THREE ALIENS WANDERING ON THE STREETS OF NEW YORK

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Abstract

In spite of its distinguishable nature and obscurity, the term 'alienation' remains to be advanced as a primary concept outlining noticeable and remarkable features of life in modern communities. It reproduces an experience that many American authors are familiar with. Alienation is a feeling of not being able to fit or to belong anywhere. This feeling can manifest itself physically, mentally, religiously, spiritually, psychologically, politically, socially or economically. At one point or another in time, each one of us has experienced alienation in one way or another whether at school, at work, at home among members of family, in politics, and in society. Thus, alienation is the state of being withdrawn or isolated from one's surrounding, events and activities through indifference or disaffection. The paper aims to explore and analyze the extent to which three Americans living in New York, J.D. Salinger's Holden Caulfield, Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man and Saul Bellow's Tommy Wilhelm, fail to adjust themselves in their environments, feel alienated from fellow New Yorkers, from social institutions and members of their respective families, learn to accept their plights and come out of alienation in the end.

Key Words: *Alienation, identity, estrangement, realization, freedom*.

NEW YORK SOKAKLARINDA GEZİNEN ÜÇ YABANCI
Özet

Ayırt edici doğası ve belirsizliğine rağmen, 'yabancılaşma' terimi modern toplumlardaki yaşamın göze çarpan ve dikkat çekici özelliklerini ana hatlarıyla çizen gelişmiş bir birincil kavram olarak devam etmektedir. Birçok Amerikalı yazarın aşina olduğu bir deneyimi meydana getirmektedir. Yabancılaşma herhangi bir yere uygun olmama veya ait olmama duygusudur. Bu duygu fiziksel, zihinsel, dini, ruhsal, psikolojik, politik, sosyal ya da ekonomik olarak kendisini gösterebilir. Öyle veya böyle, her birimiz gerek okulda, işte, evde ailemizin bireyleri arasında, politika ve toplum da bir şekilde yabancılaşmayı yaşamışızdır. O halde, yabancılaşma kişinin kayıtsızlık ve hoşnutsuzluk vasıtasıyla kendi çevresinden, olaylardan ve etkinliklerden geri kalma veya soyutlanma durumudur. Bu çalışma New York'ta yaşayan üç Amerikalının, J.D. Salinger'in Holden Caulfield'i, Ralph Ellison'un Invisible Man'i ve Saul Bellow'un Tommy Wilhelm'inin çevrelerine adapte olamamaları sebebiyle kendi emsalleri New York'lulardan, sosyal kurumlardan ve kendi aile üyelerinden uzaklaşmaları, kendi durumlarını kabullenmeyi öğrenmelerini ve sonunda yabancılaşmadan kurtulmalarını araştırma ve tetkik etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Yabancılaşma, kimlik, uzaklaşma, farkına varma, özgürlük.*

Introduction

Human being feels an existential indecision, dilemma and frustration in this era of seemingly perpetual and progressive discoveries and innovations. The feelings of anxiety and loneliness have to come to be frequently detected in the conversations of modern people. Technological and scientific advancements have introduced new living standards and modern means of communication to people, but have not diminished the despair and distress they experienced. Information has become wide-spread, but it has not succeeded in putting an end to wars or mitigating fear. Rather, mankind found himself to be more alienated, isolated, distressed and anxious more than ever. Modern technology has not been able to determine the growing distance between human intelligence or the increasing sense of resentment torturing human mind and soul. Paul Burton has appropriately expressed this predicament of humankind and asserted that "never before were so many people plunged in so much uncertainty, so much perplexity and unsettlement" (Burton, 1952:7).

Modernism, which guaranteed progression, prosperity, comfortable lives and regular income to people, has failed in its promise to render individuals happy and content with their respective lives. Alienation, which was general trait of artists, has become prevalent and engulfed each and every individual from all walks of life. Modern society attempts to suppress individuality and, therefore, the delicate individual experiences alienation and isolation. Estranged from within and with others, the problem-filled, adrift and confused man can be found in abundance in modern communities. German author Ignace Feuerlicht aptly presents the state of widespread of alienation and states that "while in the past only intellectuals, artists, misfits and deviants tended to be strangers and loners, the ordinary man, the regular guy seems bound to become one"(Feuerlich,1978:79). Man experiences loneliness and isolation even when he is surrounded by people. Even the vocabulary overflows by words that indicate the constantly widening distance between man and his work, people and their communities, and individual and religion. Alienation describes the spirit of contemporary era and surpasses status, gender, age or financial status. C. Wright Mills has declared it as "a major theme of the human condition in the contemporary epoch and of all studies worthy of the name"(Mills,1959:171). Thus, alienation has become a prevalent theme in contemporary literature also chiefly in regard to the increase of superficiality and emptiness in personal relationships.

Alienation in literature is unquestionably not a problem distinctive only to the 'modern' individual and also to the protagonists of the novels under examination. It has been a common agreement among the modern intellectuals, such as such as Erich Fromm, Richard Schacht, and Robert W. Rudnicki who conducted comprehensive research on the concept of alienation that it has its roots in the Christian obsession with mankind's detachment from God. Rudnicki, in his book *Percyscapes: The Fugue State in Twentieth-Century Fiction*, states that

"the alienated condition of man" can be found in the narrative of human being's banishment from the Garden of Eden and detachment God through "original sin" or "the Fall" (Rudnicki, 1999:31). Therefore, it can be argued that the history of alienation is as old as the history of humankind.

The shackles that decreased human liberty like slavery and misuse of working class people have been superseded by newer ones. Only a particular group of people, such as artists, scholars and mysterious individuals, used to detach and estrange themselves from the world and people around them. Therefore, it has not been considered out of place for these individuals to place an obstacle between themselves and other members of their respective societies. Robert Penn Warren recognizes this predicament of the literary experts and asserts that "no doubt, the artist, in all periods, is stuck with some sense of difference, of even alienation, no matter how stoutly or cynically he may insist on identifying himself with the world around him; and in our world, this alienation of the artist…is not only an element in his experience but often a basic theme" (Warren, 1979: 11). This theme of alienation occupies a prominent place in the realm of novels and literature in general. The outbreak of two major world wars also made a great contribution in turning it into a popular subject that still remains, to this day, a theme of importance in literature. Even though it is a prevalent theme in literature, alienation continues to induce difficulties for novelists as well as experts in other disciplines. It is a multi-dimensional phenomenon related to different contexts and disciplines, each contributing to its meaning. As Frank Johnson opines "in its use as a general concept, scientific term, popular expression, and cultural motif, alienation has acquired a semantic richness (and confusion) attained by few words of corresponding significance in contemporary parlance" (Johnson, 1973: 3).

The protagonists of many twentieth-century American novels are broken, sick, despondent, and alienated exemplars of modern reality who have finally refused to relinquish either their integrity as individuals or their moral commitment to community. The struggles of these heroes, who do not bow down to the challenges of their age and sacrifice either their honor or moral values, find expression in the descriptions of the artist who himself is also suffering from the same ailment that the individual has found himself in. This honorable and outstanding battle that modern individual fights has been noted in the words of Erich Kahler, when he states that "the artist, the poet, whose age-old vocation [is] to explore and express the human condition predisposes him to provide in his works and language a common human meeting … The alienation of the artist is only a symptom and symbol of the alienation of the individual human being for whom the artist stands" (Kahler, 1989: 42). This paper attempts to shed a light on the alienation and estrangement of the leading characters in Jerome David's *Catcher in the Rye*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day* and compare as well as contrast the effects and factors of alienation and detachment in their respective lives.

Different Aspects of Alienation in Major Characters of Selected Novels

J.D. Salinger's Holden Caulfield in *Catcher in the Rye* employs his alienation as a tool of self-defense mechanism in the same way he puts on his red hunting hat to claim his uniqueness and individuality and exercises his isolation as an evidence that he is way superior than anyone else around him and therefore he does not care to interact with inferior people. Ralph Ellison's unnamed protagonist in *Invisible Man* constantly engages himself in a process of self-discovery and attempts to discover his identity away from the expectations and desires of powerful and hierarchical social structures. And finally, Saul Bellow's Tommy Wilhelm in *Seize the Day* is estranged not only from his own family but also from his acquaintances and the entire city of New York, regains courage to live in the end and achieves a better understanding of the meaning of life on the confrontation of death.

J.D. Salinger's protagonist, Holden Caulfield's alienation is, however, self-imposed. He suffers from self-alienation. He distances himself from others as a display of mental superiority driven by the idea he possesses that everyone is a phony, while he appears to be the only one who has remained genuine and authentic in today's society. Erich Fromm, in his book *The Sane Society*, describes the predicament of the self-alienated person when he states that "He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts - but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys"(Fromm,1990:120). The main adversaries in Caulfield's life are his companions from the dormitory Stradlater and Ackley, a childhood friend, Sally, and a pimp and a prostitute that he encounters during his stay at a hotel in New York. In all cases, these adversaries prefer to disregard everyday realities by indulging themselves with certain forms of entertainment such as spending money, having sex with random people and frequenting in theater halls. Holden accuses each character for being phony and fake, and regards his siblings, his late brother, Allie and sister, Phoebe, as the only genuine and true people he has in his life. Holden has critically been overcome by the major armed conflict and its catastrophic outcomes and attempts to preserve a child-like conception of the world. As a matter of fact, he asserts that "certain things they should stay the way they are. You ought to be able to stick them in those big glass cases and just leave them alone" (Salinger, 2001: 158). Holden feels detached and alienated from those who are exactly or almost his own age due to his own incapacity to develop into maturity. The numerous experiences, Holden had, render him more and more alienated and isolated than ever before. In Sally Hayes's case, Holden gets in touch with her and arranges a date only to distance and alienate himself from her by stating: "You give me a royal pain in the ass…" (Salinger, 2001: 173). Holden is absolutely unfit to carry on friendships and persists on drawing himself further away from the rest of the world.

Holden's alienation and detachment manifest itself even further when he expresses his wish to distance himself entirely from community. To begin with, Holden invites Sally to "drive up to Massachusetts or Vermont….We'll stay in these cabin camps and stuff like that till the dough runs out…I could get a job somewhere and we could live somewhere with a brook and all….I could chop wood in the wintertime and all" (Salinger, 2001: 171). His feeling of superiority has rendered him estranged or detached not only from any significant relationships but also a wish to abandon his society nearly all together. He further states, "Everybody'd think I was just a poor deaf-mute bastard and they'd leave me alone. They'd let me put gas and oil in their stupid cars, and they'd pay me a salary and all for it, and I'd build me a little cabin somewhere with the dough I made and live there the rest of my Life"(Salinger, 2001: 258). In both instances, Holden suggests renouncing society in order to withdraw from a world he feels he does not absolutely belong to. He has no connection left with his own society and his only option is to run away from it. He feels he can no longer be part of it.

Many black people, especially in twentieth century, remained alienated and were pessimistic about their place in society dominated by white people. Much has been written about the feeling of alienation and confusion of identity which has been exhibited by black as a result of their membership in an oppressed group in America. Alvin F. Poussaint comments on this plight of African American people and believes that "the black man's alienation began when he was transported as a slave from his native Africa to the alien shores of America. The provisions of slavery turned him into a piece of property, a nonperson. To ensure a total break with the cultural institutions which give a man a sense of self, the oppressors not only separated the black man from his family, but also from other members of his tribe" (Poussaint, 1973: 359-360). Ralph Ellison's unnamed narrator, Invisible Man also suffers self-alienation. His alienation is self-imposed due to his repeated blind allegiance to authority. Though it would appear these authorities eventually force this alienation upon him, the Invisible Man's movement underground is a demonstration of his freedom. He consciously acknowledges his invisibility and proclaims, "I am nobody but myself " (Ellison, 1995: 15). The hero is alienated from a society that not only fails to see him as a black person, but also fails to see beyond the limitations of racism, the mistaken belief that some of us are more human than others or that some of us have the right to define others as we please.

The subject of invisibility and sight manifests itself since the very beginning of the book. Ellison's narrator states his happiness and contentment due to the fact that he is invisible. Nonetheless, he still, now and then, does not fail to express his anger about his state of invisibility. He remembers an occasion in which he almost killed a white man who encountered him unexpectedly and called him with a racial nickname. He stopped and refrained himself from the act until he realized that the white man did not see him as a fellow human being, but only as a stereotype, an offshoot of his own illusion. This is the basic reason why the Invisible Man chooses

to be invisible. Nobody truly sees him for what and who he is. Being established in reality, the Invisible Man's alienation and detachment led him to discover all about American society and criticize it. Marcus Klein, in his book entitled *After Alienation: American Novels in Mid-Century*, states that the hero "moves from childhood to the age of manhood, from the South to the North, and he is one of those heroes who move from the provinces to the capital, to the center of power, from innocence to experience" (Klein, 1970:108). His experiences were tragic and yet enabling, for they allowed him to see all the misfortunes the world had to offer, both on a personal and political level. The Invisible Man is resolved to release himself from the shackles of alienation and resume his responsibility towards his own society. He declares: "I've overstayed my hibernation, since there's a possibility that even an invisible man has a socially responsible role to play" (Ellison, 1995:581). He emerges at an appropriate moment and to make the change he seeks. In the words of Aimable Twagilimana, "His epilogue is his personal declaration of independence" (Twagilimana, 2009: 102).

In *Seize the Day*, Saul Bellow is mainly interested in the overused modern predicament of the individual: absolutely alienated and deeply estranged in a community whose only concern is money. Bellow's hero, Tommy Wilhelm feels out of place in this hard world of money, selfishness and exploitation. It is a world which has a non-human and animal like frame work, where feelings and emotions have no significance. Tommy is in a condition of extreme humiliation, forty-four years old, excessively sensitive and largely dependent. He is trapped and caught in a world devoid of heart in which feelings and emotions are of not much value. He is disenchanted in a community where caring and respectful communication do not take place among human beings. In the lower middle class and heavily crowded section of New York City, Tommy resides in a hotel called Hotel Gloriana. It is mainly inhabited by retired people. His father lives also in the same hotel apart from his son. People talk to each other, do business, pass the time or day, but somehow do so only superficially. All Tommy asks from the people in his immediate circle and his society is to sympathize with him and try to understand the emotional and financial problems that engulfed him. Tommy had been an actor, albeit a failed one, as well as a salesman. He has been cheated with the promise of an acting career and with the possibility of a promotion at his work for Rojax Corporation.

Furthermore, everybody, Tommy gets in touch with, turns his or her back on him rendering him utterly alienated. Maurice Venice turns his back on him when he realizes Tommy does not have the potential to be an actor. He has been passed over a promotion and eventually had been led go. Margaret, his own wife, turns her back when he needs her support and refuses to sympathize with him. All she cares about extracting money from him and enjoying her life. She even denies him a divorce which could lead to his possible happy union with his girlfriend Olive. His father turns his back against him because Tommy failed him as a son. He refuses to

be a part of the future his father, Dr. Adler, had arranged for him. He ignores Tommy's desperate attempts to reach at him for emotional and financial support. Dr. Tamkin, a surrogate father, takes advantage of him when he was most vulnerable. He shows warmth and tenderness towards Tommy when his own biological father had denied him, but these acts of warmth and tenderness have turned out to be a part of Tamkin's scheme to cheat Tommy of his final seven hundred dollars. Even Rubin, the man at the newsstand, whom Tommy has regular conversations with, manifests no genuine signs of compassion and affection. Even though Tommy lives in a metropolitan city and is surrounded by people, he has been rendered completely alienated and estranged because he failed to play by the rules of capitalistic society. It is only when Tommy finds himself weeping in the funeral of a total stranger that he reaches the consummation of "his heart's ultimate need" (Bellow, 1976: 118).

On the other hand, an unnamed character dominates Ralph Ellison's novel, *Invisible Man*, and the entire story centers on this unnamed character's painful acceptance of his social alienation, which is so extreme that he has virtually no control over the sequence of events that directs the course of life. He obtains so little acknowledgement for his attempts to designate a meaningful identity for himself that he adopts a new name, which determines his feelings on severe marginality: the Invisible Man. In the beginning he believes that the color of his skin can be held accountable for his predicament, but he gradually discovers that everybody, either black or white, resides in a lawless, immoral, and disorganized world, where respectable intention and elevated ethical standards have very little or no absolute value. Painfully shattered by this realization, the Invisible Man withdraws himself from human interaction and finds refuge in an isolated basement. There he was compelled to live nearly in complete isolation until he has the ability to find some peace, some meaning from the chaos he has unconsciously uncovered.

The absence or lack of identity of the main characters in the novels in question also contributes to the sense of alienation that they experience. The quest for selfhood or identity is the central issue for individuals to blend in and be integrated into their communities. A definition of identity that Eric Erikson provides in his essay entitled "The Problem of Ego Identity," may prove to be useful in basic understanding of the concept. He states that "The term identity ... connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (self-sameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others"(Erikson,1960:38). Identity, like alienation, is an inherently psycho-social notion. It symbolizes a sense of individual's significance to others as well as to the self. Infatuation of a person with his identity or inability to attain it leads to alienation and estrangement. Commenting on the link between alienation and identity, Donald Oken asserts that "alienation is a product of identity, as well as a sign of its disturbance" (Oken, 1973:

89). A rigid and stable sense of individual's identity presents both a scope to decide his or her direction in life and the balance to render individual secure.

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* depicts the title character's struggle to find his identity despite facing obstacles created by both white men and his fellow blacks. The unnamed protagonist takes on and discards a series of identities, discovering his true self only after experiencing repeated betrayals. Ellison himself admitted that the search for identity was the major important theme in American literature (Plimpton, 1965:329). As the narrator of *Invisible Man* tries to formulate a concept of his own identity, he realizes that his attempts were bewildered by the fact that he is a young black man residing in a racist American community. From the beginning of the novel, the Invisible Man discovers himself encountering various communities from the Liberty Paints plant to the Brotherhood, with every microcosm advocating a diverse idea of how black people must act in community. While the unnamed narrator strives to define himself through moral standards and principles that were dictated on him, he realizes, in every case, that the imposed role restricts his complication as a person and compels him to play a deceptive part. The Invisible Man's fear of losing his disputable identity is revealed when he takes up the responsibility of driving Mr. Norton, one of the white founders of the college, around the campus. The unnamed narrator involuntarily drives Norton to Trueblood's cabin and the Golden Day tavern, two of the unwelcome and undesirable places, and the Invisible Man is concerned about the identity he has ever been aware of upon driving back to the college after Mr. Norton's incident of collapsing unconsciously on the floor, and the Invisible Man's efforts to get help from the people crowding the Golden Day tavern. He says, "Here within this quiet greenness I possessed the only identity I had ever known, and I was losing it. In this brief moment of passage I became aware of the connection between these lawns and buildings and my hopes and dreams" (Ellison, 1995:99).

The narrator, upon arriving in New York, joins the world of the Liberty Paints factory, which achieves economic success by undermining blackness in the service of a glistening white. The Invisible Man discovers himself drawn in a process there in which white excessively relies on black – both with regard to the blending of the paint tones as well as the racial composition of the workforce. Yet the factory rejects this reliance in the final demonstration of its product, and the unnamed narrator winds up becoming silent as a black man. At the hospital, gradually getting conscious after the explosion at the factory, the Invisible Man, resting on a hospital bed, begins to suspect his identity once again. "Left alone, I lay fretting over my identity. I suspected that I was really playing a game with myself and that they were taking part" (Ellison, 1995:242). Upon his returning to health, the unnamed narrator enters into a political organization called the Brotherhood, which declares to preserve the rights of the socially maltreated with the guidance of Brother Jack, the white and unreasonable leader of the Brotherhood. The Invisible Man thinks that he can struggle for racial identity by serving within the principles of the

organization, but later on, he discovers that the Brotherhood hopes to us him as a symbol of black main in its theoretical project. He had to retain a new identity and forget the one he already possessed. He has been provided his new identity in a white envelope and had been instructed to remember it at all times. Brother Jack, upon handing over the new identity to the Invisible Man, declares, "This is your new identity" and "remember you identity" (Ellison, 1995:309-310). Thus, he has been rendered incapable of acting in accordance with his own personality and literally becomes ineffectual to be his real self. Even though the Invisible Man initially accepts his invisibility in an endeavor to get rid of the restricting nature of stereotype, he discovers this method to be very passive in the end. He decides to come out of his covert "hibernation" in order to perform his own services to his community as a complicated individual. Since Ralph Ellison touches upon such sensitive issues of race and identity, Alan Nadel expresses Ellison's purpose as "... working to create an American literary identity reflective of its multiracial legacy commensurate with the American historical and regional identity that provided Faulkner's driving impetus" (Nadel, 2004:170).

The views and attitudes of the leading characters in the novels of this study towards religion, religious figures as well as institutions also render them alienated and detached from these very representatives of religious personalities and organizations. Holden Caulfield cannot make up his mind when it comes to religion. He distanced and alienated himself from religion and religious institutions. The reader can see that Holden has had numerous in-depth conversations with people about religion but he is unsure what to make of it. Holden is confused about religion. He claims to be "sort of an atheist," and informs the reader that his parents are from different religions, but "all the children in our family are atheists" (Salinger, 2001:130-131). He feels like praying, but his distaste for organized religion prevents him from following through on his inclination. Holden has admiration for Jesus, but dislikes all the other people in the Bible, except "that lunatic." He reveals that in the past he has often had conversations about religion with schoolmates. He wants to protect the two nuns he meets from the corrupting influence of Romeo and Juliet and finds them to be kind, intelligent, and sympathetic. He even makes a contribution of ten dollars despite the fact that he is low on funds. He even offers to pay their bill, but they refuse. After they leave, Holden wishes he had given them more than ten dollars. However, he cannot tolerate the superficial disciples, and disdains the established religions and doctrines. Holden's dislike for religious phoniness becomes visible in his reaction to the Christmas show at Radio City Music Hall. He declares, "Old Jesus probably would've puked if He could see it" (Salinger, 2001:178). Holden can stand only those spiritual individuals who appear to be completely innocent, natural and trustful.

Similarly, Saul Bellow's protagonist, Tommy Wilhelm, like Holden, shows his respect and reverence towards religion even though he is not deeply religious. He

is not completely estranged or alienated from his religion. Although he is a non-religious Jewish and has not planned to attend a synagogue, he recognizes the importance of saying Yiskor for his dead mother; his sincere but idle threat to the unknown hoodlums who vandalized the bench next to her grave will not suffice to honor her memory. Tommy was not profoundly religious, but he "often prayed in his own manner" (Bellow, 1976: 86). He is "the kind of Jew" in Dr. Adler's opinion. Tommy did not "did not go to the synagogue," but "would occasionally perform certain devotions, according to his feelings" (Bellow, 1976: 86). At the end of the novel, Tommy undergoes a journey of transformation over a period of one day. Even though he did not have a Christian conversion and a sudden believe in God, he still went through a transformation to finally raise above all the problems facing him and have for once peace in his life.

On the other hand, throughout Invisible Man, the protagonist gets exposed to religion through Jesus-like characters, ardent believers, religious messengers, and through straight opposition to exercising religion by white men. Literary figures, such as the Founder, Dr. Bledsoe, and Reverend Homer A. Barbee, they all have their shares in contributing to the religious hints of the novel and influence the way how the Invisible Man considers the world around him. Reverend Barbee, a blind preacher, offers sermons to the students in which the unnamed narrator attended. These sermons mostly praise the founder of the college with the controlling metaphor of Jesus Christ. Direct correlations can be seen in quotes such as "And into this land came a humble prophet, lowly like the humble carpenter of Nazareth, a slave and a son of slaves, knowing only his mother" (Ellison, 1995:118). The book describes contrasting types of individuals and their ideologies, such as Booker T. Washington, the Invisible Man's hero who is steady and balanced in his principles, and Ras the Destroyer, who violently walks on the streets at the peak of the novel, brandishing weapons and shouting separatist views. In the very beginning of the book, Invisible Man is submissive to the standards of white man, and adapts as his own. This attitude of Ellison's protagonist shows resemblance to Booker T. Washington's views. Later on in the novel, the unnamed character finds himself associated with a political organization known as the Brotherhood. The Invisible Man spouts almost religiously about the Brotherhood in order to gather crowd and fulfill his so-called responsibility toward his own people. He does not realize that he becomes a part of the evil machine until the disappearance and ultimate death of his fellow Brotherhood member, Tod Clifton. This incident marks a spiritually decisive moment in the novel chiefly for the Invisible Man. The unnamed hero, from this moment onward, abandons the Brotherhood and becomes aware of the wicked ways of this organization. Due to his associations with those so-called religious figures, the Invisible Man distances and alienates himself after he discovers the true faces of such people, seeks refuge underground and stays there until he remains true to his own identity without sacrificing his responsibility to the community. He says that he finally feels ready to emerge from

underground. In the epilogue of the novel, the Invisible Man expresses his newly-discovered realization in the following words:

> Let me be honest with you – a feat which, by the way, I find of the utmost difficulty. When one is invisible he finds such problems as good and evil honesty and dishonesty, of such shifting shapes that he confuses one with the other, depending upon who happens to be looking through him at the time…I've never been more loved and appreciated than when I tries to "justify" and affirm someone's mistaken belief; or when I've tried to give my friends the incorrect, absurd answers they wished to hear (Ellison, 1995: 572-573).

The immediate relatives of the protagonists also contribute to their sense of alienation and estrangement. Tommy's father, Dr. Adler and Holden's parents, Mr. Caulfield and Mrs. Caulfield, have their share in alienation and detachment of their sons. Dr. Adler, in Seize the Day, feels embarrassed by his son's failures and lies about him to his friends. Tommy failed to fulfill Dr. Adler's notions of masculine achievement in America and the cruel old man is unable to express love for him. He refuses to extend his hand towards Tommy, who is a character in turmoil. Tommy is burdened by the loss of his job, financial instability and the separation of his wife. When he turns to his father for financial assistance as well as genuine sympathy, instead his father responds, "I want nobody on my back. Get off! And I give you the same advice, Wilky. Carry nobody on your back"(Bellow,1976:55). Returning empty-handed and desperate, Tommy finds the sympathy and the solution to his financial problems in Dr. Tamkin, his surrogate father. Even though Dr. Tamkin listens to Tommy's problems and offers advices, he, like Tommy's biological father, Dr. Adler, deserts him. Dr. Tamkin also lands the final blow on Tommy by cheating him of his last money, thus rendering him completely hopeless and desperate.

Holden's father, Mr. Caulfield, like Tommy's father, Dr. Adler, has lofty expectations of his son. Mr. Caulfield, whose first name has never been mentioned, wants Holden to go to one of the Ivy League colleges – Yale or Princeton – and to pursue his career there. But Holden has no intention to be a lawyer. It does not appeal to him and he says, "I swear, I wouldn't go to one of those Ivy League colleges, if I was dying, for God's sake" (Salinger, 2001: 112). His father is a lawyer and he considers lawyers to be phony. In Holden's opinion, all they do is "is make a lot of dough and play golf and play bridge and buy cars and drink Martinis and look like a hot-shot" (Salinger, 2001: 223). Only those who go around saving innocent people are alright in Holden's opinion. Even though Mr. Caulfield provides his children better facilities to pursue their careers, he is not around much when Holden or Phoebe needs him. He engages himself in pass-time activities with his counterparts. On the other hand, Mrs. Caulfield has also distanced herself from her children. She blames herself for Allie's death and feels traumatized as a result of it. Her husband's loss of money in bad investments drives her crazy. She is mentioned as being "nervous as hell," having frequent headaches and sitting up smoking most nights (Salinger, 2001: 265). She does not listen to Phoebe when she says she

cannot sleep, but instead she offers her another blanket. She appears to be a caring mother, but she is much more engulfed in her own problems than noticing the problems of her own children.

All three protagonists experience betrayed either by the people in the immediate family circle or by the people they get in touch with. These betrayals, no doubt, significantly contribute to these characters' sense of alienation and detached. Holden constantly feels betrayed, and that is a possible cause of his problems. First betrayal Holden witnessed concerns Mr. Spencer, Holden's history teacher at Pencey Prep. He betrays him early in the novel. He was one of the few teachers at Pencey that Holden liked. Spencer broke the news of Holden's expulsion and disclosed it to his wife, Mrs. Spencer. Holden felt betrayed when he realizes that Mrs. Spencer knew about dismissal from school. He expresses his discomfort in following words: "'I've been just fine, Holden.' She closed the closet door. 'How have you been?' The way she asked me, I knew right away old Spencer'd told her I'd been kicked out" (Salinger, 2001:9).Second instance of betrayal Holden experienced deals with Stradlater, Holden's roommate at Pencey Prep., Stradlater betrays him by dating his best friend, Jane Callagher, whom Holden also had a crush on. He felt surprised and betrayed at the same time when Stradlater reveals the name of the girl he is dating. Holden says "Boy, I nearly dropped dead when he said that" (Salinger, 2001:40). Holden grows curious and tries harder to obtain more details about his roommate's date with Jane. Finally, the last instance of betrayal that Holden suffers, involves his little sister Phoebe Caulfield. When Holden returns home to see Phoebe, she is disappointed in him that he expelled from his school. Displaying a behavior which is usually expected of an adult, she scolds Holden in following words: "'You did get kicked out! You did!'… 'You did! Oh, Holden!'"(Salinger, 2001:214).Upon this reaction of his sister, Holden feels betrayed because he thinks that she is the only noble character living in a world full of superficial and phony adults and expects that she should accept him unconditionally. These feelings of betrayal tend to render Holden more alienated and estranged from people living in New York.

In Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, the unnamed protagonist felt betrayed by a number of various characters and it is because of this reason that his life dwells in a perpetual state of turmoil from the very beginning of the novel. Disorientation and inexperience compel the Invisible Man to have faith in various characters whose intentions for him are quite dishonest and vicious. These characters fail him and betray him over and over again. These saddening betrayals of the main character occupy the large section of the novel. The unnamed narrator suffers the first betrayal at the businessman's club. He arrives there with the hope of giving his speech and feels honored at the respect that such an invitation implies. When he arrives at the club, he sees that the only reason he's there is to entertain the white men of the town with his own humiliation. The second betrayal, Invisible man witnesses, is in the presence of Trueblood. From the perspective of his own people,

Trueblood proved to be disloyal to his kindred people because he demeans any real or useful accomplishments that black people have achieved by carrying out this wicked sin of incest. The Invisible Man states his sense of shame and disgrace upon hearing Trueblood's story as such: "As I listened I had been so torn between humiliation and fascination that to lessen my sense of shame I had kept my attention riveted upon his intense face" (Ellison, 1995:68). Probably, one of the most painful acts of betrayals in Invisible man's narrative is handed down by Dr. Bledsoe. He deceives the Invisible Man by making him believe that he is writing letters of recommendation to assist him when, in fact, his intention is to send him as further away from the school as possible and render him stranded. This particular instance hurts the unnamed protagonist the most because he often considered Dr. Bledsoe as a role model. Upon the discovery of the contents of the letters Dr. Bledsoe had given him, the unnamed character feels shocked and outraged. He expresses his disappointment and disbelief in following words: "I raised my head. Twenty-five years seemed to have lapsed between his handing me the letter and my grasping its message. I could not believe it, tried to read it again. I could not believe it yet….I rubbed my eyes, and they felt sandy as though all the fluids had suddenly dried" (Ellison, 1995:191). The most painful betrayal, the unnamed narrator experiences, comes from the organization called the Brotherhood. This organization betrayed the inhabitants of Harlem as well as the Invisible Man because they have no desire to keep their promises of help and assistance that they have delivered to Harlem, but instead they spend all their efforts to politically further the Brotherhood. Another example of the Invisible Man's betrayal by the Brotherhood takes place when Brother Clifton has disappeared and the narrator is determined to get an explanation from the committee, he waits to be called to a strategy meeting, but finds out that the meeting was held without him: "Finally, I phoned headquarters, but could not reach none of the leaders....Now I was certain the meeting was being held. But why without me?...It was obvious that they hadn't forgotten to notify me. I left the building in a rage" (Ellison, 1995:429). Perhaps, the most painful of all betrayals is the Invisible Man's own betrayal to his own people by letting himself manipulated and being used as a puppet for the Brotherhood. When he finally lands underground and has no way out, he contemplates about all the acts of betrayals he had encountered and chooses to stay in a dark hole underground than to appear in order to witness another act of betrayal.

Finally, Tommy was betrayed first by Maurice Venice. Maurice, the talent scout, had called upon Tommy because of his good looks. The scout had seen his picture on a poster while Tommy was running for office at college. Maurice Venice claims that he sees potential in his looks and asks him to take a screen test. However, when the screen test comes back, Venice refuses to take him on because Tommy proved awkward on film because of varying factors, including a speech impediment that seemed amplified on screen. Therefore Maurice tricks Tommy into pursuing his career in Hollywood and causing him to strain his relationship

with his parents. Tommy's second and final experience of betrayal was delivered by Dr. Tamkin. Dr. Tamkin, whom Tommy considers to be his surrogate father, lands the most painful blow on Tommy. Because Dr. Tamkin kept him company and extended his sympathy when his own biological father refused to get him out of his financial problems. Dr. Tamkin listens to Tommy, gives him advices and shows him ways to make quick money in commodities market. Even though he often doubted the incredibility of Tamkin's stories, he still went ahead and invested his last money with him. Dr. Tamkin cheats him out of last remaining money, and thus rendering him utterly hopeless and extremely desperate. However, Tamkin's betrayal of Tommy serves him to arrive at his 'day of reckoning.' Attending at the funeral of a complete stranger, Tommy gets the chance to re-evaluate his life and finally accepts the 'burden of self.'

Holden's realization of his situation in the novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, comes in the form of a dream in which he imagines children falling off a cliff and expresses his desire to save them when he recounts this dream to his sister Phoebe. Having been questioned by Phoebe about what he would like to be and after dismissing several options such being a lawyer, he starts to recounts a strange dream he had to her:

> Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody's around-nobody big, I mean-except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff-I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy, but that's the only thing I'd really like to be. I know it's crazy... (Salinger, 2001: 224).

This extract sheds light on two significant observations in Holden's life. First, Holden comes to understand that he actually is not a child any more since he assumes the responsibility of 'the catcher in the rye' in his dream in order to save the children from falling off the cliff. Second, by the acceptance of being an adult, he has now fully lost his innocence, a matter or rather a condition that he regards so highly, and perhaps as a result of that loss of innocence he is now irreversibly 'phony' to a certain extent. By his reckoning, falling off the cliff means to fall out of childhood and all the noble characteristics he has tied up with it: the innocence, the purity and honesty that he so admires.

The unnamed narrator's realization and affirmation of his predicament, in Ralph Ellison's novel, comes when he is driven underground by the bitter realization that even when he felt he was most effectively expressing the particular plight of the black community - when he delivered a speech at fellow Brotherhood member, Tod Clifton's funeral or when he assisted the residents of Harlem to put their apartment houses on fire – his actions were influenced and guided for greater political hostilities. He admits that he "had been a tool. A tool just at the very moment I had thought myself free" (Ellison, 1995: 553). Thus, despite his insistence

that his hibernation is a "covert preparation for a more overt action"(Ellison,1995:13) and despite his decision to emerge from his hole (Ellison,1995:581), his ironic awareness of his past invisibility seems to prevent future actions that would not involve him in a similar invisibility, a similar futility and vulnerability to manipulation.

Finally, Saul Bellow's Tommy Wilhelm comes to a realization when he is compelled to analyze his life and to acknowledge the 'burden of self' in the end. Tommy Wilhelm is stimulated as well as oppressed by the American dream of achieving materialistic success. It is only when in the funeral of a total stranger that Tommy finds himself standing in front of a lifeless corpse, cannot keep himself together and starts to cry. This incident stimulates him to reevaluate his life. It was a day for Tommy, on which he would take "a good close look at the truth" (Bellow, 1976: 96). Having difficulties to breathe in, Tommy feels that he has been dragged further into uncomfortable situation. On this particular day of his reckoning, his disgraceful and shameful past – adapting a new name, unsuccessful career choices, playing around etc. – intermittently catches back with him in his mind and intensifies the already deranged present that he feels trapped in. He has to compromise with his father, Dr. Adler, his wife, Margaret, children, his chaotic past, uncertain present, pessimistic future, particularly with himself before he can seek salvation for his own soul. Tommy, feeling perplexingly suffocated and at the point of being choked, arrives at a funeral-home where he manages to forsake his egotism behind and establishes a ground for reconciliation with himself. He sees his own image and his father's when staring at the face of the deceased man and begins to shed tears until he unburdens his heart. All discomforts and troubles, he experiences, are washed away just like the sea-waves wash away the dirt from shores. Having been sobbed in the tears of comfort and cleansing, Tommy eventually arrives at the culmination of his heart's content at this very funeral of a total stranger. He succeeds in saving the day through reckoning of his mistakes of the past, reconciliation with his present state of difficulty and, finally through redemption of his tormented soul. Marcus Klein articulates Tommy's realization of his plight and his accommodation as such "the progress of Bellow's sensible hero from alienation to accommodation has become in Seize the Day a progress of the soul through its freedom from isolation to affirmation of ordinary life in the world" (Klein, 1970:41).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be safe to state and argue that the leading characters, in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day*, are alienated and estranged from themselves or from others to an extent that either lead to their downfall or set them in motion, however, slowly, in an attempt to search for reintegration with their respective communities and recognition of their own predicaments. Warren Frederick Morris,

in his book *Escaping Alienation: A Philosophy of Alienation and Dealienation*, asserts that it is possible for an individual to overcome alienation and de-alienate himself or herself only when "alienating conditions are successfully dealt with by a human capacity for rational freedom" (Morris, 2002: 236). On the other hand, Frederick A. Weiss, in his article "Alienation: Dynamics and Therapy," aptly declares that "alienated patient is not born alienated, nor does he choose alienation. Lacking genuine acceptance, love, concern for his individuality in childhood, he experiences basic anxiety. Early he begins to move away from his self, which seems not good enough to be loved. He moves away from what he is, what he feels, what he wants" (Weiss, 1962: 466). Holden Caulfield comes to a realization to accept other members of his society in their respective positions during his stay at the mental hospital. On the other hand, the Invisible Man's decision to adapt into his society goes into motion when he finds a refuge underground and is forced to stay there in order to secure his safety. Finally, Tommy admits the futility of gaining sympathies of his father, his wife, Dr. Tamkin and others and ultimately decides to accept his situation and to stand up on his two feet to face the challenges that life will throw on his way. These three characters become determined to adapt themselves into their physical surroundings and are willing to undergo transformation in order to ensure this adaptation and re-integration.

Edward Berry places emphasis on the process involving individuals' alienation, transitional period and re-integration into the society in his book entitled *Shakespeare's Comic Rites* and briefly describes the process in following words: "[All types include] an initial stage of separation, in which the individual is divorced from his familiar environment; a transitional stage, in which his old identity is destroyed and a new one created; and a final stage of incorporation, in which he is reintegrated into society in his new role" (Berry, 1984:2). However, no man can ever progress if he solely relies on the community to initiate progress. Transformation should first take within the individual himself. Carl Jung states that "it is, unfortunately, only too clear that if the individual is not truly regenerated in spirit, society cannot be either, for society is the total sum of individuals in need of redemption" (Jung, 2006:56). Therefore, if we intend to triumph over prevalent and wide-spread alienation and estrangement by nurturing and strengthening bonds between individuals, then it is necessary to establish institutions where individual has the chance to identify his needs with those of others and will be able to discover certain common grounds that will be crucial for his or her re-integration into society. In other words, it will be of great importance to bridge or reduce the gap between private and public worlds. In order this re-integration to take place and to make individuals realize their potentials to adapt themselves back into their respective societies, W. Frederick Morris states the following "suffering alienation in one form or another is necessary and to be accepted as such along with its positive effects. An alienating finitude makes human beings reach for and realize the infinite potential within themselves" (Morris, 2002:244).

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