gallantly, but his plan is excessive. Because Feffer's ideas are extravagant, he has a great impact on Sammler.

Feffer's schemes lead Sammler to break his long silence and fight against the criminal at first. Then Feffer's obtrusive suggestion of displaying a gun makes Sammler face his memory of the Holocaust so that he discloses his irrevocable past:

Sammler was preoccupied by different matters, far from playful. Feffer, wishing to divert him, had told him the tale of the insurance adjuster who pulled out the pistol. It was no diversion. Feffer had said that with that rotten gun you would have to shoot a man at close range, and in the head. Killing point blank. This shoring in the head was what Sammler had been attempting to shut out, screen off. Hopeless. (112)

Feffer's reference triggers Sammler's disclosure of his Holocaust memory over the gun. Sammler is obliged to confront "certain insufferable things" which he

has tried to blot out from his mind for a long time. (112). That is, Feffer's exhibitionistic remarks lead Sammler to revive the hidden memory of his Holocaust experience.

Sammler's memory is narrated in conflicting voices in the novel. In the first place Sammler's painful experience is described desperately at the concentration camp:

Why speak of it? Things that happen, happen. So, for his part, it had happened that Sammler, with his wife and others, on a perfectly clear day, had had to strip naked. Waiting, then, to be shot in the mass grave. (Over a similar new grave Eichmann had testified that he had walked, and the fresh blood welling up at his shoes had sickened him. For a day or two, he had to lie in bed.) Sammler had already that day been struck in the eye by a gun butt and blinded. (112)

According to this account, to speak of Sammler's memory seems to be hopeless because putting the memory into words restores nobody to life. Also, difficulties of judgment on events which occurred in wartime are described. Feffer's suggestion of displaying the gun arouses a question whether Sammler is a victim or a perpetrator so that Sammler is compelled to face his memory of a murder: "Putting a bullet through a million close-printed names — parlor game. But Sammler was driven through the parlor and back to Zamosht Forest" (113). It is a memory of killing a man after his miraculous escape from the concentration camp, as the narrator describes:

Sammler picked up as much as he could — gun, shells, food, boots, gloves. . . . The thing no doubt would have happened differently to another man, a man who had been eating, drinking, smoking, and whose blood was brimming with fat, nicotine, alcohol, sexual secretions. None of these in Sammler's blood. He was then not entirely human. (114)

As this passage shows, the narrator shows his deep sympathy for Sammler's circumstances. It is also added that Sammler has blamed himself for his depriving a man of his life as well as belongings. The narrator asserts that Sammler cannot be accused by anyone who never knows his situation. However,

the narrator's statement is inconsistent as follows:

Mr. Sammler himself was able to add, to basic wisdom, that to kill the man he ambushed in the snow had given him pleasure. Was it only pleasure? It was more. It was joy. You would call it a dark action? On the contrary, it was also a bright one. It was mainly bright. When he fired his gun, Sammler, himself nearly corpse, bust into fire. (115)

The narrator points out that Sammler also feels joy when he has been survived by shooting the man. Moreover, he adds:

[Sammler] appeared in Zamosht, in the town itself, wild, gaunt, decaying, the dead eye bulging — like a whelk. One of the doomed who had lasted it all out.

Scarcely worth so much effort, perhaps. There are times when to quit is more reasonable and decent and hanging on is a disgrace. Not to go beyond a certain point in hanging on. Not to stretch the human material too far. The nobler choice. So Aristotle thought. (114–5)

Not only is Sammler's murder condemned as a disgraced and dishonorable behavior, but a doubt upon the justice of Sammler's will to survive is also expressed here.

Sammler's crimes are represented as an unjudgeable issue in the novel. It is uncertain whether the killed man has tried to attack him. Sammler feels he has threatened by the man, but he is in the situation of ordering the man to take off his belongings. The man asks him, "Don't kill me. . . . I have children" (113–4), but Sammler shoots him "without pity" (115). Still, it is true that the man carried the gun and shells with him. After all, it is impossible for Sammler to tell the identity of the man. Because of these obscure elements, the narrator cannot define his position, and he defends and attacks Sammler one after another. These contradictory statements express that no one can determine what has happened under the extreme situation.

As shown in these discussions, the novel succeeds in avoiding a judgement on Sammler. Instead of formulating a definition, the narrator expresses the opposite opinions about Sammler's murder and survive in wartime. Ellen

Pifer also points out that there are two different speeches in the novel. She maintains that the voice is “deeply divided” in “the perceptions, thoughts, attitudes and feelings” (11). Pifer focuses on the spirituality and concludes that the divisions stem from the conflicts between soul and mind. Yet the divided opinions are expressed not only by Sammler but also by the narrator. The two speeches are shown as the reject of defining the Holocaust.

3.

Another character Doctor V. Govinda Lal as exhibitionist succeeds in leading Sammler to express his Holocaust memory. Lal’s exhibitionistic feature has been ignored in previous studies although it is emphasized in the novel. First of all, Lal comes from India to publicize his book *The Future of the Moon* which displays a showy spectacle. Sammler finds the campus of Columbia university covered with posters of Lal’s (92). Furthermore, at their first meeting, Sammler finds Lal’s exhibitionistic nature. He observes, “This was no charlatan, only an oddity. He was excellent, solid. His one immediately apparent weakness was to want his credentials known” (184–5). He notices Lal always lets falls “names and titles” of prominent figures as his intimate friend and thereby exhibits “his position” and “his connection” with them (185). Lal’s inclination to self-display is emphasized from the beginning.

Lal shows a way for the issue of unspeakable memory of the Holocaust. His advice affects Sammler’s skepticism toward explanations about the Holocaust. When Lal says, “I should be extremely interested to hear your views” (186), this remarks attracts Sammler, who is so preoccupied by the word “views” that he repeats it himself a few times. Sammler feels a change in his mind:

A strange thing happened. He felt that he was about to speak his full mind. Aloud! That was the most striking part of it. Not the usual self-communing of an aged and peculiar person. He was about to say what he thought, and *viva voce*. (186; italic orig.)

When Sammler is struck by “views,” a visual image is emphasized. He likes the idea of exhibiting an image rather than speaking. Besides, Sammler is given a further direction by him:

"View it as a recital rather than a lecture," said Lal. "Consider the thing from a musical standpoint."

"A recital. It is Dr. Lal who should give it — he has a musical voice. A recital — that is more inviting," said Sammler. (186)

Lal's advice is to display visual images and transmit acoustic sounds. Instructed by Lal, Sammler is led to be an exhibitionist of his memory. Sammler finally finds a way of expressing his experience of the Holocaust.

Lal's appearance leaves a faint hope for Sammler's memory. It is reasonable that in the next morning after he has met Lal there is a subtle change in Sammler's vision. His almost dead eye shows signs of recovery: "Suddenly Sammler . . . paused and started at himself, his dry, small, 'cured' face undergoing in the mirror a strong inrush of color. Even the left, the swelled, the opaque guppy eye, took up some light from this" (211). His left eye faintly releases the Holocaust memory which has been confined. This novel is called "Bellow's most anxious and apocalyptic novel" as well as "his most pessimistic novel" in that it describes the chaotic landscape of 1960s America (Bradbury 138–9). Yet the novel, which Bellow finally writes about the Holocaust openly, displays a hint of expectation for the memory.

Although the novel ends in Elya Gruner's death, it is not entirely hopeless. Gruner is a man who has rescued Sammler from Europe, and he has lain on his deathbed throughout the novel. That is, Gruner represents a time limit of both life and memory for Sammler. Although Sammler cannot talk about the Holocaust with him, he finds a way for mourning him. Before Gruner dies, Sammler recognizes his role, recovers his faith and begins exhibiting his experience by his encounter with the exhibitionists. Besides, Lal's exhibitionistic features indicates that he will also re-exhibit Sammler's memory. Flying all over the world, he would transmit it in his "musical voice." Historian James Clifford views a nature of exhibitions as eternity and openness:

While the object systems of art and anthropology are institutionalized and powerful, they are not immutable. The categories of the beautiful, the cultural, and the authentic have changed and are changing. Thus it is important to resist the tendency of collections to be self-sufficient, to suppress their own historical, economic, and political process of produc-

tion. Ideally the history of its own collection and display should be a visible aspect of any exhibition. (229)

Clifford suggests that exhibitions transmit excessive elements, while arguments and discussions are assertive and replaceable. Lal would transmit Sammler's views in his musical voice. While depicting the various exhibitionists in the chaotic America, Bellow's imagination transforms them to the assistants for Sammler to exhibit his memory of the Holocaust. As Aarons asserts, "Bellow seems to suggest that. . . words, uttered irresponsibly, distort essential truths. . . . Words can no longer be trusted" when he resists to argue or explain ("Washed Up" 147). Bellow's view may be his response to the contemporaneous statement of George Steiner who considers that the only response to the dilemma should be a silence. The well-known phrase "The world of Auschwitz lies outside speech as it lies outside reason" was stated almost simultaneously (Steiner 123). Still, this book is an exhibition of the Holocaust memory filled with words, instead of a silence. *Mr. Dangling Man's Planet* shows the way of representing the unspeakable memory of the Holocaust while evading the explanations.

Conclusion

Those who display extravagant behaviors in *Mr. Sammler's Planet* have been labeled as grotesque figures in previous studies while their positive impacts on the protagonist as a Holocaust survivor have been ignored. Sammler's trouble speaking out of his experience parallels Bellow's struggle to represent the Holocaust memory as a writer. Sammler is forced to recognize his identity as a witness by his encounter with a pickpocket and a heckler. The attitudes of these characters cannot be dismissed as simply part of the violence of the times. The pickpocket's exhibitionism and the heckler's exhibitionistic abuse open Sammler's bushy eyes. Then another survivor's exhibitionistic testimony stimulates him to recover his identity as a Jew. A scholar who is also characterized as the exhibitionist encourages him to express the Holocaust memories in a way of recital. After the chain of the exhibitionists' appearances, he overcomes his difficulty in facing reality; this newfound ability is represented by a recovery of his left eye damaged in the Nazi's attack.

Besides, Sammler's wartime experiences also illustrate the impossibility for any outsiders to judge or comprehend his story. In addition to the narrator's conflicting views, there are full of obscure elements as discussed above. This makes it possible to avoid simplifying the Holocaust while visualizing Sammler's memories. Although critics have focused on the politics and ethics in the narrative, this book is not a non-fictional novel of criticizing the political excess of the late 1960s. Rather, it is a creative art that uses words to depict the Holocaust memory. *Mr. Sammler's Planet* is Bellow's response to the impossibility of representing the Holocaust by adopting a style of exhibition. For those who attempts to represent the Holocaust in art, it is hard to disregard Adorno's 1949 remarks that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (Prims 34). The debate over the Holocaust representation may not be over. The ethical and epistemological problems are raised limitlessly and novelists strive to find a way to represent it. Because of their courageous struggle, the Holocaust novels become the crystallization of their art. Adorno also admits that "perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream" in 1973 (*Negative* 362), and this story describes this kind of suffering through Sammler's voice. Ever since the end of the war, museums have organized the Holocaust projects. Even when this novel was being written, a Holocaust exhibition by Louis Kahn was also held in the museum of Modern Art in New York, of which building Sammler looks at through the window when he has been in distress over his suppressed voice. Bellow has used a lot of so-called reality instructors in his novels who educate Bellow's heroes whether intentionally or not. By the display of the exhibitionists as reality instructors for the witness in the story of a survivor, Bellow opens up a new horizon for Holocaust representations.

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