MARIA BENTA DE LIMA BARBOSA

BELLOW'S VIEW OF MAN AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Dissertação para obtenção do Grau de Mestre, Área de Concentração: Literaturas de Língua Inglesa, do Curso de Pós-Graduação em Letras. Setor de Ciências Humanas, Letras e Artes da Universidade Federal do Paraná.

CURITIBA
1979

PROFESSOR ORIENTADOR
Doutor HERIBERTO ARNS

Titular de Literatura Norte-Americana da Universidade Federal do Paraná.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our debth to our tutor for his aid and wise guidance during this research. Our gratitude also to all those who have contributed to make this work possible.

CONTENTS

RESUMO

Grande parte da crítica sobre os romances de Bellow focaliza sua preocupação com o homem contemporâneo como um indivíduo. Este estudo é uma tentativa de mostrar a visão de Bellow do homem em sua relação íntima com a sociedade à qual ele pertence através da análise de um dos seus mais recentes romances — Herzog.

A primeira parte discute a relação: autor, romance e realidade social, considerando algumas concepções sociológicas sobre a sociedade contemporânea e expondo a metodologia que servirá de base para a análise do romance — o estruturalismo genético de Goldmann.

A segunda parte examina Herzog limitando-se à análise da estrutura interna do romance, relacionando seu universo imaginário aos padrões da sociedade capitalista contemporânea. Ao nível da ação, uma estrutura significativa mais abrangente é reconhecida no universo do romance, e discutida em termos de uma homologia entre ela e a estrutura da sociedade. O nível mais profundo do romance, o da consciência de Herzog, e a síntese que ele procura são também discutidos nesta parte, mostrando os comentários de Bellow/Herzog sobre o

→

homem e a sociedade contemporânea.

O estudo conclue com a afirmação de que Herzog não somente representa o homem contemporâneo no conflito entre o indivíduo e a sociedade como também representa a voz de Bellow em suas reflexões profundas sobre a história, filosofia e sociedade.

ABSTRACT

Much of the critical attention focused on Bellow's novels deals with his preoccupation with contemporary man as an individual. This study is an attempt to show Bellow's view of man in his close relationship with contemporary society through examining one of his most recent novels — Herzog.

The first part discusses the relationship: author, novel and social reality considering some sociological conceptions of contemporary society as well as expounding the methodological approach which served as the basis for the analysis of the novel — Goldmann's genetic structuralism.

The second part deals with the examining of Herzog limiting to the analysis of the internal structure of the novel, relating its imaginary universe to the patterns of contemporary capitalist society. At the level of action, a main meaningful structure is detached from the universe of the novel and discussed in terms of a homology between this struture and the struture of society. The deeper level of the novel, that of Herzog's conscience, and the synthesis he pursues are also discussed in this part, displaying

Bellow/Herzog's commentaries on man and contemporary society.

The study concludes with the assumption that not only does Herzog stand for the contemporary man in the conflict between the individual and society, but also represents Bellow's voice in his deep reflections on history, philosophy and society.

1. INTRODUCTION

Saul Bellow, the contemporary American writer awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1976, author of novels, plays and short stories, has been exhaustively studied lately, both for his style and his conscious involvement with the problems of contemporary man. W.J. Sewell says that "Saul Bellow represents a post-modern writer, that is, a writer whose fiction has turned away from a concern with social values to embrace the inner values of the individual,"[1] Indeed, the critical studies of Saul Bellow as a writer and those of this literary work which we have examined, including essays, articles, and doctoral theses, are mainly oriented towards the idea of Bellow's being an "inward-turning writer,"[2] committed to the affirmation of the individual.

Patricia W. Williams asserts that "much of the critical attention focused on the eight novels of Saul Bellow deals with the philosophy he develops."[3] This philosophy is that of the general affirmation of his thought in opposition to the current literary nihilism we find in the most prominent writers of the first half of this century, and which entered

→

the second half with conspicuous representatives, both in the theather and in the novel. In his creed of a positive affirmation of life, Bellow places supreme value on the individual, whom he considers capable of self-realization, through unconditional freedom of the spirit; this absolute freedom being the state at which Bellow's protagonists arrive after fighting out all the conditions imposed on them, reaching thus a true reconciliation of the self, in the words of Sewell, "through an alienation-reconciliation pattern," which consists of "temporary separation from social conformity as a means towards a private reconciliation with society and therein reconciliation with the self."[4] Much of the criticism on Bellow tends to see his work in the light of this pattern, with social aspects being part of it, but not the main concern.

This study, not questioning what has been written about Bellow, which shows a general tendency to consider him as a writer worried about metaphysical and ethical issues, aims to discuss his view of man in contemporary society, examining one of his more recent novels: Herzog. Thus instead of being worried about the self we will be seeing man as a social person, as part of society.

On reaching this main purpose — the apprehension of Bellow's view of man in contemporary society — we also hope to have shown Bellow as a novelist deeply engaged in universal problems, worried about the destiny of humanity, a fact that places him among major contemporary writers.

The two aspects that make up the core of this study, and help support the choice of Herzog, the novel we will

→

examine, are Bellow's wide-reaching social concern, shown in his novels, and his rejection of apocalyptic, nihilistic views on man and society. His work is filled with a wealth of social observations. His novels give us an accurate representation of a set of social relationships at one particular moment in history — the contemporary world. This fact is what aroused our interest in detecting his view of society through studying the structure of one of his novels, namely Herzog.

We could extend to Bellow what Zēraffa said of Joyce, Mann and Maltraux, when stating that they practice a kind of imaginative sociology; Bellow, too, is "able to grasp by empathy what the sociologist or historian deals with in terms of facts or concepts."[5] For Zēraffa, the form and content of the novel derive more directly from social phenomena than do those of other arts,[6] and Bellow's novels are good evidence of this assertion. They show his commitment to man and his role in society, and from the first, they have shown, without any doubt, a power of social, political, and ideological contestation. As observed by Willian D. Markos, "Bellow's desire to have his vision of life undistorted by literary fashion requires reliance on the powers of observation and critical thinking."[7]

Bellow being a city writer, his main characters are searchers in the city. It is the individual search for self and reality that drives them. That may be the reason for most criticism on Bellow to be oriented towards the self. But Bellow's creative vision of the city's possibilities is impregnated with social and ideological comments. There is always a direct relationship between the chaos of the city and his protagonists' own frag

→

mented condition, so that his main characters are searchers not only for the reality of self but also of society.

The city is the arena in which Bellow's protagonists act, and through their acting and their reflections they display the author's own view of social reality, showing a society of increasing consumerism, with its false concepts of progress and prosperity. Thus the struggle between the protagonist's humanism and social patterns is a point in commom in all his novels.

In Dangling Man, Bellow's first novel,we see through Joseph, the protagonist, the attempt of the individual to establish a relationship with the world where the individual can remain himself without succumbing to society's values. In The Victim, as Tony Tanner points out, the protagonist's "deeper fear comes from an uncertainty about his position and stability in the cruel, indifferent chaos of the modern city."[8] The acknowledgement of the urban masses is a great leap forward in the protagonist's coming to terms with the city. The Adventures of Augie March shows Augie for the first half of the book accepting the city uncritically, but there is a shift in the novel and by the end Augie's disillusionment with Chicago is complete. In Seize the Day, Dr. Adler personifies social pressures inherent in the urban setting while Wilhelm, the protagonist, rejects the materialistic world. Like Augie, Wilhelm is surrounded by machiavellian urban types who use him. In Henderson the Rain King, we see the protagonist trying to escape the pressures of society and going to Africa, where he still "thinks in city

→

metaphors and of city events; the city mantain its pressures, and alive within his other especulations is the city idea of people, nameless, faceless, with whom no communication is possible."[9] Mr.Sammler's Planet shows us a protagonist who has put his faith in reason, but who finds himself in an increasingly unreasonable world, who sees intellectual man as an explaining creature, but who can find no explanation for the society he sees about him. The novel is full of social comments made by the intellectual Sammler,and images of the city are used throughout the novel to reflect his moods of sarcasm, despair and fear towards social pressures. Humboldt's Gift, Bellow's latest novel,exposes society itself, as a battlefield for the protagonist. There he is,not only in history but in his milieu, worried about the meaning of life and death. It shows an actual commitment to contemporary life, through a more defying involvement of the protagonist in the city community.

Besides a play and a number of short stories, Bellow has written eight novels, the ones we have just made comments on, and the one we have selected for the purpose of this study: Herzog. Since all Bellow's novels mirror contemporary social reality, we think it relevant to give a reason for our choosing Herzog. With this novel Bellow begins to develop a new style in his prose, and a different character appeared for his protagonist. His style became close to that of the essayist and socially conscious thinker, and his protagonist became more rational, conscious and critical. Herzog is part of the intellectual-academic world; thus the value placed on

→

awareness,which may be considered the main objective of Bellow's protagonist, is more evident in this novel. Herzog is more conscious and self-critical than his predecessors.He also confronts almost every issue raised in Bellow's previous fiction. Bellow's own words give us evidence of his development. He said:

> In writing Herzog, I felt I was completing a certain development, coming to the end of a literary sensibility. This sensibility implies a certain attitude towards civilization — anomaly, estrangement, the outsider, the collapse of humanism. What I'm against is a novel of purely literary derivation — accepting the cannon of Joyce and Kafka. With Dostoyevsky, at least,his eyes are turned freshly to the human scene.[10]

In Herzog we testify, through the letters and internal monologues, not only a brilliant critique on the values and problems of our society but also, as we have said, a rejection of the nihilistic philosophies, in favor of a positive attitude towards modern civilization. Herzog's understanding of the "social meaning of nothingness"[11] is very significant. For him, man's awareness of nothingness, far from being a cause for despair and denial of all value, should give him a heightened realization of the value of social relationships. As William D. Markos says, "Bellow called for writers to see life directly rather than accept views of life perpetuated by the tradition of a pessimistic literature."[12]

Our purpose in grasping the author's view of society through the critical analysis of his novel is mainly based on the studies of Lucien Goldmann, who states that the author's world view, which "not only constitutes an assertion of a truth but is a precise reflection, a questioning of the entire

→

world,"[13] is elaborated by the social group he belongs in, though only he can achieve an advanced degree of coherence, giving the work of fiction a character at once collective and individual. Thus the imaginary universe of individuals and particular situations created by the author, showing his world view, is the transposition into a plane of imaginary creation of the mental categories of a social group.

Accepting Goldmann's argument which will be discussed in more detail in the first part of this study, we will be accepting what can be expressed by the homology: the relation which exists between Bellow and the social reality he is part of corresponds to the relation which exists between Herzog and the universe of the novel, which shows Bellow's world view. This assumption enables us to believe that Herzog's reflections and questionings throughout the novel are Bellow's own, so that Herzog's view of contemporary society is Bellow's own view.

The study will be divided in two parts: the first will deal with the relationship between author, novel and social reality, and more details about the supporting methodology will be supplied; the second part will deal with the intrinsic analysis of Herzog, with the aim of delineating significative structures, immanent in the universe of the novel, and relating them to those in society. Thus we hope to reach our purpuse, which is to show Bellow's view of man and contemporary society.

→

NOTES

[1]SEWEL, W.S. Literary Structure and Value Judgement in the Novels of Saul Bellow. Thesis. Ph.D. Duke University, 1974, p.III.

[2]Ibid. p. III.

[3]WILLIAMS,Patricia Whelan. Saul Bellow's Fiction: A Critical Question. Thesis. Ph.D. Texas, A & M University, 1972, P.III.

[4]Literary Structure and Value Judgement in the Novels of Saul Bellow. p. III.

[5]ZÉRAFFA. Michel. The Novel and Social Reality. Trans. Catherine Burns and Tom Burns. Middlesex, Peguin Books,1976, p.41.

[6]ZÉRAFFA says that "...the novel is directly concerned with the nature of our situation in history and with the direction in which that situation is about to move. (...) It seems to imply a mearningful connection between casuality and destiny: the novel should at one and the same time describe what is happening to us, extract its mearning and signpost the direction in which we are going. (...) The novel, more directly than other arts, confronts us openly with the issue of the meaning and value of our ineluctable historical and social condition. Implicit in the text of the novel are the propositions that man never lives by himself, and above all, that he has a past, a present and a future." (The Novel and Social Reality, pp.10-11)

[7]MARKOS, Donald William. The Humanism of Saul Bellow. Thesis. Ph.D. University of Illinois, 1966, p.118.

[8]TANNER, Tony. Saul Bellow. London. Oliver & Boyd,1965, p.27

[9]KLEIN, Marcus. "A Discipline of Nobility: Saul Bellow's Fiction." Kenyon Review, 24 (Spring 1962), p. 209

[10]GALLOWAY, David D. "Moses-Bloom-Herzog: Bellow's Everyman." The Southern Review (Winter, 1966), p. 62

[11]BELLOW, Saul. Herzog. New York, Avon Books, 1976.

[12]The Humanism of Saul Bellow. p. 147

→

[13]GOLDMANN, Lucien. Cultural Creation in Modern Society. Trans. Bart Grahl. Saint Louis, Telos Press, Ltd., 1976, p.78.

— 2 —

THE AUTHOR AND SOCIAL REALITY

CHAPTER ONE

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SOCIAL PROCESS

The sociologist thinks of social reality as denoting a large complex of human relationships, or to put it another way, as referring to a system of interaction. The character of this social process is interpreted according to the sociological theory that orients the sociologist. Emile Durkheim[1], for instance, the founder of the most important school of French sociology, which stands in the tradition of Comtian positivism, and is characterized by its emphasis on the non-subjective quality of social phenomena, emphasized that society was a reality sui generis, that is, a reality that could not be reduced to or translated into other terms. According to him, society confronts us as an objective reality. It is external to ouselves, surrounds us, encompasses our life on all sides. We are in society, located in specific sectors of the social system, which predetermines and predefines almost everything we do. We are located in society not only in space but in time. Our society is an historical entity thatextends temporally beyond any individual biography, it antedates us

→

and will survive us.

Max Weber[2], the modern German sociologist, opposes Durkheim in that the point of departure of his sociological orientation is the individual person. By emphasizing the understandability of human conduct, as opposed to the mere casual explanation of social facts as in natural science, Weber draws the line between his interpretative sociology, which considers the individual and his actions as the basic unity, and Durkheim's tradition. Durkheim stresses the externality and objectivity of social reality, in relation to the individual, while Weber always emphasizes the subjective meanings, intentions and interpretations brought into any social situation by the actors in it. Weber,of course, also points out that what eventually happens in society may be very different from what these actors meant or intended, as is clear in his thesis on Protestantism and capitalism, in which he demonstrated the relationship between certain consequences of Protestant values and the development of the capitalist ethos: the puritan wished to serve God, but he helped to bring about modern capitalism. However,he asserts that this entire subjective dimension must be taken into consideration for an adequate sociological understanding, which involves the interpretation of meanings present in society. In this view, each social situation is sustained by the fabric of meanings that are brought into it by the various participants.

In the Durkheimian perspective, to live in society means to exist under the domination of society's logic, and

→

this approach has been carried over into the theoretical approach now called functionalism. In functional analysis, society is analysed in terms of its own functioning as a system, functioning that is often obscure or opaque to those acting within the system. The contemporary American sociologist Robert Merton[3], has expressed this approach well in his concepts of "manifest" and "latent" functions. The former are the conscious and deliberate functions of social process, the latter, the unconscious and unintended ones. Thus, for instance, Christian missions in parts of Africa "manifestly" try to convert Africans to Christianity, "latently" help to destroy the indigenous tribal cultures and thus provide a driving force towards rapid social transformation.

Max Weber, in his methodological emphasis upon understanding the individual as the ultimate unit of explanation, attacks the functionalist approach as well as the Marxist use of objective meanings of social action regardless of the awareness of the actor. Marx ascribes meanings to the process of social interactions and Weber rejects the assumption of any objective meaning. He wishes to restrict the understanding and interpretation of meaning to the subjective intentions of the actor, although, in his actual work, as we have illustrated, he shows awareness of the paradoxical fact that the results of interactions are not always identical with what the actor intended to do.

What we have been trying to do as an introduction to this first part of our study is to give a very general idea

→

of the main sociological orientations concerning the participation of the individual in the social process, since our study deals with the relationship between man and social reality. However, as this study is of literature,we do not think it relevant to go more deeply into this field. Our purpose is only to show how the main sociological trends see this relationship, before we get into our actual aim: the relation between the author and social reality. One more sociological orientation, that of the sociology of knowledge,[4] we think might be relevant to mention, since the novel we are studying in this paper deals with philosophical issues. The term sociology of knowledge was first coined in the 1920s by the German philosopher Max Scheler and the basic reference for this orientation in contemporary sociology is Karl Manheim's Ideology and Utopia[4]. The way the sociology of knowledge fits into our comments is by showing us that ideas as well as men are socially located. This sociological trend rejects the claim that thought occurs in isolation from the social context within which particular men think about particular things. Even in the case of very abstract ideas that seemingly have little social connection, the sociology of knowledge attempts to draw the line from the thought to the thinker to his social world. This approach in sociological studies has much to do with what we will be developing in this dissertation, in which we will be dealing with the same kind of relationship, since the novel we will be studying is a novel of ideas, in which the protagonist is a scholar.

As we have stated, the above introductory comments

→

on the main modern sociological orientations in relation to man and society serve only to introduce our study of the relation between the author, the subject of action, and the living social reality he is part of, for what we will be trying to show is that the creator of a work of art, in our case a writer, derives the raw material for his creation from the actual social reality, establishing then the relationship between him, a social individual, society and the novel itself.

NOTES

[1]DURKHEIM, Émile. The Rules of Sociological Method. Chicago, Free Press, 1950.

[2]All the comments on Max Weber's sociology, in this chapter, are based on GERTH, H.H. and MILLS, C. Wright. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. New York, Oxford University Press, 1946.

[3]MERTON, Robert. Social Theory and Social Structure. Chicago, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1957.

[4]Our comments on sociology of knowledge are based on MANHEIM, Karl. Ideologia e Ulopia. Trans. Sérgio Magalhães Santeiro. Rio de Janeiro, Zahar Editores, 1972.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL PHENOMENON AND THE NOVEL

Our purpose in establishing a relation between the writer and his society is mainly influenced by the studies of Lucien Goldmann and Michel Zéraffa who deal with the relationship between social reality and literature. Michel Zéraffa in his book The Novel and Social Reality[1] presents a comprehensive study of the relation between the novel and social reality, stressing throughout his work that although the novel is rooted in social reality, it keeps its unreduceable aspect — it is a especific artistic form. In chapter one — "The novel as Both Literary Form and Social Institution," he asserts the close connection between the novel and society as well as its irreducibility to other terms. He begins by saying that "the form and the content of the novel derive more directly from social phenomena than other arts, except perhaps cinema;" for him, "novels often seem bound up with particular moments in the history of society" (Z,7). The novelist can therefore, according to him, be regarded as an authentic interpreter of the social reality of his time; the forms and the actions of society provide a model for the

→

forms and the actions of the novel. Henry James to whom Zēraffa refers throughout the chapter we have mentioned above, at the end of the last century, had already aknowledged the close connection of the novel with living society. He says in his essay "The Art of Fiction" that "the only reason for the existence of a novel is that is does attempt to represent life. A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life."[2] In the same essay, he says that "one writes the novel, one paints the picture of one's language and of one's time,"[3] which relates art in general to history and consequently to society.

Zēraffa, connecting the novel to social reality, relates the writer's creative manifestation to the milieu he is part of. For him, the novel gives us an accurate representation of a set of social relationships at one particular moment in history, and however accurate the writer's knowledge of reality, which he represents in his literary creation, he does not cease to attribute to this reality a significance which he derives from the world view of the social milieu in which he had been brought up. Zēraffa reminds us that novelists like Joyce, Mann and Malraux, when creating their literary universe, practice a kind of sociology, in the sense that they are able to grasp by empathy what the sociologist or historian deal with in terms of facts or concepts. "The value of the novel", he asserts, "seems to belong primarily to the fact that it is the art form which gives the fullest and most profound account of the status of the individual at any time in history"(Z,66). He continues his argument, on the same page, saying that "to say

→

that a novel is composed essentially of characters means that the writer embodies in them the social relationships which he has most frequently seen and experienced." He leaves it clear though, in the first chapter of his book, that "the forms of fiction have their own history, which cannot be rendered in terms of history any more than of 'society'." (Z,9) Thus, the novelist, according to Zēraffa's arguments, must be considered as absolutely an artist; his work is the expression of a reality which already has in his mind a form and a meaning which is expressed by means of techniques. In this sense, the writer's perception of society is transformed in the novel into artistic perception. Zēraffa gives us some practical examples for his arguments, from which we chose that of Ulysses, which he says "testifies to the irreducibility of the opposition between the perception of what one might call 'living reality' and the indisputably abstract interpretation that the writer puts on it" (Z, 41). Joyce reveals the concrete reality of Dubliners only in terms of a single conception of value: the inner life of consciousness embodied and acted out by Bloom and Stephen Dedalus.

Zēraffa discusses Lukācs's Theory of the Novel, which exposes a theory of the novel based on the concept of production, arguing that, though Lukācs showed that the novelist tries to show a reconciliation, shown to be impossible, between actual social relationships, which are determined by the infra-structure of production, with the values, which the individual hopes to realize in his life, he is concerned with the problems of form. "The novel," Zēraffa says, "is not a

→

reflection of the myriad aspects of social intercouse; it is, on the contrary, the mirror itself." (Z,44) A theory of the novel, although based on the concept of production, must, according to Zēraffa, take account of the artistic structure of the novel — its form, and the form of the novel has to be understood, in his conception, as meaning not only the style of the writing but also the manner in which it is constructed.

Henry James, who contributed to give the novel a primary aesthetic status, upheld the same kind of relationship between the novel and social reality as Zēraffa, in acknowledging the writer's need to find meaning in complex reality and express such meaning through a particular form[4].

From what we have expounded above, which we consider to be some essential points in Zēraffa's discussion of the novel in relation to society in The Novel and Social Reality, we can conclude that his main goal in this work, as the title suggests, is to expound his concepts of the novel as a literary form, which is nevertheless inevitably related to social reality. The novel must be understood as possessing a meaningful structure that certainly has its origin in the social reality, but is unreduceable to it. We have also inserted in our exposition some valuable assertions from Henry James's discussion on the novel, which we concluded are in agreement with Zēraffa's, in asserting the close and unescapable relationship between the novel and social reality, and seeing the former as a form in itself. This is what we will be dealing with in the second part of this study, discussing

→

the novel as a specific form that must be comprehended and at the same time seeing it as a mirror of the social reality in which it is inserted.

Though Zēraffa evidences in his work — The Novel and Social Reality, when discussing Lukācs, his unqualified acceptance of the idea that the infra-structure of production does provide a firm basis for the interpretation of the novel, and that the writer's world view in reality derives from the subjective consciousness of one particular class, this point certainly does not constitute the core of his work. Thus, the specific study of the relationship between — author, social reality and novel, which is the aim of our paper, has to be supplied. We will try to supply this specific aspect as well as give support to our study with the exposition of some important points from Lucien Goldmann's work in this field. As Goldmann is both a sociologist and a theorist of literature, his contribution in this fiel is most valuable.

→

NOTES

[1]All comments based on Zéraffa in this chapter are from ZÉRAFFA, Michel. The Novel and Social Reality. Trans. Catherine Burns and Tom Burns. Great Britain, Hazel Watson & Viney Ltd., 1972. Quotation will be immediatly followed by the referenced pages, as for instance (Z, 7).

[2]JAMES, Henry. "The Art of Fiction." In: ELLMANN,R. & FEIDELSON, Jr., C. The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds of Modern Literature. New York, Oxford UniversityPress, 1965, pp. 429-430.

[3]Ibid, p. 436

[4]Cf. FORD, F.M. The Old Man:The Question of Henry James. London, Bodley Head, 1964.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In his books,"Towards a Sociology of the Novel and Cultural Creation in Modern Society."[1] Goldmann discusses the essential relation between social life and literary creation, and sets out the operational premises of his methodological orientation for the analysis of a literary work. He called this orientation genetic structuralism,a model in which dialectical materialism in presented in a form of structuralism, and the Lukācsian concept of "totality," which is the essence of the method Marx took over from Hegel, and the foundation of Goldmann's sociological method itself, became "meaningful structures."[2]

The first premise of Goldmann's method of literary analysis is that the essential relation between social life and literary creation is not in the sphere of contents, but instead in what he called "the form of the content," "This form refers to the mental structures which organize the empirical consciousness of a particular group as well as the imaginary universe created by the writer."[3] A second premise, closely connected with this first one, is that there

→

is a structural homology between the structure of the imaginary universe of a literary work, and the mental structure of a certain social group, a homology that does not refer to the sphere of contents, and thus shows the opposition of Goldmann's method to a sociology of contents, which sees the literary work as a reflex of the collective consciousness. Goldmann asserts that by focusing on the content of collective consciouness, traditional sociology fails to grasp the essence of artistic work.

A third premise of genetic structuralism refers to the collective character of literary creation, that the individual writer does not create a world view. His world view is the expression of the collective mental structure of a group. The individual subject's role — in the case of literary creation, the writer's role — is to give these categories a high level of consistency and coherence.

When analysing his concept of world view, Michel Zéraffa compares it with Goldmann's and does not recognize any substantial difference between the two. Zéraffa identifies world view, which he considers the first real stage of the work yet to be written, with an ordered pattern the writer reaches in synthesizing the conflicting forces of reality by means of some basic ideological principle. He describes Goldmann's definition of world view as a process in which "there is first the conceptual extrapolation of the actual, effective and intellectual tendencies of the group to its ultimate coherent form, and, secondly, a coherent set of problems and responses which expresses, in creative literature, a concrete world of

→

people and things through the medium of words."[4]

Comparing the two concepts we can identify essential points in commom -- synthesis and ultimate coherence, but what fits into our purpuse is the assertion, common to both concepts, that a world view is a process reached by sinthesizing the conflicting forces of reality,or rather sinthesizing the "actual, effective and intellectual tendencies of the group," for what we will be showing in our study is that the synthesis Herzog struggles to reach is Bellow's own world view.

This third premise, referring to the collective character of literary creation, is connected to the previous one in the sense that the collective character of the literary creation, according to Goldmann,[5] comes from the fact that the structures of the imaginary universe are homologous to the mental structures of certain social groups or are in intelligible relation with them.

In his essay "Dialectical Thought and Transindividual Subject,"[6] Goldmann discusses the functionality of the subject in the artistic creation and gives reasons for his choice in analysing the structure and function of a literary work in relation to a collective subject. His arguments are related to a fourth premise of his genetic structuralist method: the rejection of literary analysis in terms of the psychobiography of the author. Goldmann admits that the meaning of a work of art is situated at two levels, in relation to an individual and to a transindividual subject, "in relation to the individual subject there is a libidinal meaning but it is neither aesthetic nor historical."[7] The "truth content"of a work of

→

art can only be grasped, according to him, in the perspective of a collective subject.

In a discussion with Theodor Adorno, Goldmann expounds his position concerning his acknowledgement of the collective subject rather than the individual subject as the true author of the literary work, and asserts that "the work of art permits the creation of an imaginary world with a rigorous form and structure in relation to the group", not to an individual. He adds that "this imaginary comprehension helps reinforce the group's consciousness because it is situated specifically in relation to those group aspirations."[8]

Goldmann's concept of collective consciousness is based on his concept of potential consciousness, in opposition to "real" consciousness, which, he says, orients contemporary sociology. For him, "the problem is to know not what a group thinks," which would be the real consciousness, "but what changes are likely to occur in its consciousness in the absence of modification in the group's essential nature."[9] Thus, on the level of the collective subject there is a dynamic process, things are in transformation: "social groups are transformed within given structures and at certain moment the transition is made from one structure to the other."[10] Thus, the relation between the writer and society would involve the fact that this process of structuration in the social group, this striving of subjects to achieve dynamic equilibrium with their environment does not reach an effective coherence, which is reached only in the imaginary universe created by the writer. In this sense, the literary work is

→

not only a meaningful structure, but a functional one: it helps to clarify and make coherent the tendencies of the social group the author is part of.

The purpose of this study, stated in our introduction, is mainly based on the premises expounded above, and in the methodological process of Goldemann's genetic structuralism, which involves the interrelated processes of comprehension and explanation. Explanation puts the work in relation to the social structure which should be comprehended in its systematic structuration. This process constitutes what Goldmann calls "genetic explanation": to understand a work "through inserting it in a more global systematization, a vaster significative structure." Our aim, then, based on Goldmann's study, is to explain Herzog, by placing it in functional relation with a global structuration — American urban society, which is inserted in an even vaster structure: technocratic society— which explains how the novel was born. Thus, embracing Goldmann's theory, we intend to show that Herzog is an imaginary universe with a specific form, whose meaningful structure mirror the structure of contemporary society. This specific form will be analysed so that we can understand it and decodify its meaningful structures, and thus place them in functional relation with the social structure. We will be then doing what Goldmann calls the processes of comprehension and explanation: we comprehend the imaginary universe and explain it by inserting it in a vaster structure. We also have to comprehend, as stated above, the systematic structuration of society, and this we will see in the next chapter.[11]

→

Goldmann's theories, as we have seen, are dialectically oriented, thus, embracing his idea that everything is functional, and centered on the possibilities of variation and transformation of consciousness and social reality, we will be also trying to show that Herzog not only shows Bellow's view of society, but also tries to communicate an attitude that brings a new orientation to contemporary man.

In his book, The Human Sciences and Philosophy,[12] Goldmann defined fully what he considers to be the fundamental category for comprehending human history — the category of the possible, which characterizes dialectical sociology in the sense that it tries to isolate, in the society it studies, the potential, developing tendencies oriented towards overcoming that society. Goldmann considers that throughout history man's psychic life has been developed in terms of two fundamental dimensions: "the tendency to adapt to the real, and the tendency to overcome the real toward the possible— toward a beyond which men must create by their behaviour."[13] This adaptation to the real, as we have seen, is essential to a dynamic structuration, but it may threaten the second dimension, if it tends to become static.

These potential tendencies that develop in a social group and are oriented towards a transformation are grasped by Bellow and constitute the coherent universe of his novels. This is the fact that led us to study one of his novels based on the theory we have been discussing, which says the writer can only write in a perspective that must exist in society, so that he can subsequently transpose it in a coherent imaginary

→

universe. Bellow shows, in his work, an awareness of the fundamental problems of our technocratic society, but,as we will see, Herzog shows that Bellow shares Goldmann's belief in the second dimension of men[14]. He is aware of the position of man in contemporary society, which is mirrored in the structure of the novel, but he is also sensitive to the new tendencies that are emerging in our society to overcome reality.

We are trying to point out at this point of our argument that Bellow's work, especially Herzog, is closely related to our social reality, a fact that aroused in us the interest to analyse it through a sociological model.Malcolm Bradbury, comparing Herzog with Bellow's earlier novels,discussed its closer relation to society and stated:

> ..., it is more deeply located in its society,the society of urban America, and this society in turn is much more deeply located in its founding history and ideology than are most of the earlier novels. Herzog, speaking out of the Jewish and the intellectual sector of democratic modern America, knows experientially and intellectually just what character this world has out of which he is speaking. The intellectual and sociological awareness of the novel, its sense of history and society, promotes its size and its centrality; and it is from this awareness that the essential search, and the guiding standards of the book derive.[15]

Thus, embrancing Goldmann's[16] theory that the great writer is the exceptional individual who manages to create a fictional, coherent universe whose structure corresponds to that to which the members of the social group tend, we will be accepting that the novel we are examining represents Bellow's view of the social group he belongs in, and which is responsible for the elaboration of the elements that

→

make up his world view. Considering that Bellow belongs in an urban community, that he is part of the city, his view is that of the urban group, so that we think it relevant to define the urban group and discuss Bellow's relation with it.

According to Louis Wirth,[17] the contemporary world may be called "urban", due to the influences that the cities exert on the social life of men. For Bellow, from what we infer from his novels, the city is the living momuent of man's collective actions. The city seems to fascinate him due to its complexity. "It is the place of compressed human misery, but it is also the place for human involvement." [18] It is the place in which Bellow belongs and from which the raw material for his work emerges, if we consider, literature as "a social product, arising out of the dialectical interaction between a particular historical consciousness and a particular social reality."[19] This chaotic raw material is transformed by the writer, in our case Bellow, into a coherent universe, in the light of Goldmann's concept already discussed, that the social group does not really create a world view — which is the role of the writer, it only provides its composing elements that are elaborated by the writer into a coherent universe. A.L.Strauss, in his article "Urban Perspectives: New York City" asserts that "the novelists have portrayed life in the city not only more dramatically — more humanly if you wish — than their scholarly contemporaries, the sociologists, the geographers,the planners". Strauss even comments on Louis Wirth's article ,

→

"Urbanism as Way of Life",saying that Wirth's perspectives, though outstanding, are narrower than those expressed by the novels. Irving Howe in his article "Mass Society and Post-Modern Fiction" has added some good comments to the subject, stating:

> The novelists may not have been aware of the various theories concerning capitalism, the city and modern industrial society; it does not matter. These ideas had so throughly penetrated the consciouness of thinking men, and even the folklore of the masses, that the novelists could count on them without necessarily being able to specify or elaborate them. In general, when critics"find" ideas in novels, they are transposing to a state of abstraction those assumptions which had become so familiar to novelists that they were able to seize them as sentiments.[20]

Bellow's style, his themes, and the basic categories of his thought are rooted in the economic, political,social and moral features of our technocratic society. His fiction is a response to concrete historical circumstances,the ones we are living today, in which the rational, free individual appears to occupy a diminishing territory. This position of the individual in contemporary society is crucial in Bellow's work, since he shares the essential humanist "demand for a free development of a many-sided, integrated man," [21] which is becoming utopian, as pointed out by Georg Simmel:

> The individual has become a mere cog in an enormous organization of things and powers which tear from his hands all progress, spirituality, and value, in order to transform them from their subjective form into the form of a purely objective life.It needs merely to be pointed out that the metropolis is the genuine arena of this culture which outgrows all personal life.[22]

Much of Bellow's work shows his commitment to the problems of modern "selfhood." He sees the problem of the

→

individual in the midst of the masses. In a talk about the contemporary American writer he said:

> Laboring to mantain himself, or perhaps an idea of himself (not always a clear idea), he feels the pressure of a vast public life, which may dwarf him as an individual while permitting him to be a giant in hatred or fantasy. Public turbulence is largely coercive, not positive. It puts us into a passive position.[23]

On examining Herzog, in the following part of this study, we will see how Bellow shows a deep desire for the liberation of man from chains, wheter imposed by society or by the mind, through what he calls "sterile intellectualism" and worn out philosophies. Originating in social interaction, the basic categories of his thought were transformed in his imagination, to re-emerge into patterns of contemporary society in this work.

NOTES

[1]GOLDMANN, Lucien. Towards a Sociology of the Novel. Trans. Allan Sheridan. London, Tavistock, 1975. GOLDMANN, Lucien. Cultural Creation in Modern Society. Trans. Bart Grahl. Saint Louis, Telos Press, Ltd., 1976.

[2]Cf. William W. Mayrl's introduction to Cultural Creation in Modern Society, p. 11.

[3]Ibid., p. 13.

[4]Ibid., p. 47.

[5]Cf. Towards a Sociology of the Novel.

[6]Goldmann illustrates his argument saying that if Jean or Pierre lift a table, they are together to lift it, and thus, the subject of the action is collective; he adds that "everything which is history occurs in this perspective," and that this concept arose "at the moment in the history of philosophy when philosophers understood that man participates in creating the world." Transindividual subject, he says, has also created "social relations as well as the mental categories with which we comprehend them" (Cultural Creation in Modern Society p. 104).

[7]Ibid, p. 100.

[8]Goldmann illustrates his concept saying that "if I ask about the functionality of a play by Racine in relation to the individual Racine, two basic difficulties appear which nullify this type of research. First, Racine's personality is much too complex for one to be able really to study it scientifically, and to show the work's functionality by these means, it would have nothing to do with the literary or cultural character of the work. The collective subject, on the other hand, is an empirical problem." ("Goldmann and Adorno: To Describe, Understand and Explain." In: Cultural Creation in Modern Society. pp.141-142)

[9]Ibid. p.33.

[10]Ibid. p. 105

[11]Goldmann's methodological process of comprehension and explanation was explained in note 5 of our introduction.

→

[12]GOLDMANN, L. The Human Sciences and Philosophy. Trans. Hayden V. White and Robert Anchor. London, Johathan Cape, 1969.

[13]Cultural Creation in Modern Society, p. 57.

[14]Goldmann rejects Marcuse's theory of the "unidimentional man." Herbert Marcuse says that "if social evolution does not change direction, man will live and act increasingly only in the single dimention of adaptation to reality, and not in the other, the dimention of transcendence," but Goldmann does not accept this theory. (Cf. Cultural Creation in Modern Society, p. 58.)

[15]RATNER, L. Marc. "Saul Bellow: Searcher in the City." (unpublished material).

[16]Cf. Towards a Sociology of the Novel.

[17]Wirth defines city as a "centro iniciador e controlador da vida econômica, política e cultural que atraiu as localidades mais remotas do mundo para dentro de sua órbita e interligou as diversas áreas, os diversos povos e as diversas atividades num universo... (WIRTH, Louis. "O Urbanismo como Modo de Vida". Trad. Marina Correa Trenherz. In: VELHO, Otávio Guilherme (org.) O Fenômeno Urbano, Rio, Zahar, 2º ed. 1973, p. 96.)

[18]BRADBURY, Malcolm. "Saul Bellow's Herzog." Critical Quarterly, Autumn, 1965, p. 274

[19]SANDERS, Scott. D.H. Lawrence — The World of the Major Novels. London, Clarke, Doble & Bredon Ltd., 1973, p. 18.

[20]HOWE, Irving, "Mass Society and Post-Modern Fiction." Partisan Review XXVI, Summer, 1959, p. 425.

[21]That is how Georg Lukács describes the humanist principle in Writer and Critic and Other Essays, New York, 1971, p. 70.

[22]SIMMEL, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." In: The Sociology of Georg Simmel. Tr. and ed. by Kurt H. Wolff. Glencol, The Free Press, 1950 p. 422.

[23]BELLOW, Saul. "Some Notes on Recent American Fiction," In Klein, Marcus, ed. The American Novel Since world War II. Greenwich, Conn, Fawcett Publications, 1969, p. 61.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

In the previous chapter we discussed Goldman's concept of explanation which puts the work in relation to the social structure which should be comprehended in its systematic structuration. In this chapter we intend to present some sociologists' views on contemporary society, aiming an understanding of it,and also delimit some relevant aspects in this society, which will be discussed in the novel we will examine in the following chapter.

Irving Howe, discussing, in 1959, post-modern American fiction argues that the contemporary writer "recognizes that the once familiar social categories and place-marks have now become as uncertain and elusive as the moral imperatives of the nineteenth century seemed to novelists of fifty years ago," and that the something new they stumble against is, he would suggest, the mass society. He defines mass society as follows:

> A relatively comfortable, half welfare and half garrison society in which the population grows passive, indifferent and atomized; in which traditional loyalties, ties and associations become lax

→

> or dissolve entirely; in which coherent publics based on definite interests an opinions gradually fall apart; and in which man becomes a consumer, himself mass-produced like the products, diversions and values that he absorbs.[1]

Goldmann, in his book Culture Creation in Modern Society, develops a good study on mass society, which accords with Howe's definition.[2] Discussing the development of capitalism in the Western world in terms of culture creation, he shows the changes that it has suffered to reach the stage of organizational capitalism, in which the importance of the individual disappeared from economic life, while the social and economical equilibrium was reconstructed. Liberal capitalism, which lasted till about 1910, he says, was expressed, at the level of thought, by two branches of individualist philosophies: rationalism and empiricism, and on the literary level, by the classical novel, which shows a degraded society in which values are no longer conscious, and which ends with the hero's awareness of the frustration of his search. The period that follows shows capitalism in a state of crisis, characterized by the development of the economy of monopoly, and lacking the mechanisms of regulation necessary to control this development; adding to which there was the two world wars, crucial to the stability of Western civilization. This phase corresponds, on the philosophical level, owing to the chaotic features of society, to the rise and development of existentialist philosophies, which on the one hand contain certain elements of individualism, but are no longer centered on reason and perception, that is, on the possibilities of the individual, but rather on his limits. On the literary

→

level, this period is characterized by the showing of a dissolute, depressing, meaningless and aimless world, parallel to a tendency in the novel, towards the dissolution of character. This attitude towards the world, is still embraced by some outstanding contemporary writers. The organizational capitalism we are living today, the mass society, contradicting the marxist thought that capitalism could never integrate a whole vision of society and means of production, shows that it overcame the crisis, and its theorists reached a stage of awareness of the problems of global organization of society and economy. But, in this transition from liberal society to technocratic society we suffered a great loss, that of the social and economic importance of the individual. In the liberal society studied by Marx and his followers, there was, despite the process of reification, a social structure in which an important autonomy of individual consciousness persisted, based on the responsability that fell over almost all the individuals.

What characterizes, then, the contemporary mass society is the fact that, on discovering, elaborating and putting into action mechanisms of self-regulation, both economic and social, it introduced conscious and rational action at the level of total production, but reached this point, reducing, almost all participation of individuals in essential decisions. This fact not only caused the progressive disappearance of the importance of the individual and the constriction of his consciouness, but also led him to an excessive passivity, due to the extreme concentration of decision-making power.

→

It is a society of technocrats, who keep the power of decision, and technicians,highly qualified specialists who are kept at the level of execution. Parallel to the reduction of participation there is a reduction of activity in the field of consciousness that prevents individuals from interesting themselves in the problems of economic, social and political organization, making them alien to any decision of responsability, essentially oriented towards consumption.

E.H. Carr, talking about modern democracy in "The New Society," shares Goldmann's views on contemporary society, saying that

> Large scale political organizations show many of the characteristics of large-scale economic organizations, and have followed the same path of development. Specialized groups of leaders (élites) have taken shape with startling rapidity. These leaders, instead of remaining mere delegates of their equals, tend in virtue of their functions to become a separate professional, a separate social group, forming the nucleus of a new ruling class, or more insiduously, being absorbed into the old ruling class.[3]

We have selected from Goldmann's analysis of technocratic society features that we think most relevant to characterize this society and that seem irrefutable,leaving out points that have become polemical or even proved inadequate. William W. Mayrl points out important aspects that Goldmann failed to see, as for instance,"the failure of capitalist economies to become fully rationalized and managed, the growing surplus of middle level salaried workers, continuing inflation, the crisis in public services, etc,"[4] but these points are not really relevant to our purpose since our aim is not to put forward a complete description of so

→

ciety, but only touch on outstanding features that are closely related to what we are going to discuss in the analysis of Herzog.

We have already discussed the fact that Bellow is a city writer, as he himself stated in an interview —"I don't know how I could possibly separate my knowledge of life, such as it is, from the city,"[5] and also the fact that the novel we will be analysing is set in big cities, namely New York and Chicago. Thus, we think it also relevant to expose some sociologists' views of the contemporary city, which is the intellectual, economical and political center of modern society.

Georg Simmel in his essay, "The Metropolis and Mental Life,"[6] discusses many features of life in the city, mainly those related to the psychology of the individual and his behavior. He begins saying that "the deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces," (S,409) and the central theme of the essay is the discussion of how the personality accomodates itself to these social forces. His idea is that the metropolitan type of man develops a mechanism of defence which protects him against the discrepancies of his external environment, but makes him react rather with his head than with his heart. "Metropolitan life, thus, underlies a heightened awareness and a predominance of intelligence in metropolitan men." (S,460)

For Simmel, the metropolis has always been the seat

→

of the money economy, and money economy and the dominance of the intellect are intrinsically connected. "They share a matter-of-fact attitude in dealing with men and with things" (S,411), which threatens individuality. The modern metropolitan mind has become more and more calculating, reducing qualitative values to quantitative ones.

Another important trait which Simmel says that metropolitan man develops is a kind of indifference in relation to facts and his fellow-men. "This mood", Simmel says, "is the faithful subjective reflection of the completely internalized money economy." (S, 414)

Louis Whirth[7], recognizing the influence of the city in contemporary society, says that the contemporary world could be called "urban" owing to the influence of the city upon the social life of man. Technological development in means of mass communication has stressed the role of the city as the dominant element in our civilization, and extended the urban way of life beyond the limits of the city itself.

For Wirth, the sophistication and rationality ascribed to city man are explained by the impersonal, superficial, transitional and segmentary contacts in urban social relations, which dwarf the emotional reaction of the individual. Physical contacts in the city are close, but social contacts are distant. This close physical contact and the division of labor develop a spirit of competition and mutual exploitation, and we are going to see in the analysis of Herzog that this sense of competition leads people to use others as instrument. This discussion on contemporary society does not mean to be

→

exhaustive, it has only the purpose of displaying a sociological view of society to make possible the discussion of inteligible relations between the significative structures of the universe of the novel and the social structure.

NOTES

[1]HOWE, Irving. "Mass Society and Post-Modern Fiction." Partisan Review XXVI(Summer) p.426

[2]This study will limit to discuss capitalist society since its main purpose — to show Bellow's view of contemporary society — is based on the principle that the author's view is that towards which his social group tends to, and the author discussed belongs in a capitalism society, which functions as setting for his novels.

[3]CARR, E.H. "The New Society." In:Man in Contemporary Society." New York, Columbia University Press, V.1. 1955, p. 895.

[4]WILLIAM, W. Mayrl's introduction to Cultural Creation in Modern Society, p.26

[5]The Art of Fiction XXXVII. "Saul Bellow: An Interview." Paris Review, (Winter, 1966). p-52-73.

[6]The comments that follow are based in Simmel's essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life" and the quotations will be immediately followed by the page number, as for instance (S, 409).

[7]WIRTH, Louis. "O Urbanismo como Modo de Vida." Trad. Marina Corrêa Trenherz. In VELHO, O.G. (org.). O Fernômeno Urbano. Rio. Zahar, 2a. ed. 1973.

CHAPTER FIVE

ESPECIAL FOCUSING ON RELEVANT ASPECTS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

As we have said, in this chapter, we will delimit and discuss some aspects of contemporary society, to which he necessarily draws his world view, aspects,which we think to be relevant to the structure of novel[1] we will be analys ing.

Bellow, being a contemporary writer,sees the western world, in the absence of a fixed, stratified society, as complex and chaotic,lacking meaningful motivations and unity, which his protagonists look for. In this sense, Bellow agrees with Irving Howe's comments when he contrasts the contemporary novelist with the modern novelist who wrote realistic novels, saying that "the task of the novelist was now to explore a chaotic multiplicity of meanings rather than to continue rep esenting the surfaces of common experience."[2]

The economic structure of our society,as we have seen, defines its social and moral structures. The money economy directs social relations towards a materialistic relationship and demolishes the sense of moral values. Thus, money and values are consequently two opposing and dominant elements

→

in the structure of most of Bellow's novels, including Herzog. In a society which produces for the market, people are oriented towards comsumption and so money becomes excessively and unrealistically important, affecting interindividual relations, becoming the main element of relation among people who are used as instruments. Authentic personal relationships are minimized and moral values are replaced by imposed materialist values. As Georg Simmel says, "money is concerned only with what is common to all: it asks fot the exchange value, it reduces all quality and individuality to the questions: How much"?[3]

Marcus Klein, commenting on Bellow's observations on the distracting character of modern life, says that, "we are menaced by the sheer distraction of sheer wealth," and that "there is so much money now and there are so many possessions." He quotes Bellow's words on the matter, providing a good image of our money-oriented society."Love, duty, principle, thought, significance, everything is being sucked into a fatty and nerveless state of 'well-being'," [4] says Bellow. These values, that Bellow says have been "sucked" into our money-oriented society, are pursued by his protagonists who see themselves lost in a world moved by materialistic motivations. Irving Howein his discussion on modern and contemporary fiction says that "by now the search for values has become not only a familiar but an expected element in modern fiction." He even adds that readers have come "to regard it as a necessary component of the novel."[5] This search for values in a confusing, materialistic and alienatory society is a relevant point in Bellow's fiction and has been exhaustively discussed by the

→

critics.

Two other aspects of contemporary society, related to the individual, and which are characteristic of technocracy, of a society which tends to organize itself rationally, will be analysed in Herzog: alienation and lack of identity. As we have already seen in our exposition of Goldmann's discussion, the problem of extreme concentration of decision-making power in our organizational society, becomes fundamental, and the rise in competence does not lead the great majority of individuals to participate in essential decisions. This fact brings about serious psychic consequences, and a basic one, which is revealed in Bellow's novels, is the divorce of the competent individual from society's decisions, which makes him alienated and passive. Goldmann considers "the most important result of this phenomenon the considerable reduction of the psychic life of individuals." He states:

> It is not true that rising level of knowledge and professional skill necessarily and implicitly entails expanded freedom, intensified psychic and intellectual life, or strengthened possibilities of comprehension. What I once called "the illiterate specialist" is a danger which threatens to grow considerably in organizational society.[6]

Irving Howe, describing mass society, discussed the alienated position of the individual in the process of decision, considering this aspect a crucial problem in contemporary society. He says that "passivity becomes a widespread social attitude" and that "now people no longer have any opinions: they have refrigerators."[7] He notes a few traits or symptoms in consumer society and most of them connected to the problem of passivity and alienation.[8] This passive character of contemporary man is revealed in Bellow's protagonist: who acts

→

passively in relation to people who exert coercive forces over him.

Peter L. Berger in his study "Society as Drama" shows a picture of society as a stage populated with living actors: "the institutions of society, while they do in fact constrain and coerce us, appear at the same time as dramatic conventions."[9] This dramatic model of society seems to fit perfectly our technocratic society, where people alienated from their authentic social roles play games. This inauthenticity or lack of true identity, either social or individual, pervades Herzog whose universe is populated by people playing roles. Berger discusses Heiddeger's concepts of authenticity and inauthenticity which he considers useful for his sociological argument, and we think most relevant to elucidate the aspect of contemporary society we have delimited to analyse in Herzog: lack of identity. Berger exposes Heidegger's concepts as follows:

> To exist authentically is to live in full awareness of the unique, irreplaceable and incomparable quality of one's individuality. By contrast, inauthentic existence is to lose oneself in the anonimity of the Man, surrendering one's uniqueness to the socially constituted abstractions.[10]

Though Heidegger's concept is philosophical, its relevance for sociological interpretations is evident, and our society seems to be a perfect milieu for the manifestation of this human way of life, due to increasing restriction of consciousness it propitiates. Heidegger's concept of Man[11], which is related to those of authenticity and inauthenticity, is also relevant to our study, for under the aspect of the

→

Man we see society as protective, a fact that provokes the growing of passivity and shows the coercive power of organizational society. Berger, supporting his arguments on Heidegger's concepts, says that "society provides us with taken-for-granted structures" and that within it, "as long as we follow the rules, we are shielded from the naked terrors of our condition." This is true of our society, rationally organized, holding the power of decision, crushing our individuality, but providing a security which offers itself as an option to conscious and authentic acts. This same image is displayed in the universe of Bellow's novels: people playing roles, exhibiting masks, camouflaging their own identity, indifferent to the personal implications of their acts.

A fifth and last feature of contemporary society we will analyse in Herzog, which seems to be a dominant element both thematically and aesthetically, is that of confusion, which is connected to the aspect of transiency and speedy changes in contemporary world. Bellow's protagonists look for a sense of clarity and unity that opposes the universe of the novels. Social facts have become so transient that it is impossible for the individual to grasp society's form. Acceleration is a new social force in the contemporary world, and transiency is, consequently, its psychological counterpart. Alvin Toffler, discussing the concept of transiency says that, "transciency is the new 'temporariness' in everyday life. It results in a mood, a feeling of impermanence."[12]

→

He says that it is not only in our relationships with people that seem increasingly fragile or impermanent but also with things, places, institutional or organizational environment and with certain ideas. He adds that the condition of high transiency affects immensily the way people experience reality and their sense of commitment, and this is what we see in the universe of Bellow's novels, where people show a weak sense of commitment concerning love, friendship, family, tradition, moral and religious values, and mainly concerning the past.

Bellow himself gives his opinion on this confusional aspect of contemporary society. In an interview, in which he was asked about the distractions the novelist had to confront today, he answered that "the modern masterpiece of confusion is Joyce's Ulysses. There the mind is unable to resist experience." He goes on talking about Bloom's facing experience in all its diversity and adds that "sometimes it looks as if the power of the mind has been nullified by the volumes of experiences." He ends his answer saying that "Stronger, more purposeful minds can demand order, impose order, select, disregard, but there is still the threat of disintegration under the particulars."[13] In the same interview when he is asked about fashionable ideas, he says that "we can be consumed simply by the necessity to discriminate between multitudes of propositions."[14] Though Bellow said he believes in stronger minds able to impose order, he gives his opinion on Herzog saying that it "points to the impossibility of arriving at a syntheses that can satisfy modern

→

demands."[15]

The mobility of social groups, or rather,the blurring of social groups, either in the economic, ethnic or religious aspect, is also relevant, concerning confusion, and is evident in Bellow's novels. Irving Howe in his description of mass society discusses this problem, saying:

> Social classes continue to exist, and the society cannot be understood without reference to them;yet the visible tokens of class are less obvious than in earlier decades and the correlations between class status and personal condition, assumed by the older sociologists and the older novelists, become elusive and problematic.[16]

This confusional feature of contemporary society is, as we have said, a strong point in Herzog, both in the thematic and formal structure.

The five relevant aspects of contemporary society we have selected — money,values, alienation, identity and confusion — are closely related to each other, the confusional aspect being the unifying element. Confusion is a peculiar state of the average contemporary man, who, exposed to speedy changes in all fields, overstimulated,bombarded by an excess fo transient ideas and information, crushed in his individuality, put in a state of anonymity, is unable to grasp the form of society and prevented from reaching conscious states of mind. This man lives in a materialistic society, submitted to a rational system where money represents the forces of good and evil and psychic activity is structured by comsumption; where social,moral,religious values are absorbed and incorporated by the system and transformed into conventional and false values. The society he lives in leads him to passivity,

→

lack of participation, making him alienated from his true social role and preventing him from questioning the meaning of his own life. This alienated state makes him inauthentic concerning himself and his interindividual relationships, leading him to mask his identity, both individual and social.

In the following part of this study, we will be analysing Herzog and the analysis will limit to the discussion of meaningful structures immanent in the novel and their relation to the social structure with the aim of revealing Bellow's view of our own society, considering the features we delimited and briefly discussed in this chapter.

→

NOTES

[1]The aspects of contemporary society we wil delimit in this chapter will be discussed in the intrinsic analysis of Herzog in the second part of this study.

[2]"Mass Society and Post-Modern Fiction", p. 423

[3]Simmel also connects money to rationality in opposition to emotional attitudes. He says that "All intimate emotional relation between persons are founded in their individuality, whereas in rational relations man is reckoned with like a number, like an element which is in itself indifferent." (The Metropolis and Mental Life", p. 411)

[4]"A Discipline of Nobility: Saul Bellow's Fiction," p. 207.

[5]"Mass Society and Post-Modern Fiction," p.422

[6]"The Revolt of Arts and Letters." In: Cultural Creation p. 57.

[7]"Mass Society and Post-Modern Fiction," pp.429,430-

[8]Among the traits Howe enumerates we could select some close related to passivity, alienation and indifference: (5) As perhaps never before, opinion is manufactured systematically and "scientifically." (6) Opinion tends to flow unilaterally, from the top down, in measured quantities: it becomes a market commodity. (7) Disagreement, controversy, polemic are felt to be in bad taste; issues are "ironed out" or "smoothed away"; reflection upon the nature of society is replaced by observations of its mechanics. (Mass Society and Pos-Modern Fiction," p.427.)

[9]BERGER, Peter L. Invitation to Sociology: A Humanist Perspective, U.S.A., Anchor Books, 1963, p. 138.

[10]Ibid., p. 146

[11]Berger explains Heidegger's concept of Man as follows: "Man refers to a deliberately vague generality of human beings. It is not this man who will not do this, nor that man, nor your nor I — it is, in some way, all men, but so generally that it may just as well be nobody." (Ibid., p. 146.)

→

[12]TOFFLER, Alvin. Future Shock. New York, Random House, Inc., 1974, p. 45.

[13]"The Art of Fiction", p. 66.

[14]Ibid., p. 71

[15]Ibid., p. 68

[16]"Mass Society and Post-Modern Fiction," p. 427

HERZOG: IN SEARCH OF A SYNTHESIS

CHAPTER SIX

HERZOG: A NOVEL OF IDEAS

Before beginning the study we have proposed to do, that is, to reveal Bellow's view of contemporary society through the analysis of imaginary universe of the novel, we think it relevant to justify the title we gave this part, as well as give an account of the action of the novel and a general idea of its formal structure.

Herzog is Bellow's most successful attempt to synthesize idea and personal reality, since its protagonist's struggle is definitely a struggle for synthesis, for order, for understanding, not only in the personal sphere but in society and in history. As Clayton says, "In a sense, Herzog is the sum of all Western civilization since the Renaissance, as if he were reflecting on his personal past."[1] Synthesis for Herzog is connected to a true sense of value which is in antagonistic relation to a set of forces that surround him, and give him a sense of chaos that demands clarity. Thus Bellow not only "portrays Herzog struggling for order in his chaotic personal life, but he depicts him as an intellectual, striving to explain order as a part of intellectual history."[2] The synthesis

→

which Herzog is aiming at is "... to live in an inspired condition, to know truth, to be free, to love another, to consummate existence, to abide with death and clarity of consciousness."[3] This means Herzog's affirmation of human values against alienating and repressing forces in society, his looking for a conscious state of mind in order to define his own identity, and his role in society and in history. Through his search for personal synthesis, which would affirm a true sense of human existence, he reveals his own emotional and confusing state of being, in confrontation with anatagonistic forces that brought him to his present crisis; and through his search for a general synthesis, involving a whole civilization, in order to define himself as an historical and social creature, he expresses his concern with the Western cultural and social scene: manners, morals, class distinctions, politics, modern philosophies, religion, relying on historical perspective. As a modern intellectual, he goes over a number of contemporary problems concerning man and society through recollection and deep reflections in the form of interior monologues and unmailed letters, displaying Bellow's own view of man and society.

The novel is written in the third person, but there is constant shifting from the voice of the narrator to the personal idiom of Herzog. The narrator's function is to describe Herzog objectively, describe his state of mind, or summarize his impressions, recollections and ideas, but the general effect of the novel, which as a whole is a stream-of-consciousness novel, is that of the interior monologue —

→

while the narrator is conscious of communicating to the reader, Herzog, is not. His recollections are presented in fairly orderly style, controlled by the narrator, though a blurring of the narrator's voice and Herzog's is a constant feature. His letters and interior monologues, however,show stylistic irregularity, reflecting his emotional and confusing state of mind. Both letters and interior monologues show Herzog's mental debates and a significant analysis of contemporary experiences, his philosophical, social and political ideas, his arguments, his protests, his polemics. As Calyton says,

> ... he has to think and write in order to stay balanced. "Quickly, quickly, more!" he thinks in the middle of a letter (p.68). First,he must vent his feelings somehow; second, his private indignation and dispair.[4]

The letters, at the superficial level,give an impression of formlessness, but they actually reveal the thematic as well as the aesthetic unity of the novel, for they unify the universe of the novel both in terms of social, historical and ideological background, and by serving as a continual commentary in the meaning of Herzog's real life in his search for a personal synthesis. Through the letters,Herzog excavates both his own past and that of our civilization as well as displays his present chaotic practical life and the social and political world in which modern man lives. He writes letters to living and dead people, including philosophers, scientists, religious representatives, politicians, people related to him in his personal intricacies: friends, mistresses, ex-wives, relatives, scholars, doctors,psychiatrists,

→

lawyers, judges, and even to God. His letters, though apparently formless, as we have said, cover his own personal history and the history of our civilization. He tries to explain his letter writing when he says:

> I must be trying to keep tight the tensions without which human beings can no longer be called human. If they don't suffer, they've gotten away from me. And I've filled the world with letters to prevent their escape. I want them in human form, and so I conjure up a whole environment and catch them in the middle. I put my whole heart into these constructions. But they are constructions. (Hz 333).

There is a dialectic between past and present, personal and cultural. "Most of the novel is concerned with Herzog's examination of his own past and western man's as he attempts to analyze his professional and marital failures and relate them to the history of civilization."[5] His letters thus supply a structural means of portraying a man who tries to clarify his own chaotic life by universalizing his personal situation.

Herzog's letters also show a dialectic between man's fallen state and his possibility of salvation. As Sewell points out:

> In order for Herzog to arrive at a realistic view of himself as a man of decline but one with potential, he must think his way to clarity in his personal life as he evaluates the present in terms of the past. Because the task involves sometimes long and weighty exposition the imaginary letters serve as a plausible means for the protagonist's engagement in the process.[6]

Here again, Herzog's personal search for synthesis is expanded into man's search, through his letters. His rejection of the notion that his present chaotic situation is definite, which is shown through his struggle to reach clarity, expands

→

into a historical vision of the world dialectically oriented. He opposes negative views of history, asserting man's ability to overcome his own condemnation, as he states in his letter to an intellectual friend of his wife's, showing his own sense of fall as husband, and resenting his wife's immoral behavior:

> Are all traditions used up, the beliefs done for, the consciousness of the masses not yet ready for the next development? Has the filthy moment come when moral feeling dies, conscience dissintegrates, and respect for liberty, law, public decency, all the rest is cowardice, decadence, blood? (Hz, 95-96).

He goes on in the same mood, refuting what he calls "the commonplaces of the Wasteland outlook", believing in a new orientation, in a better spiritual life for modern man, when he says, "I can't accept this foolish dreariness. We are talking about the whole life of mankind". (Hz, 96).

Besides its structural function, Herzog's letters help reveal his own character, the character of an intellectual, whose mind is given to analysis and mental arguments, able to articulate ideas into syntheses.

Though, as we have seen, Herzog covers not only the history of its protagonist but the history of Western civilization, the present action of the novel is compressed in five days of Herzog's life which reveals Bellow's remarkable ability in handling time. The narrator shifts to and from two different levels of time: the timeless ominiscient level in which he summarizes the subjective contents of Herzog's mind and the space-time world of the linear narrative in which he describes Herzog objectively as an object in a scene, or his general state of mind. But most of the novel covers

→

an inner realm of time, that of Herzog's mind, where time is psychological and consists of recollections, though, as we have already commented, the narrator's summary of Herzog's past sometimes blurs with Herzog's recollections.

In spite of its remarkable technique in time-shifting, internal monologues and the letter-writing device for dramatizing consciousness, the novel is rather a traditional novel, in the sense that it deals with the whole life of a man in the realist tradition, blended with elements of the picaresque novel. The novel, however, is centered in the actual consciousness of its protagonist (everything we know about the people in the novel we know from Herzog's mind), and the journey we have is the journey of the mind, the novel thus being a probing, introspective novel of ideas. Bellow presents the thoughts of a man trying to cope with the social reality of our time; trying to grasp the paradoxes of modern history, science and philosophy. All sorts of questions and problems obsess Herzog's mind, which is working at full speed all the time.

The novel tells the story of Moses Herzog, an American-Jewish scholar of immigrant parents who, originally poor and unsuccessful, finally achieves late in life a business success which leaves him financially secure, and free to follow out a life of ideas. Herzog marries, first, a conventional Jewish wife called Daisy, whom he divorces, taking up with a passive Japanese mistress. His second marriage is to Madeleine, a Catholic convert of intellectual interests but of extravagant tastes. Madeleine finally dis

→

misses Herzog and lives with their best friend, who has been cuckolding Herzog; they keep the daughter of the marriage, forbidding Herzog to appear in the district where they live in Chicago, and accusing him of losing his sanity. It is at about this point that the narrative action begins, presenting the earlier material in retrospect, and so throwing the focus of the novel upon a short period of late spring and summer immediately after the break-up of Herzog's marriage, when he is in a state of suffering and isolation, seeking his direction and doubting his own sanity.

The novel begins with a general description of its protagonist's state of mind on a summer's day in his country house in Ludeyville, followed by a brief summary of actual journeys during the development of the novel:

> ... He had carried this valise from New York to Martha's Vineyard, but returned from the Vineyard immediately; two days later he flew to Chicago, and from Chicago he went to a village in western Massachussetts. (Hz, 7).

Thus, the actual time of the novel is compressed in five days, in which the above itinerary is fitted. This summary is followed by a description of how Herzog has been spending the two or three days after his return to Ludeyville from Chicago:

> Late in spring Herzog had been overcome by the need to explain, to have it out, to justify, to put in perspective, to clarify, to make amends. (Hz,8)

Following this summary of Herzog's state of mind we have an account of his job, teaching adult education courses in a New York night school, his progressive preoccupations

→

with his thoughts, the "long pauses in his lectures",and the scattered notes he wrote. Only at the top of page four do we have the actual narration focused in an evening five days back, with Herzog on the sofa of his kitchenette apartment in New York. It is the first time we have Herzog as an object before us in the concrete present. It is the beginning of the actual action of the novel, which, as we have said, is compressed into five days. Nothing much in the way of physical action really happens in the novel; time is experienced with Herzog as duration, so that, we have a sense of chronology, which is really built up of a chain of recollections mixed up with actual action. The present action of the novel can be summarized in a few lines: Herzog takes a train to Vineyard Haven, to an old friend's country house, but does not stay long as he has planned, flying back immediately to New York. On the next day he has dinner with Ramona, his mistress, and spends the night with her. The next morning he goes to a court building, where he is put in crude contact with reality; then, on an impulse, moved by murderous intentions, he takes the plane to Chicago where his daughter lives with her mother, his ex-wife Madeleine. He spends two days there, gets involved in a traffic accident with his little daughter in the car,and is arrested by the police for carrying a gun. By the afternoon of the fifth day, Herzog is back in Ludeyville and the narrative returns to the point where it began.

The setting, the Ludeyville country-house he had bought for his second wife, is now a place in ruins. Eating

→

packaged bread, canned beans, and American cheese, sleeping on a bare mattress, Herzog enjoys the calmness and freedom of a pastoral life: "Now and then he picked raspberries in the overgrown garden, lifting up the thorny canes with absent-minded caution. As for sleep, he slept on a mattress without sheets." (Hz, 7) It is in this setting, far from chaotic events, that Herzog reexamines his life. Most of the book, as we have said, is recollection, either summarized by the omniscient narrator, or in interior monologue form, or in letter-writing form. Through these devices we learn about Herzog's disordered life, the events that culminated in his state of near insanity, his ex-wives, his mistresses, his friends, his enemies, his children, his relatives, his childhood, his ideas, his doubts, his dreams, everything that might contribute to build him up in the universe of the novel. Mos of the actual action of the novel reveals the world of the big city, with its conflicts, its indifference, its smashing power, as in this description: "In emancipated New York, man and woman, gaudily disguised, like two savages belonging to hostile tribes, confront each other." (Hz,232). But the city is also seen in its glamour, as Herzog sees New York on his way back from Ramona's: "In spite of the buses which glazed the air with stinking gases, he could smell the fresh odor of the soil,... the buses pouring poison but the flowers surviving, garnet roses, pale lilacs..." (Hz, 254).

All the characters in the novel, who are part of the web in which Herzog is caught, are products of the city, and play their games in an alienatory society. In the analysis

→

of the novel we will study the roles these people play in the universe of the book.

NOTES

[1]CLAYTON, J.J. Saul Bellow: In Defense of Man. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1971, p.206. Clayton argues that "maybe Bellow is being satirical, but he is also serious: Herzog is Representative Man fighting for survival."

[2]Literary Structure and Judgement in the Novels of Saul Bellow. p. 195.

[3]BELLOW,Saul. Herzog. New York, Avon Books 1976, p. 205. Further quotations from Bellow will be immediately followed by the page number, as for instance (Hz, 205).

[4]Saul Bellow: In defense of Man. p. 205. The page number in Herzog in the edition we are using is 87.

[5]MOSHER, H.F. "The Synthesis of Past and Present in Bellow's Herzog." Wascana Review, 6, nº 1 (1971) p. 33.

[6]Literary Structure and Judgement in the Novels of Saul Bellow. p.207

CHAPTER SEVEN

HERZOG vs MADELEINE

Our investigation has the aim of decodifying the meaningful structures which are immanent in the novel and are connected to the features of contemporary society we discussed in the preceding chapter. We will be engaged in the study of an imaginary universe with the aim of finding a significant relation between the structures of this imaginary universe and the structures which make up contemporary society: social, economical, political and religious structures.

This literary universe, created, undoubtedly, out of the social reality of our time, presents formal requirements that we are forced to understand to elucidate the meaningful structures that compose it.

The essential content of Herzog seems to be an ambiguous statement: the consciousness of the death of values in our society, and, at the same time, a positive affirmation towards life, a hope, a messianic attitude. Herzog shows a piercing sensibility for the intellectual and moral crisis of the Western world, "trying to keep his dignity" (Hz,41)

→

in a society where to be human is to be archaic, and, at the same time, rejects dooming and nihilistic ideas.

The incarnation of this society, in the universe of the novel, is Madeleine, Herzog's second ex-wife, who represents, at a deeper level, the antagonistic force which functions as a catalytic element in Herzog's mind, provoking the outburst of a compressed mental life. He bursts out through his letters and interior monologues, pressed by an inner imposition, his vision of the world. The narrator says of Herzog: "He knew his scribbling, his letter writing was ridiculous. It was involuntary. His eccentricities had him in their" power"(Hz,19), and Herzog writes: "There is someone inside me, I am in his grip. When I speak of him I feel him in my head, pounding for order. He will ruin me."

This he Herzog mentions is his authentic self,feeling the powerful coercion of an oppressing society actualized in the universe of the novel in Madeleine, who incarnates the repressive forces, anatagonistic to the passive behavior of Herzog. This significative structure — antagonism between man and woman, namely Herzog vs Madeleine, is homologous to the relation: individual and technocratic society.

Herzog is driven to the inner necessity of finding answers to the problems of modern man, and thus is led to question the nature of reality not only in his private existence, but also in society as a whole. He was "overcome by the need to explain, to have it out, to justify, to put in perspective, to clarify, to make amends." (Hz, 8) He felt an urge to explain, to synthesize, to find an order, a pattern

→

underlying the chaos.Introspection and reflection, insistence in intellectual examination and thinking are essential elements in Herzog's search for meaning and values. So, his mind become the universe of the novel: his reflections, internal monologues and the unsent letters he writes make up not only the aesthetic but also the thematic unity of the novel, as we have said in the previous chapter. All his letters and thoughts of intellectual status are intimately related to his private reality, to what he sees and suffers, and thus mirror society. He is aware of his wild internal disorder and struggles to be free from personal drama,"while in pursuit of a grand synthesis." (Hz, 255) He tries to find out,personally,

> ... what it means to be a man. In a city. In a century. In transition. In a mass.Transformed by science. Under organized power. Subject to tremendous controls. In a condition caused by mechanization. After the late failure of radical hopes. In a society that was no community and devalued the person. Owing to the multiplied power of numbers which made the self negligible. (Hz, 247/8).

In his pursuit for synthesis, a synthesis he never found, and came to believe, at the end, was not unavoidably necessary,[1] in his attempt to make sense out of American mass society, Herzog gives us an image of man in contemporary society. His letters, which we said comprise the basis for the formal structure of the novel, reveal an interaction between Herzog and his social milieu, and, metaphorically, function as a chaotic interpretation of the social scene, reflecting Herzog's mental distraction and serving as a medium for showing the fragmentation of modern life.

→

Madeleine, who we said is the embodiment of repressive forces of society on the individual, is "a violent, hysterical woman", hugely avid and demanding, lacking redeeming qualities. This lack of characteristics of human personality, suggesting rather a caricature than a living person, is what makes us feel Madeleine as an object of hostility, an anatagonistic force against the humane perspectives of Herzog. So that, at a deep level, the Herzog — Madeleine relationship is a significative structure of man's fighting his way towards a humane perspective in contemporary society.

At the end of the novel, when Herzog is isolated in the country, keeping no company except his own, having a perspective of the latest fact of his life, he thinks of his relationship with Madeleine, and his reflections clearly show Madeleine to be symbolic of a destructive society. His struggle "to assert moral realities and individual values against a background in which man is turning to waste,"[2] seems to have reached an end; he has at least gained spiritual peace, and being free from Madeleine is the main motive for his peaceful state of mind. The narrator says:

> He was surprised to feel such contentment... contentment? Whom was he kidding, this was joy! For perhaps the first time he felt what it was to be free from Madeleine. Joy! His servitude was ended, and his heart released from its grisly heaviness and encrustation. Her absence, no more than her absence itself, was simply sweetness and lightness of spirit. (Hz, 381).

In a talk with Ramona, Herzog, very excited, vented all his feelings and resentment against Madeleine and Valentine, her lover, whom at a deep level may be considered an extension of Madeleine. This explosion that shows Madelein as obsessed

→

with power, the will to dominate and destroy, also reflects an image of her as representative of an oppressive society, a society highly rationalized and alienatory, where the individual has little chance to participate and integrate in community, as revealed by Herzog's own words:

> "... And then she and Valentine ran my life for me. I didn't know a thing about it. All the decisions were made by them — where I lived, where I worked, how much rent I paid. Even my mental problems were set by them. They gave me my homework. and then they decided that I had to go, they worked out all the details — property settlement, alimony, child support. I'm sure Valentine thought he acted in my best interests..." (Hz, 239).

Madeleine is portrayed as incarnating all the characteristics of contemporary society we have discussed in the preceding part of this study. Her destructive extravagance reflects the false values of an excessively materialistic and money-minded society. Her greed for buying indiscriminately shows her being imbued with the germ of affluency, completely alienated from a sense of value or necessity, to the point of paranoia. The narrator comments, on her extravagances, saying:

> For a week or two, Field's delivery truck was bringing jewelry, cigarette boxes, coats and dresses, lamps, carpets, almost daily. Madeleine could not recall making these purchases. In ten days she ran up a twelve — hundred dollar bill. (Hz, 74).

She "toured the antique shops with Phoebe Gersbach, or brought home loads of groceries of the Pittsfield supermarkets." (Hz, 153).

Madeleine is deprived of any sense of true values, she is completely amoral, showing the absence of any self-limiting principles. In opposition to Herzog's Jewish

→

moralism and humanistic idealism, "she is completely worldly and completely competent for this world."[3] While Herzog, in search of a synthesis, not only for his own chaotic world, but for the whole humanity, values the past, Madeleine rejects it completely and scorns it, as in a discussion with Herzog:

> Madeleine said quickly, firmly, and accurately, "You'll never get the surroundings you want. Those are in the twelfth century somewhere. Always crying for the old home and the kitchen table with the oil cloth on it and your Latin book. Okay — let's hear your sad old story (...) Oh, what balls!" (Hz, 155)

We experience Madeleine mainly through Herzog's consciousness, which presents her as a "bitch",but also through other points of view. Ramona, Herzog's lover, sees her as a "frigid, middlebrow, castrating female" (Hz, 184). Sandor Himmelstein, Herzog's lawyer-friend, sees Madeleine as "a strong-minded bitch." (Hz, 182). She is portrayed as lacking any feelings concerning love or friendship. Herzog, in his reflections, sees her as an opportunist and deprived of any human concern:

> As long as I was Mady's good husband, I was a delightful person. Suddenly, because Madeleine decided that she wanted out—suddenly, I was a mad dog. The police were warned about me and there was talk of committing me to an institution, (Hz, 48).
>
> .....
>
> I now know the whole funny, nasty perverted truth about Madeleine. Much to think about. He now had ended. (Hz, 56)

She is not only emblematic of absence of love, but also of any human concern or respect for others. Her relation with Herzog is that of suject—object. She manipulated him and involved him in a dense web of treachery.She planned his ruin with deliberate and systematic cruelty while he trusted

→

her. He was impotent to face her ignoble inhumanity even when he came to know the "whole funny, nasty,perverted truth about her" (Hz, 56). Thinking of Madeleine, Herzog reflected on women: "What do they want? They eat green salad and drink human blood." (Hz, 56) The scene at the police station where Herzog is taken when he is involved in a car accident, while driving with June, his little daughter, shows Madeleine's indifference and unconcerned behavior. The narrator comments, "It was necessary that Madeleine should see him, but her look was devoid of intimate recognition"(Hz, 362), and Herzog thinks of her as being "as sweet as cheap candy, and just as reminiscent of poison as chemical sweet acids" (Hz, 364). Herzog was quite cool at the court, waiting for the Madeleine he knew to come out, but

> ... She seemed to realize that she must control her tic and the violence of her stare. But by noticeable degrees her face became very white, her eyes smaller, stony. He believed he could interpret them. They expressed a total will that he should die... (Hz, 367)

In a talk with Ramona, Herzog comments on an incident concerning Gersbach and Madeleine, that points out to her amoral behavior and lack of respect for human feelings. She had traveled to Boston to think her marriage through and try to save it, and a week later Gersbach came to the house to pick up some of her things. The conversation with Ramona about the incident went like this, showing Madeleine's limitless degree of disregard:

"Then we went back to the house and Gersbach packed her things. And what he had mainly come for — her diaphragm."

→

> "You don't mean it !"
> "Of course I mean it."
> "But you seem to accept it ..."
> "What I accept is that my idiocy inspired them, and sent them to greater heights of perversity." (Hz, 238).

Adding to the fact that Madeleine is more a caricature than a real person, she is also an actress.We feel her actions as a conventional performance. We do not see her as a fully realized personality, but as a grotesque creature that emerges from Herzog's recollections. This actress-like behavior is a strong motive for us to consider her as a symbolic figure. We feel her playing out roles that lead Herzog into his reflections about man and society. In fact, when Herzog first met Madeleine, she was obsessed with playing the role of a Catholic convert. "Conversion was a theatrical event for Madeleine," (Hz, 141)reflected Herzog. Not only did she enjoy dressing for the part, that is,transforming herself "into an older woman," (Hz, 138) to show dignity and status, but she was especially excited by the fact that her father confessor was a celebrity, the eminent Monsignor Hilton. Herzog observed her in the process of transformation, with absolute detatchment and expert efficiency, as the narrator comments:

> ... Moses, participated in all this, intensely, silently. Still without pauses or hesitations, she put a touch of black in the outer corner of each eye, and redrew the line of her brows to make it level and earnest. (...) She primed her lips with waxy stuff, then painted them a drab red, adding more years to her age. (Hz, 139).

Madeleine's theatricality concerning religion, her unauthentic behavior, provokes Herzog's reflections about orthodox religion, showing her as completely alienated from

→

true religious values. In a letter to Edvig, Herzog and Madeleine's psychiatrist, who considered that Madeleine possessed a deep religious nature, Herzog makes significant comments on Madeleine's religious behavior, which shows her as antagonistic to what he may consider true religious values. He says:

> I don't quite understand what you mean by "religious." A religious woman may find she doesn't love her lover or her husband. But what if she should hate him? What if she should wish continually for his death?
> ...I don't expect a religious woman to be lovable, a saintly pussycat. But I would like to know how you decided that she is deeply religious.
> ...Madeleine, your saint sent my picture to the cops ...I'm sure you know the views of Buber. It is wrong to turn a man (a subject)into a thing (an object), (Hz, 82-83).

In a long internal monologue of Herzog's, when he recollects Madeleine's transforming herself to go to church, while "he, the owrn, unshaven, sinful Jew, endangering her redemption," (Hz,140) observed her,he comments on Madeleine's theatrical behavior:

> ... Theater — the art of upstars, opportunists, would-be aristocrats. Obviously she had religious feeling, but the glamour and the social climbing were more important. (...) The Jewish interpretation of the high-minded Christian lady or gentleman in a curious chapter in the history of social theater. (Hz, 141)

Madeleine is portrayed as showing no true identity. She is not really explicable as an identity, either individually or socially. In spite of her inhumanity she is seen as good mother to June in the views of other characters. In her greed for freedom to become what she wants,she is shown as confused as to what she should be, and unauthentic. She displays sequences of masks. First, she uses the mask of a

→

Catholic convert, then she becomes an intellectual woman, eager for culture, "avid for scholarly conversation,"(Hz,90) interested in Russian civilization. "Culture — ideas— had taken the place of the Church in Mady's heart", (Hz,91) comments Herzog, who recognizes her changeable character when he says, "If she had one constant interest it was murder mysteries." (Hz, 93) When Herzog began courting Madeleine, she had rejected her Jewish identity and wanted to lead the life of a Catholic, marry in the Catholic Church and baptize her children. But as the narrator comments,

> ... when all was said and done, Madeleine didn't marry in the church, nor she baptize her daughter. Catholicism went the way of zithers and tarot cards, bread-baking and Russian civilization. And life in the country. (Hz, 148).

In a letter to Edvig, his and Madeleine's psychiatrist, in which Herzog says of her imposition concerning his undergoing psychiatric treatment,arguing that he was in a dangerous mental state, Herzog comments on her dubious identity:

> ... I was allowed to choose my own psychiatrist. Naturally I picked one who had written on Barth, Tillich, Brunner, etc, Especially since Madeleine, though Jewish, had a Christian phase as a Catholic convert and I hoped you might help me to understand her. (Hz, 70).

Madeleine is representative of confusion and chaos,to the point of insanity and hysteria. In spite of her beauty she is connected with dirt and disorder. In a talk with Gersbach, Herzog comments on the chaos of her practical life:

> ... "She's built a wall of Russian books around herself. Vladimir of Kiev, Tikhon Zadonsky. In my bed! It's not enough they persecuted my ancestors! She ransacks the library. Stuff from the bottom of the stacks nobody has taken out in fifty years. The sheets are full of crumbs of yellow paper."

→

> "Have you been complaining again?"
> "Maybe I have, a little. Eggshells, chop bones, tin cans under the table, under the sofa. ..." (Hz, 77)

In another scene, which shows Herzog complaining about the disorder in his bedroom, we have an image of Madeleine's hysterical behavior. The narrator comments:

> ... one night in the disorderly bedroom, when they were both naked, and Herzog, lifting the sheet, made a sharp remark about the old books underneath (...), it was too much for her. She began to scream at him, and threw herself on the bed, tearing off blakets and sheets, slamming books on the floor, then attacking the pillows with her nails, giving a wild, choked scream. (Hz, 74).

In a letter to Shapiro, Herzog says he has taken a list of the traits of paranoia from a psychiatrist and studied it, coming to the conclusion that all them fitted Madeleine's condition:

> It read "Pride, Anger, Excessive 'Rationality,' homosexual inclination, Competitiveness, Mistrust of Emotion, Inability to Bear Criticism, Hostile projections, Delusions," It's all there — all! I've thought of Mady in every category,... (Hz, 99).

Medeleine's greed for culture and knowledge, her avidity for getting and storing information, as if it were a crucial necessity, is symbolic of the plurality of ideas and accumulation of information in contemporary society, opposing Herzog's disapproval of sterile intellectualism that we infer to be no more than part of a system for him. The fact that Madeleine is representative of this condition in contemporary society also helps to show her as alienated from her role both in her personal and social life. She is not really conscious of any of her roles, neither as a scholar nor as a wife or mother. Her unconcerned attitude about the consequences of her acts shows

→

her as dominated by a pre-determined controller that makes her alien to her action. At a deep level she is the source of all the forces that are antagonistic to Herzog, and thus representative of social patterns which oppose his own ideal of society.

It may be important now we delineate Herzog's character, so that his antagonism to Madeleine becomes clearer,an antagonism which we consider to be the comprehensive significative structure of the novel.

Madeleine, we have said, is portrayed as completely unaware of her action, she is considered paranoid by Edvig, the psychiatrist.[4] She even believes she is innocent and a victim of Herzog's mania. Though she is said to be,throughout the novel, brilliant and remarkably intelligent,not only in Herzog's view but in others' too, we do not have a scene that shows her as possessing any ability to consider or to think about her behavior and the consequences of it, both in her private life and in her relationship with others. In opposition to Madeleine, Herzog, who voices Bellow himself, conducts his "own analysis — of self, psyche, family,society, and beyond."[5] "Awareness was his work; extended consciousness was his line, his business." (Hz, 140) Facing a situation of "near-delirium", provoked by Madeleine, Herzog went through his process of reaching full awareness. "He hesitated somewhat to lie down and shut his eyes; tomorrow he might not be able to recover his state of simple, free,intense realization" (Hz, 324). In his attempt to analyse his professional and marital failures and relate them to society in general,and to

→

the history of civilization, he tries to reach awareness of his condition of man, both as individual and social identities.

In an antagonistic attitude towards Madeleine's inherent eagerness for material possession, her avidity for buying things, her insane pleasure in spending money uncontrollably, Herzog "set himself up with emotional goodies — truth, friendship, devotion to children." (Hz, 325) Opposing Madeleine's materialistic and money-oriented behavior, Herzog's struggle is to assert moral realities, true individual and social values. Truth, love, friedship, dignity, duty, principles constitute the core of his pursuit. The narrator comments, "It amused Shura that his brother Moses should be so fond of him. Moses loved his relatives quite openly and even helplessly." (Hz.100) Alone, in a "rattling cab" he considers his present condition and wonders about his own nature:

> ... And what about all the good I have in my heart — doesn't it mean anything? Is it simply a joke? A false hope that makes a man feel the illusion of worth? (...) But this good is no phony. I know it isn't. I swear it. (Hz, 254).

Herzog's dialectic between past and present, showing the opposition of the ideal and the real is constructed in such a way as to show his longing for old values that seemed lost in the past. "He sometimes tried to think, in his own vocabulary, whether this might be his archaic aspect, prehistoric." (Hz, 100) Talking of Madeleine as a reality instructor for him — "Madeleine wasn't just a wife, but an education", Herzog resenting true values to be growing absolete, comments on his own personality as opposing hers:

> ... A good, steady, hopeful, rational, diligent,

→

> dignified, childish person like Herzog who thinks human life is a subject, like any other subject , has to be taught a lesson. And certainly anyone who takes dignity seriously, old-fashioned individual dignity, is bound to get the business. (Hz, 239).

After the lesson Madeleine gave him, the idea of marriage made Herzog nervous, and he thought of his sense of love and family as out of date in our society. He considered his feelings towards the traditional family as he thought,"He could be a patriarch, as every Herzog was meant to be", but "the family man, father, transmitter of life, intermediary between past and future, instrument of mysterious creation was out of fashion." (Hz, 249) Further on in the novel, in the scene that shows Herzog involved in a traffic accident with June, while the police examined his documents and his old gun, the gun that had belonged to his father, his mind was occupied with thoughts of the past: "ancient Herzogs with their psalms and their shawls and beards would never have touched a revolver. Violence was for the goy," (Hz, 349) he thought. He considered then his ancestors, holder of old values, lost in the past,and thought "they were gone, vanished, archaic men." (Hz, 350).

While Madeleine is protrayed as lacking authenticity and a genuine identity, playing roles rather than living authentically, and completely unaware of this reality,Herzog tries to establish his identity. "We must be what we are. That is necessity. And what are We?" (Hz, 86) he says, His pursuit of a synthesis involves a search of his human identity. "My God!" he says, "who is this creature? It considers itself human. But what is it? Not human of itself. But it has the

→

longing to be human." (Hz, 270) Though Herzog never really doubted his identity, as he reflected, "I am Herzog. I have to be that man. There is no one else to be that man" (Hz, 86), in a state of confusion, he searched for a full deline ation of it. He seemed to connect his problems of personal identity with the problems of values.[6] His anxieties would cease when he came to terms with himself as an individual and got into a proper relationship with society, and thus he is intensily involved in an effort to define his values and thereby to define himself.

In opposition to Madeleine, whose life, both practical and mental, showed a state of confusion that she never ad mitted, Herzog, faced with both moral and physical chaos, felt a need for order that grew out of some inner need for stability, and extended to the whole of society. In a cab, through the streets of New York, his eyes fixed on the sights of the city where the "square shapes were vivid", and "gave him a sense of fateful motion", somehow "he felt himself part of it all and sensed the danger of these multiple excitements." He felt "he had to calm down these overstrained galloping nerves, put out this murky fire inside" (Hz, 38), in other words, he had to reach clarity. He ques tioned his own self in search of a meaning, and thought, "Is there nothing else between birth and death but what I can get out of this perversity — only a favorable balance of dis orderly emotions?" (Hz, 254) He struggled to find a pattern underlying his confused self when he said, "who knows what the mixture is! What good, what lasting good is there in

→

me?" (Hz, 254) The constant physical and psychological stress Herzog lives in and his fragmentary and confused mind, is associated with his pressing need to grasp totality. The narrator comments, "He was only vastly excited — in a streaming state — and intended mostly to restore order by turning to his habit of thoughtfulness." (Hz, 324) Back in Ludeyville,he reflects, "The light of truth is never far away, and no human being is too negligible or corrupt to come into it." (Hz, 382) What he wanted, back, there, "was peace and clarity." (Hz,382). The letters themselves, considering them as a unifying element in the structure of the novel, serving as a continual commentary on the meaning of man's life, show Herzog's search for personal order,[7] both in the mental and practical sphere.

The struggle in Herzog takes place on two levels, that of Herzog's private life and that of society in general. In the first level, Herzog fights Madeleine, and this struggle involves him with a group of characters who help dramatize conflict, and by their treacherous and unauthentic behavior reinforce the opposing forces Madeleine represents. Herzog,in his process of awareness, comes to understand the ambiguous behavior of these characters, and on doing so reveals them to the reader. These characters belong to Madeleine's world and are potentially able to act the way she does. They maintain close relationship to both Madeleine and Herzog, who reaches full understanding of their behavior.

This first level — the level of the action — which displays the conflict between the protagonist and other characters, and which we are going to discuss in the following

→

chapter, functions as a motivation for Herzog's questioning of the world he lives in, through his reflections and letters, which constitute the second level. The level of the action gives us elements for the characterization of Madeleine as opposing Herzog's ideals and his sense of humaneness, though we rarely see Madeleine face to face; in fact, only by the end of the novel, when Herzog, having been involved in a traffic accident with his little daughter, is at the police station, do we see Madeleine out of Herzog's recollections, acting directly. Throughout the novel we see her mainly through his point of view and the narrator's, and since the omniscient narrator and Herzog's voices tend to melt into one, we are led to conclude that Madeleine is mostly part of Herzog's mind. She is both the motivation for his fight and the embodiment of his general dissatisfaction and questioning, being this second level a kind of ghost. This fact becomes clear to us when at the climax of his tension he goes to hill Madeleine and Gerbasch, moved by a fit of rage, seeing himself as a victim, as the narrator, voicing him, argues:

> It did not seem illogical that he should claim the privilege of insanity, violence, having been made to carry the rest of it — name-calling and gossip, railroading, pain, even exile in Ludeyville. That property was to have been his madhouse. Finally, his mausoleum. (Hz, 311).

His thinking of Ludeyville, his country house, bought to please Madeleine, and where they had lived together, as a madhouse makes us see it as an image of society itself, ruled by uncontrollable forces represented by Madeleine. The narrator goes on considering, "they had done something else to Herzog — unpredictable... They had opened the way to justifiable

→

murder" (Hz, 311). In other words, they opened the way to violence and hatred, We have here a clear image of society leading to violence by denying man the chance to act conciously and have individual reponsability. The narrator, reinforcing the image,. comments, "In spirit she was his murderess, and therefore he was turned loose, could shoot or choke without remorse." (Hz, 312) At this point, Herzog was still in the process of reaching understanding of the chaos in his personal life. So far he had been passive,feeling only the need to fight, but then he took a decision to act. The scene we have, however, betrays his intentions and is illuminating both for him and for the reader. When he gets to the house, without being seen, and watches Madeleine in the kitchen, his rage seems to vanish. He looks for little June, watches her being bathed by Gersbach through the bathroom window, and sees "the man wash her tenderly." "His left hand touched the gun... There were two bullets in the chamber... But they would stay there. Herzog clearly recognized that." (Hz, 315). At this point we recognize Madeleine as motivation for Herzog's pursuit of clarity, and we see him moving towards awareness of life when he says:

> Those two grotesque love-actors have it all. And I apparently believe that if the child does not have a life resembling mine, educated according to the Herzog's standards of 'heart', and all the rest of it, she will fail to become a humanbeing. This is sheer irrationality, and yet some part of my mind takes it as self-evident.(Hz,315).

Madeleine and Gersbach, for the first time, became real in Herzog's eyes and with all their negative characteristics they melted into the undeniable reality.The narrator

→

comments:

> As soon as Herzog saw the actual person giving an actual bath, the reality of it, the tenderness of such a buffoon to a little child, his intended violence turned into theater, into something ludicrous. (Hz, 316)

Later, Herzog actually meets Medeleine at the police station. Her acting does not alter his view of her, she is still "superbly cunning", cold and tyrannical, but he has overcome his obsession. That is the end of Mady in the novel. Later he writes her and Gersbach some lines (unsent) that show his complete disconnection from them. Referring to Gersbach, he says:

> And you, Gersbach, you're wellcome to Madeleine. Enjoy her — rejoice in her. You will not reach me through her, however. I know you thought me in her flesh. But I am no longer there. (Hz, 388).

→

NOTES

[1]Herzog considers "a curious result of the increase of the historical consciousness is that people think explanation is a necessity of survival. They have to explain their condition. And if the explained life is not worth-living, the explained life is unbearable, too. 'Synthesize or perish!' Is that the new law? But when you see what strange notions, hallucinations, projections, issue from the human mind you begin to believe in Providence again." (Hz, 392).

[2]TANNER, Tony. "Functionalized Recall - or 'The setting of Scores! The Pursuit of Dreams!'" In:City of Words. New York, 1971, p. 302.

[3]MARKOS, Donald William. The Humanism of Saul Bellow. Thesis. Ph.D. University of Illinois, 1966, p. 171.

[4]In a talk with Edvig, Herzog tells him of an episode that revealed Madeleine's strange behavior and "Edvig termed this a paranoid episode." (Hz, 73).

[5]"Fictionalized Recall." p.295. Tanner, analysing Phillip Roth's Portnoy's Complaint and Herzog says that "it must be more than a freak coincidence that two of the most remarkable and popular novels of the sixties are written by men lying down and conducting, as it were, their own analysis — of self, psyche, family, society and beyond!"

[6]Rollo May, in Man's Search for Himself, states that "anxiety, bewilderment and emptiness — the chronic diseases of modern man — occur mainly because his values are confused and contradictory, and he has no psychic core." (quoted in MARKOS, D.W. The Humanism of Saul Bellow. p. 154)

[7]W.Sewel says that "the letters serve as a logical way for Bellow to incorporate into the novel an historical dialectic on the value of indiduality realized through personal order... (Literary Structure and Value Judgement in the Novels of Saul Bellow, p. 183)

CHAPTER EIGHT

HERZOG'S ACTUAL WORLD

The group of characters which, we said, reinforces the opposing forces Madeleine represents and helps dramatize the conflict, is mainly represented by Valentine Gersbach, Madeleine's lover and Herzog's former friend. He is pluri-focused in the novel. We see him from the point of view of the narrator, of his wife, of Herzog and of other characters, and these views put together give a confusing delineation of his character.

The narrator sees him as an attractive man, a "dandy", as he says, "Valentine was exquisitely confident of his appearance. He knew he was a terribly handsome man"(Hz,29), but lacking true consistency. He says of him:

> Dealing with Valentine was like dealing with a king. He had a thick grip. He might have held a scepter....He was a big man, too big for any thing but the truth. (Hz, 79/80).

Simkin, Herzog's lawyer friend, sees him as having homosexual tendencies. In a talk with Herzog, he gives his opinion of him, saying that "there was something about his looks, his clothes, his loud voice, and his phony Yiddish."

He adds, "I didn't like the way he hugged you. Even kissed you, if I reacall... (Hz, 260).

In Herzog's point of view, he opposes all the authentic values Herzog pursues, playing double roles, the role of Herzog's best friend and that of Madeleine's lover, thus showing no sense of loyalty, dignity, friendship, or family concern. "Herzog himself was somewhat amused by his sentimental faith in 'best friends'" (Hz,259).

Denying all true values, he seemed fit for a competitive society, showing outstanding ability to display convenient masks for different situations, able to grasp opportunities, indifferent to any sense of dignity. Herzog comments on his character thus:

> A man like Gersbach can be gay. Innocent, Sadistic. Dancing around. Instinctive. Heartless. Hugging his friends. Feeble-minded. Laughing at Jokes. Deep, too. Exclaiming "I love you!" or "This I believe," And while moved by these "beliefs" he steals you blind. (Hz, 239).

Even in Herzog's physical description of him there is a suggestion of his ambiguous character. He says, "he walked on a wooden leg, gracefully bending and straightening like a gondolier." (Hz,12) He could make use even of his handcaps. He was perfectly inserted in society. Dicussing his occupation with a friend lawyer, Herzog describes him:

> He's a ringmaster, popularizer, liaison for the elites. He grabs up celebrities and brings them before the public. An he makes all sorts of people feel that he was exactly what they've been looking for. Subtlety for the subtle, warmth for the warm. For the crude, crudity. For the crooks, hyprocrisy. (...) Whatever your heart desires. Emotional plasma which can circulate in any system. (Hz, 264).

His charisma seemed to be responsible for his multifaced

→

image; while Herzog, capable of consciousness, sees him as a "sugary, repulsive, poisonous, not an individual but a fragment, a piece broken off from the mob" (Hz, 315), Phoebe,his wife, sees him as an "ideal husband." In a talk with Herzog, when, after his frustrated homicide, he went to her to get her help in his process of pledging for Junie's custody, she tries to convince him of Valentine's pure feelings. She says to him:

> You never understood a thing about him. He fell for you. Adored you. Tried to become an intellectual because he wanted to help you— (...). He read all those books so you'd have somebody to talk to, (...) It never was enough. You wore him out. It nearly killed him trying to back you up. (Hz, 319).

The image Phoebe has of Valentine is that of a man deprived of the vices of the big city, possessing the innocence of a child. Herzog, already conscious of his masks,mocks her view of her husband, commenting of him:

> Just a rube. Yes. Knows nothing about fancy vices from the big city. Didn't even know how to dial a number, Had to be led step by step into degeneracy by me — Moses E. Herzog. (Hz, 319).

Thus, the falseness we see in Gersbach seems to be mainly provided by this dubious focusing of his character.It makes us feel he himself is confusing about his own direction, having no chance to establish a set of values which could guide his behavior. In other words, he is part of a society, which owing to its materialistically-oriented structure, prevents the individual from reaching a stage of consciousness of his own role as a man. In opposition to Herzog,he is not led towards reaching a synthesis,a sense of order. Thus, he is shown as possessing tenderness, even in Herzog's view — "He

→

spoke with authority, but affectionately and with grumbling smiles and occasionally with laughter he bathed her", comments Herzog, referring to Valentine's bathing Junie — but at the same time he is unable to recognize the true value of friendship or dignity. Like Madeleine, he does not reach consciousness of his acts, either as an individual or social creature. He is part of the alienated mass who act without any consistency of behavior. In this sense we said he seems to be an extension of Madeleine in the general structure, stressing her antagonistic characteristics. Herzog himself sees Gersbach and Madeleine as distructive forces against his integrity. Talking about them to his friend Asphalter, Herzog says, "They divvied me up. Valentine took my elegant ways and Mady's going to be the professor." (Hz,327).

A second character who stresses the opposing forces Madeleine represents is Edvig, the Chicago psychiatrist who treated both Madeleine and Herzog. He provides a perfect image of absence of authentic social identity. He denies all the characteristics that have to be considered relevant to identify his social role — that of a psychiatrist. Led by interests, we might recognize both as monetary and erotic, he fails to display professional dignity, showing no sense of values which could support his social role — honesty, trustworthiness or humaneness. He plays a game, using Herzog for his own enjoyment of Madeleine's personality — as the narrator says, "Herzog could see that Edvig was fascinated by every word about Madeleine" (Hz, 71) — and at the same time giving Herzog an image of Madeleine that might deceive him.

→

In a letter to him, Herzog gives as image of his untrustworthy character in opposition to Herzog's beliefs. He wrote:

> So, Edvig, you turn out to be a crook too. How pathetic! (...) I was allowed to choose my own psychiatrist. Naturally I picked one who had written on Barth, Tillich, Brunner, etc.Especially since Madeleine, though Jewish, had a Christian phase as a Catholic convert and I hoped you might help me to understand her. Instead, you went for her yourself. ... (Hz, 70)

Edvig, whom Herzog describes ironically as "this calm Protestant Nordic Anglo-Celtic Edvig" (Hz,70), being on Madeleine's side, stresses the absence of true values and the lack of consciousness of individual or social responsability in our society, which she embodies.

Sandor Himmelstein, another character on Madeleine's side,a Chicago lawyer who helped Herzog when Madeleine deserted him, but whom Herzog had no reason to trust, lacks, like Edvig, professional dignity. He belongd to the world of corruption, recognizing it and accepting it passivily.He is puzzled by Herzog's innocence, when he talks about reality. "Jesus! You don't know anything. ... You don't know what goes on," (Hz, 112) he says. Herzog opposes his degeneracy calling him a mass man. Their exchange goes as follows:

> "Do you know what a mass man is, Hilmmestein?"
> "How is that?"
> "A mass man. A man of the crowd. The soul of the mob. Cutting everybody down to size."
> "What soul of the mob ! Don't get highfalutin. I'm talking facts, not shit." (Hz, 109).

He was Herzog's lawyer when in his process of divorce from Madeleine he wanted to take care of Junie. In a talk with Herzog about Herzog's possibilities in getting Junie's

→

custody he gives his view of the court and states his own immoral participation in the cases. He shows the figure of Herzog in front of the court:

> "They'll kill you."
> "Sandor, quit this."
> "Put you over a barrel. Tear your hide off."
> "I can't stand it."
> "Tie your guts in knots. Sonofabich. They'll put a meter on your nose, and charge you for breathing. You'll be locked back and front. ..."
> "But I didn't leave Madeleine."
> "I've done this to guys mylself."
> "What harm did I do her."
> "The court doesn't care. You signed papers — did you read them?" (Hz, 112).

This dialoque displays an image, of our money-oriented society's repression of the individual, who is helpless in front of its coercive power.

In a scene which shows Sandor talking to Herzog,saying friendly words such as "you and me, a pair of old-time Jews," "you are my boy. My innocent kind-hearted boy," the narrator pictures his masked character, his impossibility to be authentic, and feel deeply and truthfully. He says, "He gave Moses a kiss. Moses felt the potato love. Amorphous,swelling, hungry, indiscriminate, cowardly potato love." (Hz, 115).

Herzog writes him a letter, which also helps shows his disloyalty. Herzog writes, "I left you money for an emergency. You turned it all over to Madeleine to buy clothes. Were you her lawyer, or mine?" He reflects on his valueing money above anything:

> I might have understood, from the way he spoke of his female clients and assaulted all the men.(...) I was so far gone in foolishness that even they, those Himmelsteins, knew more than I. And showed me the facts of life,and taught me the truth. (Hz,115)

→

The truth Herzog talks about is social reality, which he had not faced truthfully, so far.

The three characters we have discussed—the lawyer, the lover and the psychiatrist—are the only ones who are really closely involved in the conflict and, as we have said, strengthen the forces against which Herzog struggles, though the last one, the psychiatrist, is never seen in the actual action of the novel. The novel however is populated with a lot of characters, who, though not directly involved in the conflict, play their roles in the process of leading Herzog towards reaching plain consciousness of reality. We will examine some of these characters who we think most relevant in the process of revealing social reality, and consequently in showing Bellow's view of contemporary society.

Phoebe, Gersbach's wife, in her inability to react against her husband's disregarding behavior, shows an image of the contemporary individual who only worried about his own security accepts all social imposition without a fight.

The narrator says of her, "Phoebe had only one business in life, one aim, to keep her husband and protect her child." (Hz, 76). In her preoccupation with keeping her security, she disregards her individual dignity, being totally passive in relation to her husband's betrayal. She does not vacilate in blaming Herzog for Gersbach's indecent behavior, showing complete alienation from reality, worried only with what she thought represented her security. In a talk with Herzog, she says, "We had a quiet life until you and Madeleine descended

→

on Ludeyville and forced yourself on me." (Hz, 319)When Herzog accused her of indifference, saying to her, "You watched the whole thing going on. It went on for years, and you said nothing. I wouldn't have been so indifferent..." (Hz,320),her answer shows her position of accomodation and her disapproval on people who question and refuse passive acceptance, displaying, at the same time, helplessness. She answers:

> It's not my fault that you refuse to understand the system other people live by.Your ideas get in the way. Maybe a weak person like me has no choice. I couldn't do anything for you. (Hz, 320).

Herzog tries to force Phoebe to face the truth she denies, but she prefers to pretend she believes her husband rather than question reality. Having just left Madeleine's house, where he had seen Gersbach bathing Junie, Herzog talks with Phoebe:

> "He's deserted you, hasn't he?"
> "Val? I don't know why you say that! I'm not deserted."
> "Where is he now — this evening? This minute?"
> "Downtown. On business."
> "Oh come on, don't pull that stuff on me, Phoebe. He's living with Madeleine. Do you deny it?"
> "I most certainly do. I can't imagine how you ever got such a fantastic idea," (Hz, 320/321).

Monsignor Hilton,who converted Madeleine to Christianity and baptized her, is seen in Herzog's view as opposing his idea of true spirituality. Like Edvig, he is not seen in the actual action of the novel, but through him we have an image of orthodox religion, divorced from authentic religious values. Herzog resents his own condition of a believer in true values, in spite of the mass society we live in, not being able to communicate (his letters are unsent), while Monsignor could do it. He writes to him:

→

> You see, Monsignor, if you stand on television in the ancient albs and surplices of the Roman church there are at least enough Irishmen, Poles,Croations watching in saloons to undertand you,lifting elegant arms to heaven and your eyes like a silent movie star..(Hz.133)

Monsignor is portrayed, through Herzog's reflections and a letter, as acting unauthentically, playing a role like Madeleine. He says, "Monsignor himself was an actor. One role, but a fat one." (Hz, 141) Herzog does not see Monsignor as holding true values. Thus, the image he gives us is that of the orthodox Church as part of a society which imposes false values. After finishing a letter he wrote to him, Herzog reflects:

> Ecclesiastical doll — gold threaded petticoats, whining organ pipes. The actual world, to say nothing of infinite universe, demanded a stern, a real masculine character, (Hz, 148).

Simkin, a lawyer friend to whom Herzog goes for advice on his effort to win the custody of Junie, is, in Herzog's own words, "a stout Machiavellian old bachelor." He is, like Sandor Himmelstein, inserted in society, and sees Herzog as innocent — "Poor intellectuals, so badly treated," he says of him. He functions in the novel as one of Herzog's reality instructors, helping to reveal to him the power of money in our organizational society. Talking with Herzog about private investigation, which he says costs a tremendous amount,he gives a view of the class division in our society through the power of money. He explains:

> The big corporations have created a new aristocracy under the present tax structure. Car, planes, hotel suites — fringe benefits. Also restaurants, theaters, et cetera, good private schools have been priced out of range for the low-salaried man. The deductible medical expense has enriched psychia

→

> trists, so even suffering cost more now. (...)Everything is subtler. Large organizations have their own C.I.A. Scientific spies who steal secrets from other corporations. (Hz, 260).

Simkin suggested Herzog might hire a private ivestigator to watch Madeleine and charge her for bad behavior in order to get Junie's custody, but at the same time warned him about them, saying that low-income fellows, owing to the big fees the investigators get, are liable to deal with twe worst element in the racket. "Many a plain blackmailer calls himself a private investigator," (Hz, 261) he warns. Herzog is thus exposed once more to a vision of corruption and inescapability, caused by affluency and money supremacy in our society. Thus Sinkin joins other characters in helping Herzog in his process of reaching awareness and clarity.

The three women besides Madeleine with whom Herzog is connected through love, have different functions in his process of reaching a synthesis. Daisy, his first wife, shows the image of the conventional wife who fights for a stable position, supporting middle class values, imposed by social conventions, which bore Herzog, as he says, after he has divorced her, "I gave up the shelter of an orderly purposeful, lawful existence because it bored me." (Hz, 129) Thinking of her, Herzog considers, "Stability, symmetry, order, containment were Daisy's strength." (Hz, 158) These considerations lead us to think of Daisy as representative of an organizational society stuck to patterns, denying the values of the individual. Reflecting on his involvement in reaching an understanding of history in general and of his own disordered life, Herzog thinks of Daisy, ironically, as an imposition of a false order:

→

> By my irregularity and turbulence of spirit I brought out the very worst in Daisy. I caused the seams of her stockings to be so straight, and the buttons to be buttoned symetrically. I was behind those rigid curtains and underneath the square carpets. Roast breast of veal every Sunday with bread stuffing like clay was, due to my disorders, my ruge involvement — huge but evidently formless — in the history of thought (Hz, 158).

The two other women with whom Herzog is involved, two mistresses, Sono and Ranona, appear in moments of deep confusion and depression, serving him as an escape from his confusing self. Sono Ogudi lulled him during the troubled time when he was being divorced from Daisy, but she was so mysterious for him that he deserted her for Madeleine. We see her as representing a free balanced life; she offers him pure love, free from any bondadge, being for to him as an option of freedom, but Herzog did not seem yet prepared for such a choice. He reflects, "To tell the truth, I never had it so good. But I lacked the strength of character to bear such a joy." (Hz,210) The narrator comments on Herzog's incapacity for freedom to enjoy life, showing him burdened with the weight of confusion. He says:

> When a man's breast feels like a cage from which all the dark birds have flown — he is free, he is light. An he longs to have his vultures back again. He wants his costumary struggles, his nameless, empty works, his anger, his afflictions and his sins. (Hz, 210).

In his sexual intercourse with Sono, Herzog questions the old, traditional Jewish discipline in his efforts to come to terms with the option of freedom that is offered to him and which he hesitates to accept totally. Herzog thinks:

> ... is this really possible? Have all the traditions, passions, renunciations, virtues, gems and master-pieces of Hebrew discipline(...) brought

→

> me to these untidy green sheets, and this rippled mattress? (Hz, 211).

The narrator comments, "As if anyone cared what he was doing here. As if it affected the fate of the world in any way." Focusing on Herzog, he says, "I got a right," Herzog whispered, "Though his face neither changed nor moved."(Hz,211) His unemotional attitude in stating his rights reveals passivity, rather than resolution, but it shows already a germ of awareness. We see this attitude as an image of man in contemporary society, bound by his own impotence in front of alien forces, but feeling the imposing necessity to fight them.

Ramona, though also a mistress to whom Herzog escapes in a moment of depression, has a different meaning in his process of reaching consciousness of reality. Different from Sono who reveals a possibility of freedom through love, Ramona, whom Herzog meets after divorcing Madeleine, lures him into the binding enchantments of sex. She is shown as a goddess of sex, a "priestess of Isis," in Herzog's words. Opposing Sono, who prepares Herzog for the ritual of love, as if conducting a hesitating child into a new experience, Ramona prepares herself for the art of seduction.

Sono's ritual for the moment of love is made up of pure and innocent actions, beginning with the elemental ritual of washing. The narrator says:

> After the bath, Herzog's body was red. When she had dried and powdered him, she dressed him in a kimono, her pleased but still slightly unwilling Caucasian doll. The stiff cloth cramped him under the arms as he sat on the pillows. She brought him tea in her best cups (Hz, 211).

The ritual of love for Ramona, different from what it is for Sono, is the art of luring. She prepares herself for

it ingeniously, offering luxury, as the narrator comments:

> Ramona was highly experienced at entertaining gentlemen. The shrimp, wine, flowers, lights, perfumes, the rituals of undressing, the Egyptian music whining and clanging, bespoke practice; and he regretted that she'd had to live this way, but it flattered him, also (Hz, 195).

In a sense, Ramona is also representative of society, not as an oppressing force, but as an enticing element.

The narrator comments on her, saying that Herzog "realized suddenly that Ramona had made herself into a sort of sexual professional." She represents sex, not in the pure sense Sono does, but as a consumer product of society. Her ritual implies a sequence of devices which mirror artful advertisement in the consumer society. She is, thus, symbolic of the power of advertsing exerted by society on the individual, which brings him into unconscious involvement into the system, and consequently limits his possibilities of conscious choice. In this sense, though opposing Madeleine as she herself tells Herzog — "You look for domineering women. I'm trying to tell you that you've met a different type in me," (Hz,243) she is also negative. Her erotic involvement implies blind and compulsory servitude, and consequently, alienation.

In his process of reaching awareness, Herzog tries to run away from Ramona, though he is attracted by her. When in a moment of depression, he decides to leaves New York to go to an old friend's country house in Vineyard Haven, he is trying to get away from Ramona.

The narrator comments on his decision, showing why he felt compelled into acting so:

→

> ... and was making his get away from Ramona. He knew how things would turn out if he went to Montauk with her. She would lead him like a tame bear in Easthampton, from cocktail party to cocktail party (...) Yes, Ramona would lead him in his new pants and striped jacket, sipping a martini... (...) And so he would suck in his belly and stand on aching feet — he, the captive professor, she the mature, successful, laughing, sexual woman. (Hz, 34).

Only at the end of the novel, when he reaches a full state of consciousness, can Herzog meet her peacefully. He has, then, already got to a state of understanding of reality and is ready to face it.

Asphalter, Herzog's zoologist friend, in whose house Herzog spends the night when he goes to Chicago, is quite a strange character: a university teacher "indifferent to practical interests, something of a marginal academic type," who "without his Ph.D., taught comparative anatomy". (Hz,57) He is seen as a passive victim of a system, solitary, fighting depression. For lack of friends, he attached himself to a monkey, whose death he fights to overcome. As he says, "I realized that no other death in the world could have affected me so much." (Hz, 328) He is the image of the sensitive person smashed by the indifference of the big city in our society. In his depression, unable to believe the doctors, he is led to accpet, as a process of cure, a gloomy philosophy stated by a Hungarian woman in a book, wich prescribes certain exercises, the main one consisting of facing one's own death. Thus, Asphalter is not only the image of the solitary man in the middle of the mass, but also that of the lost, confused man, who, rejecting the values imposed by society, attaches himself to strange philosophies, which he thinks might bring

→

him the possibility of facing reality.

Alexander (Shura) and William, Herzog's brothers,are true representatives of an affluent society. William is the image of the well-to-do technician in our society.Though he is able to show family sentiments, he is unable to love and feel like Herzog. His objective attitudes are shown by the narrator when he says, "Will is a quiet man of duty and routine, has his money, position, influence, and is just as glad to be rid of his private or "personnal side." (Hz,374) Alienated from any questioning on the nature of man or society, he enjoys his stable position in the technical world, protecting himself against personal and emotional involvement. The narrator comments on him saying, "Willian did not share his brother's passion for reminiscence. He was an engineer and technologist, a contractor and builder; a balanced, reasonable person." (Hz, 373).

Shura, whom Herzog describes as "his money-making brother," (Hz, 30) is far more inserted in the world of money than William. The narrator, talking of Herzog's feelings towards his family, comments on Shura saying that Herzog "loved Will, Helen, even, Shura, though his milions had made him remote." (Hz, 368) Shura provides the image of the man for whom the only values are those connected with money. He is described by the narrator as the typical money-minded man:

> His handsome stout white-haired brother in his priceless suit, vicuña coat, Italian hat, his million-dollar shave and rose manicured fingers with big rings, looking out of his limousine with princely hauteur. Shura knew everyone (...)Shura was your true disciple of Thomas Hobbes.Universal concerns were idiocy. Ask nothing better than to prosper in the belly of Leviathan and set a hedonistic example to the community. (Hz, 100).

→

When Herzog was involved in the car accident with Junie, and when finally he had his little daughter in his arms, he was dominated by a strong emotion and he brooded on the inability of mankind to part with its beloved or its dead. His mind is led back to the past, to his father's death, and for the first time, the narrator says, he took a different view of the way in which Alexander had run his father's funeral. His recollections of the funeral and the way he sees Shura running it give a good image of the power of the affluent society in repressing legitimate feelings and in dwarfing the emotional and humane traits in the individual. His recollections provide this image."No solemnity in the chapel," he recollects, "Shura's portly, golf-tanned friends, bankers and corporation presidents, forming an imposing wall of meat." (Hz,342) Then, he remembers when the coffin was lowered; he and the others wept, and Shura censured him saying, "Don't carry on like a goddamn immigrant" (Hz, 342) Herzog reflects on the incident and judges himself unfit for the society he lives in, in which Shura is so perfectly integrated, accepting so genuinely values imposed by money, bulding so easily around himself a bar against true emotional reactions, divesting himself of the past. Herzog thinks:

> Maybe I was not entirely in the right. Here he was the good American. I still carry European pollution, am infected by the Old World with feelings like Love — Filial Emotion. Old stuporous dreams. (Hz, 342)

The world of the immigrants, which seems so contemptible to Shura, is part of Herzog's recollections, Their struggle,

→

their suffering, their dreams, their beliefs, their emotions are part of Herzog's mind while it rambles through his distant past, the past of his childhood and youth. Herzog is fascinated by the past and he puts us in contact with it through his memories. The characters who inhabit this world of memories, though not involved directly in the main external conflict of the novel, also play important roles in Herzog's commentary on contemporary society by opposing the world of the present.

Being past an important aspect of Herzog's synthesis we think it justifiable to give it a special section, including the study of the characters who are part of it in that section.

The characters we have discussed, whose dramatization we have seen as images of contemporary society,can be regarded in the whole structure of the novel as opposing the protagonist in the sense that only Herzog represents the possibility of consciousness. None of the others, regardless of their degree of happiness or unhappiness, reach awareness;they are assimilated unconsciously into the system.

→

CHAPTER NINE

A DIALECTIC OF PAST AND PRESENT

Though the time-span of Herzog is short, all its days have a past, and the history of Herzog's family and its European origins, immigrant experience in Canada and Chicago, and the Herzogs final and perflexing rise to wealth are thoroughly explored by memory, by Herzog's taking up the facts again and making use of them to contrast present and past. Father and Mother Herzog, Aunt Zipporah, Ravitch, a Jewish friend, Nachman, a childhood mate are evoked as images of the past, putting in contrast two different worlds.

Father Herzog, the bootlegger, is a romantic presence in Herzog's mind, and Herzog's recollections cover a sequence of scenes from his childhood, in which his father's figure is central. He remembers the Canadian village they lived in, their pasting labels forged by his father, who would say cheeerfully, "Well, children, what shall it be — White Horse?" These recollections do not arouse any feelings of disapproval of his father's behavior. Papa Herzog belongs to a past when being a bootlegger meant a heroic choice, it meant defying the law, an imposition of modern civilization. Papa

→

Herzog is the image of the immigrant conquering the new world, defying its new codes, trying to be part of it, and at the same time faithful to the old way, or rather, inescapably the essence of the old world itself. Aunt Zipporah, the realistic figure of Herzog's recollections, trying to make Papa Herzog aware of the incompatibility of the two worlds, provides through her speech a good image of them, on one side, the old world, on the other, the embryo of the contemporary world. She tells Pappa Herzog in her realistic manner:

> You think you can make a fortune out of swindlers, thieves, and gangsters. You? You're a gentle creature (...) I know these hooligans and "rasboiniks." They don't have skins, teeth, fingers like you but hides, fangs, claws. You can never keep up with these teamsters and butchers. Can you shoot a man? (Hz, 180)

Father Herzog had his own history, which was told and retold, sometimes by himself, sometimes by the mother — a history of suffering, a history of failure, a history of "a father, a sacred being, a king." (Hz, 183) Herzog remembers the sequence of failures in Papa Herzog's history: what he heard from his life in Russia and what they lived together. He thinks of Canada:

> In 1913 he brought a piece of land near Valleyfield, Quebec and failed as a farmer. Then he came into town and failed as a baker; failed as a sack manufacturer in the war, (...)He failed as a junk dealer. Then he became a marriage broker and failed. (Hz, 170)

Herzog recollects this suffering and failure, and thinks of these personal histories as "antiquities — Jewish antiquities originating in the Bible, in a Biblical sense of personal experience and destiny." (Hz, 184) Papa Herzog as a hero, living an individual life with individual dreams →

and individual suffering, belonged to a past, distant from our world, in which there is no place for individual history or individual suffering. This image of dignified and heroic suffering is contrasted with the image of Herzog's comic suffering which pervades the whole book. Another image of suffering which contrasts with Father Herzog's is that of Asphalter, Herzog's biologist friend whom we have already discussed. Asphalter's deep suffering for his monkey's death, though humane in quality, is seen as comic, displaying the image of the contemporary sufferer, an anonymous sufferer in the middle of the mass, lacking individuality, thus opposing to the old dignified sufferer. Herzog's recollections lead him to reflect upon the world now as a more brutal standard, "a new terminal standard, indifferent to persons." (Hz,184) When Herzog gets to Vineyard Haven, where he had gone in a state of despair, and discovers that he has made a mistakes — that was not the place for him — he becomes distressed and thinks deeply on his condition. The omniscient narrator reveals his thoughts which are occupied with the fate of the individual in the modern world, based on his own personal drama. In the middle of it, the narrator says:

> For that matter, he had been taking this primitive cure, administered by Madeleine, Sandor, et cetera; so that his recent misfortunes might be seen as a collective project, himself participating to destroy his vanity and his pretensions to a personal life so that he might disintegrate and suffer and hate, like so many others, not on anything so distinguished as a cross, but down in the mire of post-Renaissance, post-humanistic, post-Cartesian dissolution, next door to the Void. (Hz, 117).

He considers, distressed, that these personal histories have no meaning in the middle of the mass where suffering is

→

collective, having lost, consequently, its heroic character. A good image of contemporary society comes out of Herzog's reflections on the worthlessness of these "old tales for the mass man. He reflects:

> ... to whom can this matter? So many milions, — multitudes — go down in terrible pain. And at that, moral suffering is denied these days. Personalities are only good for comic relief. But I am still a slave to Papa's pain. The way Father Herzog spoke of himself! That could make one laugh. His I had such dignity. (Hz, 184).

Herzog's mind wandered through Napoleon Street, to which his heart was attached with great power. "Here was a wider range of human feelings than he had ever again been able to find," (Hz, 174) he thinks. The ghosts of Herzog's past populate a world whose disappearance he regrets. They contrast with the people in his present world, who lack true human feelings. He remembers his childhood in Napoleon Street, giving us an image of life which offers the possibilities of dreams, emotions and suffering. He is really contrasting his own chaotic, insecure, confused life with that hard but intensely meaningful life, and these recollections come to his mind as a relief from his tensions. The characters in that world seemed so purposeful. "His father was desperate, frightened, but obstinately fighting. His brother Shura with staring disingenuous eyes was plotting to master the world, to become a millionaire," (Hz, 175) he recollects.

Herzog thought of his mother and Aunt Zipporah as opposing each other. Aunt Zipporah, a brilliantly shrewd woman, a realist, who made her fortune through hard work, valued it more than anything and was getting distant from her

→

past. She was already embracing the new value — the supremacy of money. Mother Herzog, a dreaming creature, believing in the past, ambitious in the old sense,wanted her children "to be lawyers, gentlemen, rabbis, or performers."(Hz,175) The narrator considered, "No life so barren and subordinate that it didn't have imaginary dignities, honors to come, freedom to advance." (Hz, 175) That was the life those ghost characters played. Each of them had his own genuine history in Herzog's recollections, contrasting the people connected with his present stage of life, who instead of having individual histories had roles to play, which showed a common feature: alienation from true human values and blind involvement in affluency.

Even Ravitch, who boarded with the Herzogs on Napoleon Street, who drank his pay, and is seen in Herzog's recollections as "a tragic actor of the Yiddish Stage, with a straight drunken nose and a bowler pressing on the veins of his forehead," who, "in an apron worked at a fruit store," and "at the masket in zero weather was sweeping a mixed powder of sawdust and snow," (Hz,168) had his private dreams and his history. "The project of his life was to send for his family, a wife and two children who were still in Russia," (Hz, 168) says the narrator.

Nachman, Herzog's childhood mate, pervardes his memories. "My friend nearly forty years ago — playmates on Napolean Street. The Montreal slums," (Hz, 161) Herzog reflects. He remembers him at five, at eight when they shared a bench in the cellar of the synagogue. Then he remembers him as

→

a youth in Europe, writing poetry and almost starving. Nachman and his beloved Laura form the genuine romantic couple who fights the rules and the materialistic imposition of contemporary society. Herzog's recollections of the last talk he had with Nachman when they went together to visit Laura at an insane asylum in New York, gives us as image of contemporary society, showing the impossibility of sensitive people accepting its patterns. Nachman talked of his and Laura's pure and unlimited love, their happiness and suffering, and of the society which opposes the growing of true feelings. He tells Herzog of their love and the persecution of her family, commenting, "So back of it all is bourgeois America. This is a crude world of finery and excrement. A proud, lazy civilization that worship its own boorishness." (Hz,166) He reminds Herzog of their being "brought up in the old poverty" and wonders how American Herzog has become since the old days in Canada. "You've lived here a long time. But I will never worship the fat gods," he says. He is aware of his poetic way of facing life, of his keeping his heart with Blake and Rilke, but this does not prevent him from recognizing the power material values have over contemporary man, and he goes on lecturing in a fervent way. Herzog cannot recognize him, he is not the real Nachman — "that child with his fresh face, the smiling gap in his front teeth, "this" gaunt apparition of crazy lecturing Nachman," (Hz, 166) He is the image of the disturbed man for whom reality is so shocking as to become destructive. His bitter words show a view of man in contemporary society, distancing farther from true values,

→

trapped by the dehumanizing mechanisms of a money-oriented system. He lectures:

> Perhaps people wish life to end. They have polluted it. Courage, honor, frankness, friendship, duty, all made filthy. (...) There was a time when men were born, lived and died. But do you call these men? We are only creatures. Death himself must be tired of us. I can see Death coming before God to say "What Shall I do? There is no more grandeur in being Death. Release me, God, from this meanness" (Hz, 166).

The characters we have been discussing,who belong to the world of the immigrants, back in Herzog's past,provide, as we have seen, images of contemporary society by contrasting with the present, but they are also an essential element in Herzog's process of reaching clarity. We have also mentioned that Herzog has the historical consciousness and is concerned with a dialectic; the relations between past and present, ideal and real, isolation and integration, which are discussed in the book, are Hegelian.Herzog goes to the past to review the present; with the memories from the ideal world of the past he questions the real world of the present.[1]The values of the past must have some bearing on the present, Herzog admits. Thus in his process of reaching a synthesis, the past, to which he is so attracted, stands on one side, and whereas Herzog's fragmented reflections tend to be abstract, his memories are more concrete and serve to bring his mind back to personal experiences which provide him the possibility of contrasting and questioning both past and present to reach a synthesis. But though Herzog accepts the past as an instructor to lead him out of chaos, he gradually comes to understand that the intolerable condition

→

of his present life have driven him to escape into an idealized remote past.

Harold F. Mosher, Jr., in his study "The Synthesis of Past and Present in Bellow's Herzog," has shown that Herzog has tried to justify his own failures by constructing his view of the past because he cannot accept it for what it is any more than he can accept the real present. Mosher says:

> Like his approach to the present — either accepting too much responsability or entirely refusing it — Herzog's conception of the past may be divided into two contrasting views: his nostalgia for the past corresponds to a negative view of history, the belief in a golden age from which man is predistined to decline; his repulsion for the past corresponds to a positive theory of history, the belief in continual progress from a dark age. The first theory might be called Christian, or more accurately Calvinistic, with its emphasis on the Fall. (Herzog is associated several times in the novel with Calvinism, the Elect, and puritanism). The second theory might be called Romantic, with its emphasis on the value of the self and its progress. Thus, possibly, the significance of the title of his first book Romanticism and Christianity.[2]

Herzog's view of history, which will lead him to his synthesis, is going to be discussed more deeply later in this study. So far, it interests us as a resort in order to explain Herzog's synthesizing view of present and past which indirectly gives us an image of contemporary society. Thus, the past with its defined patterns in which even money has a moral value, as a symbol of hard work, contrasts the moral and physical chaos which modern man, symbolized by the protagonist, faces. Richard Poirier, in his article, "Herzog, or, Bellow in Trouble," talks of Bellow as the Jewish writer in the American city facing a great cultural conflict. He

→

says:

> Bellow feels threatened in his role as public defender of two distinct yet historically harmonious cultural inheritances: of the Jew as a poor immigrant, the outsider whose native resources save him from the bitterness of alienation, and of the Jew as successful arriviste in American society, enriched and burdened all at once by traditions of high culture. Now a kind of insider looking out, he yearns for those cultural supports which since world War II, have been commercialized by the society at large if not submerged entirely under the tidal waves of mass produced taste.[3]

Throughout the novel we have Herzog swinging between past and present, fascinated by the past but urged towards facing the present and living it. To reach the state of confronting the present, he goes through a deep analysis of it from which we get his view of society. Herzog's memories are not completely free, they are intermingled with his effort to come to the present. To give an example, once, riding in a cab, Herzog remembers nostalgicaly his childoohd in Motreal, traveling by train, and in the middle of his detailed recollections he becomes conscious of his escape. This process of control recurs throughout his remembrances. The narrator comments:

> Leaving the cab, he thought how his mother would moisten her handkerchief at her mouth and rub his face clean. He had no business to recall this, he knew, and turned toward Grand Central in his straw hat. He was of the mature generation now, and his life was his to do something with, if he could. But he had not forgotten the odor of his mother's saliva on the handkerchief that summer morning. (...) These acute memories are probably symptoms of disorder. (Hz, 46)

Herzog is conscious of his attraction for the past — he thinks, "all the dead and the mad are in my custody, and I am the nemesis of the world-be-forgotten. I bind

→

others to my feelings, and oppress them." (Hz, 167) — but he fights against a total absorption into it, and in this point resides the essence of the book: The coming together of the two forces saves Herzog. By the beginning of the book, when he initiates his self-analysis, he talks of his early book as well accepted by the younger geration of historians for its "model of the new sort of history, history that interests us — personal, engagée," a history that" looks at the past with an intense need for contemporary relevance."(Hz,13)

As he struggles towards personal accomodation between past and present Herzog reveals the essential pattern of his thinking. He writes:

> As the dead go their way, you want to call to them, but they depart in a black cloud of faces, souls. They flow out in smoke from the extermination chimneys, and leave you in the clear light of historical process — the technical success of the West. Then you know with a crash of the blood that mankind is making it in glory though deafened by the explosions of blood. Unified by the horrible wars, instructed in our brutal stupidity by revol utions by engineered famines, by "ideologists" (heirs of Marx and Hegel and trained in the cunning of reason) perhaps we, modern humankind (can it be!), have done the nearly impossible, namely learned something. (Hz, 96).

We can see in the above passage that Herzog goes from nostalgia to a positive view of history —"and leave you in the clear light of historical success." He provides us an image of the contemporary world with its negative aspects but ends by praising "we, the modern humankind."

We have seen in the preceding chapter how the characters we discussed function as images of contemporary forms of society opposing in different aspects the protagonist, and how he, progressively, reached awareness of their roles in

→

society. Now we are focusing closely on the protagonist and in his process of reaching a realistic view of himself. We have discussed his memories and the characters in them as images of the past which Herzog has separated from the present. But for Herzog to reach his synthesis he must use the past to understand the present, and thus we come across long reflections in which we see his acceptance of the values of the past as having some bearing on the present, or rather,we see him use the past to clarify the present and understand himself. He thinks:

> But a learned specialist in intellectual history, handicapped by emotional confusion... Resisting the argument that scientific thought has put into disorder all considerations based on value ...Convinced that the extent of universal space does not destroy human value, that the realm of facts and that of values are not eternally separated. And the peculiar idea entered my (Jewish) mind that we'd see about this! My life would prove a different point altogether. (Hz, 133)

In this point of our study we have left the level of the action and are leaving Herzog's memories in which we still have dramatization of characters, to get deeper into Herzog's mind, dealing mainly with abstractions. Herzog tries to bring himself to clarity through a mass of imaginary writings, reflections and unsent letters which constitute a considerable portion of the novel. These writings are not only a means of escape from his chaotic present life but also a way of reaching clarity, complemented by the action in the novel.Through these imaginary writings, Herzog questions and discusses philosophy, religion, history, politics and society, as well as his personal life, in order to define his values and thus to define himself. Herzog faces, as we have already seen,

→

the problem of self definition both in theoretical and personal terms. He sees his personal dilemma as part of the historical situation. Thus his writings are mainly concerned with defining man's existence in contemporary society as well as arriving at an adequate solution for his personal drama. In the following chapter we will discuss Herzog's imaginary writings in which he evaluates the present in terms of the past through internal monologues and unsent letters, as well as through the voice of the omniscient narrator, revealing his own view of contemporary society.

→

NOTES

[1]Richard Pearce, studying Herzog's structure in terms of a conflict of two kinds of grammar:traditional grammar in opposition to a grammar of energy, points to the dialectic of past and present in the novel. He says,"For it is a traditional grammar that Herzog, the rational humanist, try to harness the random social, political and psychological energies of the past and present. And it is with a grammar of energy that Herzog, the man of passionate feeling, perceives the world and its history." (PEARCE, Richard, "The Ambiguous Assault of Henderson and Herzog." In: Saul Bellow — A Collection of Critical Essays, Earl Rovit, ed. New Jersey, Prentice.Hall, Inc., 1975, p. 78).

[2]"The Synthesis of Pastand Present in Bellow's Herzog." p. 32.

[3]POIRIER, Richard. "Herzog, or, Bellow in Trouble."In: Saul Bellow — A Collection of Critical Essays, Earl Rovit, ed. New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1975, p. 83.

CHAPTER TEN

HERZOG'S WAY INTO CLARITY

It is in the historical process of synthesing that Herzog is engaged to find explanation for his personal drama. In the beginning of the novel, as we have said, Herzog has already reached the state of clarity he seeks — as the omniscient narrator says, "some people thought he was cracked and for a time he himself has doubted that he was all there. But now, though he still behaved oddly, he felt confident, cheerful, clairvoyant, and strong. (Hz, 7) — so that, the whole book constitutes the process of clarification that gives us his view of man is contemporary society, which we infer to be Bellow's view." Thus, in this part of our analysis we will follow Herzog in his search, keeping track with him, involved in the same process as we grasp from his scribbling his commentaries on man and society.

In the opening page of the novel we read:

> He had fallen under a spell and was writing letters to everyone under the sun. He was so stirred by these letters that from the end of June he

→

> moved from place to place with a valise full of papers... Hidden in the country, he wrote endlessly, fanatically, to the newspapers, to people in public life, to friends and relatives and at last to the dead, his own obscure dead, and finally the famous dead... All the while one corner of his mind remained open to external world. (Hz, 7)

This letter-writing is, as Abraham Chapman says, "a fundamental part of Herzog, one of his most meaningful modes of communication, his road from the brink of madness back to sanity."[2] The process is complemented by his introspection and the voice of the omniscient narrator. Herzog analyzes himself as a means of getting out of his depression, and in this self-examination he blames himself, thus providing an image of contemporary man being conformed to the patterns of society. He admits his passivity, indifference and inhumanity:

> To his son and his daughter he was a loving but bad father. To his own parents he had been an ungrateful child. To his country, an indifferent citizen. To his brothers and his sister, affectionate but remote. With his friends an egotist. With love, lazy. With brightness dull. With power, passive. With his own soul, evasive. (Hz, 11-12).

Herzog's thinking of his own life leads him to begin his writing addressing a letter to the president. From this first letter we see him as a symbol of the modern man: his drama, his life being manipulated, is emblematic of a whole context. He writes:

> Dear Mr. President, Internal Revenue regulations will turn us into a nation of bookkeepers. The life of every citizen is becoming a business. This, it seems to me, is one of the worst interpretations of the meaning of human life history has ever seen. Man's life is not a business. (Hz, 19)

Herzog resumes his preoccupations with the individual

in our society in his letter when he gives an image of man in an organizational society, dying of boredom and avid for culture; feeling the necessity for something that might get him out of automation and lead him to consciousness and creativity. He addresses the letter to Smithers suggesting new lecture courses for evening classes. It reads in the middle:

> ... you organization men have to depend on the likes of me. The people who come to evening classes are only ostensibly after culture. Their great need, their hunger, is good sense, clarity, truth, even an atom of it. People are dying — it is no metaphor — for lack of something real to carry home when day is done.(Hz, 39)

In spite of all his efforts, Herzog feels he cannot remain rational, he is described as feeling "feverish, damaged, angry, quarrelsome, and shaky." This physical and mental state supports his anxieties and the disconnected stream of ideas that comes out of his mind. Thus, his letters do not follow a sequence, they rather mix together history, philosophy and personal drama. This apparently confused outburst, however, bears a pattern: a historical view of man in the contemporary world, which Herzog unfolds gradually, intermingled with a plurifocused commentary, in his process of instruction into clarity. He begins by explaining his project of study in which he tries to delineate a new angle on the modern condition. The narrator says:

> ... his study was supposed to have ended with a new angle on the modern condition, showing how life could be lived by renewing universal connections; overturning the last of the Romantic errors about the uniqueness of the self; revising the old Western, Faustian ideology; investigating the social meaning of Nothingness (Hz, 53).

The exposition of this project is an embryo of the

→

development of Herzog's analysis. He begins then by rejecting radical views, and proposing a revision of old and modern interpretations in order to reach a new perspective. Herzog adds a comment on the emptiness of freedom in the modern world as part of his study — he says that "people can be free now but the freedom doesn't have any content." (Hz, 53) This comment is also an embryo for further development on modern man whose image is seen in many characters who kill their own genuine feelings and emotions for what they think is freedom.

Herzog's mind goes to politics again with a letter to the New York Times commenting on the Philosophy of Risk of a government scientist. He resumes the theme of the meaning of human life saying that Dr. Strawforth "compares human life to Risk Capital in business." Remembering one of de Tocqueville's prophecies he acknowledges the social system as a criminal agent. He writes of de Tocqueville:

> He believes modern democracies would produce less crime, more private vice. Perhaps he should have said less private crime, more collective crime. Much of this collective or organizational crime has the object precisely of reducing risk.(...) De Tocqueville considered the impulse toward well doing as one of the strongest impulses of a democratic society. He can't be blamed for understimating the destructive powers generated by this same impulse. (Hz, 67).

Herzog goes on with his letter, turning to the danger of concentrated power in modern democracies:

> In every community there is a class of people profoundly dangerous to the rest, I don't mean the criminals. For them we have punitive sanctions. I mean the leaders. Invariably the most dangerous people seek the power. (...) Mr. Editor, we are bound to be the slaves of those who have power to destroy us. (Hz, 68)

Herzog's mind shifts from the abstract to the con

→

crete, from his private concerns to society and history. He is involved in action while his mind continues working at full speed. There is always a connection between his personal life and his questioning, which amalgamates the whole sequence. Thinking of Madeleine as a Christian he takes up the interpretation of history again to question Nietzsche's view, which he persistently defend himself against— "I don't agree with Nietzsche that Jesus made the whole world sick infected it with his slave morality," he says. His questioning goes on while he considers, in essence, the Nietzschean view to be Christian. "But Nietzsche himself had a Christian view of history," he says, "seeing the present moment always as some crisis, some fall from classical greatness,some corruption or evil to be saved from." (Hz, 71)

Herzog's thinking of Madeleine as a Christian leads him to write to Edvig, the psychiatrist, whose religious ideas he questions:

> I've read your stuff about the psychological realism of Calvin. I hope you don't mind my saying that it reveals a lousy, cringing, grudging conception of human native, This is how I see your Protestant Freudianism (Hz, 75)

The letter reveals Herzog in the position of a victim of Edvig, Madeleine and Gersbach who took religion to him. His reaction towards it, complaining and statirizing their false religiosity, shows him in his process of consciousness in his private life and as a historical man.

Herzog comes back to society and writes to Governor Stevenson. In the letter he questions the position of the intellectual in modern organizational society,seeing people

→

oriented toward trusting "visible goods." Herzog tells Stevenson he had supported him in the elections with a hope for the intelectuals. He says:

> But the instinct of the people was to reject mentality and its images, ideas, perhaps mistrusting them as foreign. It prefered to put its trust in visible goods. So things go on as before with those who think a great deal and effect nothing and those who think nothing evidently doing it all. (Hz, 85).

Herzog shows his awareness of his process of change in the letter he addresses to himself in which he is shown as changing from alienation to consciousness. He writes:

> Dear Moses E. Herzog. Since when have you taken such an interest in social questions, in the external world? Until lately, you led a life of innocent sloth. But suddenly a Faustian spirit of discontent and universal reform descends on you... (Hz, 88)

Herzog now reaches a high point of questioning in a letter he writes to Shapiro, Madeleine's intellectual friend, in which he goes over all the previous ideas he has already gone through outlining his own view of the contemporary world. He begins by questioning the assertion that ours is an age of decadence. "Are all the traditions used up, the beliefs done for, the consciousness of the masses not yet ready for the next development?" he asks. He goes on with a sequence of questions about the crisis of dissolution, death of moral feelings, disintegration of consciousness, collapse of public decency and respect for liberty, not denying the facts but questioning a radical dark view of history. He says:

> But we mustn't forget how quickly the visions of genius become the canned goods of the intel

→

> lectuals. The canned saurkraut of Spengler's Prussian Socialism," the commonplace of the Wasteland outlook, the cheap mental stimulants of Alienation, the cant and rant of pipsqueaks about Inauthenticity and Forlorness. I can't accept this foolish dreariness. We are talking about the ehole life of mankind. (Hz, 95-96)

Herzog realizes that his position is not easy because he feels himself to be a survivor in this age as he is attracted by the past, but he fights against the passive acceptance that this is a doomed age of decline. He rejects a negative view of history as we have already discussed in his previous questioning when he sees a common point — the Spenglerian view of rise and fall — in the Nietzschean and Christian view of history. We are led,following him in his search towards clarity, to an assertion which take us back to the first chapter of this study, that the social group undergoes a process of transformation, that there is a potential consciousness parallel to the real consciousness.[3] Thus, virtual changes begin to undermine the apparently definite structure and at a certain moment the transition is made. The great writer consciously has the ability to grasp the potential perspective, to reach its essence, and subsequently transform it into a coherent imaginary universe.[4] Bellow,in the voice of Herzog,grasps the virtual tendencies of his social class: the belief in man's possibilities in contemporary industrial society. Malcolm Bradbury in his essay, "Saul Bellow's Herzog," asks some questions about contemporary man and society which he says are Herzog's questions, and which corroborate our arguments. He says:

> Is the morbid definition the correct definition of man? Is man in an urban mass-democracy necessarily small, unable to control his destiny, lacking

→

> in fullness of self? Herzog is a novel that deliberately pursues these questions: questions that have always interested Bellow. And to a point the novel reaches a more positive answer than we are familiar with in most of our modern fiction, an answer, too, that the book genuinely and strugglingly achieves.[5]

Trying to bring himself to clarity through his imaginary writings, Herzog comes to recognize the error of exaggerating men's destinies and to see the need for synthesizing these extreme views of man so that he may have an authentic purpose in the present. What Bellow really does in his novel is to show Herzog trying to locate himself in a historical perspective which will draw him out of his confusing and depressive state brought out on a concrete level by the treacherous web he was involved in his personal life. He does it, as we have seen, on two levels — the level of action and that of Herzog's consciousness. On the level of action, which we might say gives a view of the real consciousness of contemporary society,[6] he shows the characters alienated from their true roles in society. The meaningful structure we have discussed at this level — Herzog vs Madeleine — gives us an image of the actual model of contemporary society. On the other level, that of Herzog's consciousness, we really come into contact with the potential consciousness, of his social class, which he, in an apparently disconnected way, reveals to us ingeniously, counter-pointing images of society, his gradual acknowledgement of its patterns and a discussion of a historical perspective for contemporary man.

Malcolm Bradbury, talking about the historical consciousness of Bellow's Herzog mankes an assertion about

→

this novel that shows in a different perspective the two kinds of consciousness we have just discussed. He says:

> The people around Herzog are the spokesman of the environmental perspective,"reality instructors;" but in the long run Herzog is seeking to go beyond all this to assert his own self suficiency to achieve hos own cure.[7]

Herzog goes on with his letter to Shapiro talking of his own attraction to the past but showing his awareness of historical success,recognizing man's capacity to overcome crisis. Throughout his analysis, Herzog shows his disapproval of the model of contemporary society whose image is shown at the level action, but counterpointing this,he envisages hope for man and condemns nihilistic ideas.He writes in the letter:

> I dont't say that the prosperity of Germany is altogether agreable to contemplate. But there it is, less, than twenty years after the demonic nihilism of Hitler destroyed it. And France? England? No, the analogy of the decline and fall of the classical world will not hold for us.Something else is happening, and that something lies closer to the vision of Comte — the results of rationally organized labor — than to that of Spengler.(Hz,97)

The rejection of the Wasteland outlook parallel to the nihilistic view of man as well as the disapproval of the writer as being dominated by these doomed ideas pervade all Herzog's questioning. Undoubtedly these are Bellow's ideas as we can testify through his own words in interviews and essays. He left it clear, when speaking about modern literature, that the time for these ideas has already passed. He says:

> ...modern literature was dominated by a tone of elegy from the twenties to the fifties, the atmosphere of Eliot in "The WasteLand" and that of Joyce in the Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. (...) This went much farther than it should have been allowed to go. It descended to ab

→

surdities,of which I think we have had enough.[8]

Herzog, through his writing, is gradually becoming conscious of his own existence as a man in society. "He had letters to write," says the narrator. "He was busy, busy,in pursuit of objects he was only now, and dimly, beginning to understand." (Hz, 128) He is also getting closer to facing reality and thus begins questioning the relevance of great ideas for everyday life. "Living amid great ideas and concepts, insufficiently relevant to the present, day by day, American conditions," he writes in a letter to Monsignor. This theme of the irrelevance of explanation for survival is one that Herzog is going to pursue, parallel to his rejection of the isolation of the intellectual. Though he has never yet had a chance to actually face reality, he begins questioning theories about it. So far we have seen him "tired of the modern form of historicism which sees in this civilization the defeat of the best hopes of Western religion and thought," (Hz, 133) now we begin to see him worried about ordinary life. He writes in his letter to Monsignor:

> No philosopher knows what the ordinary is,has not fallen into it deeply enough. The question of ordinary human experience is the principal question of these modern centuries, as Montaigne ans Pascal, otherwise in disagreement both clearly saw — The strength of a man's virtude or spiritual capacity measured by his ordinary life. (Hz, 133)

Thinking of ordinary life leads Herzog towards realizing his own life as an individual and the position of the individual in modern society. He begins again to swing between his thought,which is leading him towards a positive view of man, and reality itself, presented to him in the patterns

→

of society. "His own individual character cut off at times both from facts and from values," the narrator says. He begins to be attracted towards reality, which he has been evading so far, and his dialectic — ideal vs real — begins to be envisaged more clearly; his counterpointing of images of society and questioning becomes more recurrent. He gives now a realistic view of the modern character which shows his awareness of the position of the individual in society, lacking both old values and a rational definite direction. The omniscient narrator says:

> ...modern character is inconstant, devided, vacillating, lacking the stonelike certitude of archaic man, also deprived of the firm ideas of the seventeenth century, clear, hard theorems. (Hz,134)

Herzog thinks of the people he is involved with in his private live as "reality instructors." "Sandor Himmelstein, Valentine Gersbach, Madeleine P. Herzog, Moses Himself," he reflects, "They want to teach you — to punish you with — the lessons of the Real." (Hz,157) Thus he recognizes the facing of the real, the involvement with it, as important elements to bring to clarity. These considerations lead Herzog to question Romanticism with its overvaluation of the self, and see it leading man towards isolation, a theme which he is going to develop in his imaginary writings. Herzog's letters to Dr. Mossbach shows us his view of Romanticism. He writes:

> Dear Mossbach, I am sorry you are not satisfied with my treatment of T.E.Hulme and his definition of Romanticism a "split religion." There is something to be said for his view. He wanted things to be clear, dry, spare, pure, cool, and hard. With this I think we can all sympathize. I to am repelled by the "dampness," as he called it, and swarming of Romantic feelings. I see what a villain Rousseau was, and how degenerate.(...) But I do not see

→

> what we can answer when he says "je sens mon coeur et je connais les hommes." (Hz, 161)

Herzog rejects Romanticism in the sense that he cannot accept absolute ideologies, but he accepts, in Rousseau's philosophy, its emphasis on the values of the heart. He goes on in his letter sympathizing with Hulme's attack on Romanticism but disapproving of his radicalism. He does not see modern science as an option for modern man though he rejects the definition of human nature the Romantics propose. He says:

> Modern science, least bothered with the definition of human nature, knowing only the activity of investigation, achieves its profoundest results through anonymity, recognizing only the brilliant functioning of intellect. Such truth as it finds may be nothing to live by, but perhaps a moratorium on definitions of human nature is now best. (Hz, 161)

A letter to McSiggins commenting on his monograph on "The Ethical Ideas of the American Business Community" brings Herzog to society again. He writes apparently loose statements which function as an image of contemporary society, in which even "goodness has become a free commodity."[9] Then he writes to General Eisenhower referring to factual happenings and political decisions, condemning centralization of power which represses the individual and limits his participation. He writes:

> The old proposition of Pascal (1623-1662) that man is a reed, but a thinking reed, might be taken with a different emphasis by the modern citizen of a democracy. He thinks, but he feels like a reed bending before centrally generated winds. (Hz,201)

Thinking of Pascal leads Herzog to abstract considerations, to theories. He writes about freedom and Tolstoi's view that "to be free is to be released from historical limitation ," then he goes to Hegel who "understood the essence

→

of human life to be derived from history." He comes back to reality and writes, "The goal however, is freedom. And what does a man owe to the state?" (Hz, 201) Herzog thinks of the position of the individual in our money-oriented society, which by centralizing the power of decision, interfers in his very possibilities of creativity and participation. He writes, "I thought of the variation on Gresham's famous law: Public life drives out private life. The more political our society becomes (...) the more individuality seems lost." (Hz, 202)

Herzog bursts out all his dissatisfaction with the position of a man in our society, who is put in service of manufactured commodities, and the quality of people who hold power. Seeing the defeat of Stevenson by General Eisenhower, Herzog realizes that the intellectuals cannot assert themselves in public life and that people who control political and social power despise the intellectuals. He writes:

> More plainly, national purpose is now involved with the manufacture of commodities in no way essential to human life, but vital to the political survival of the country. Because we are now all sucked into these phenomena of Gross National Product, we are forced to accept the sacred character of certain absurdities or falsehoods whose high priests not so long ago were mere pitchmen, and figures of derision — sellers of snake-oil." (Hz, 202).

Herzog goes on with his angry observations on the nature of private life in our society, and ends the letter pointing out to the highest importance of the subject since "it has to do with the invasion of the private sphere by techniques of exploitation and domination." (Hz, 202) His mind now turns again to abstractions. He resumes his philo

→

sophical questionings and writes a letter to Pulver, the editor of Atlantic Civilization. Questioning once more a historical view which longs for a golden age, he begins to show consciousness of his pathological attraction for the past. He writes, "we have fashioned a new utopian history, an idyll, comparing the present to an imaginary past, because we hate the world as it is." (Hz, 203) He considers then the demand of emerging consciousness in our mass civilization and writes:

> Taking up the suggestion, Pulver, that evolution is nature becoming self-aware — in man, self-awareness has been accompanied at this stage with a sense of the loss of more general natural powers, of a price paid by instinct, by sacrifices of freedom, impulse (alienating labor, et cetera). (Hz, 203).

The sequence of the letter shows Herzog shifting from reality to abstraction, building up a dialect of values and technology to reach a consciousness that the former has been absorbed by the latter, and a new reality has come out of this embodiment. What he really tries to show is that former conceptions of human life are impossible to maintain at present and that a new vision, "a total reconsideration of human qualities" has to be envisaged. His mind turns to society which he sees absorbing values and putting them at the service of technology and of the system itself. Thus what is really a rational technique displays an image of benevolence. He writes:

> Intelligent observers have pointed out that "spiritual" honor or respect formerly reserved for justice, courage, temperance, mercy, may now be earned in the negative by the grotesque. I often think that this development is possibly related to the fact that so much of "value" has been absorbed by technology itself. It is "good" to electrify a primitive area. Civilization and even morality are implicit in technological transformation. Isn't it good to

→

> give bread to the hungry, to clothe the naked? (...) Good is easily done by machines of production and transportation. (Hz,204)

Herzog turns now to Romanticism also with a dialectical vision; though be rejects its overvaluation of man's uniqueness, hesees Romanticism as having "preserved the poestic,philosophical, and religious teachings during the greats and most rapid of transformations." Richard Poirier, in his essay "Bellows to Herzog" touches on this point saying:

> Herzog's interest in Romanticism is itself an expression of a familiar concern of Bellow: the effort to preserve individuality during a period of economic and scientific acceleration with which is supposedly impossible for the human consciousness to keep pace.[10]

Refuting one aspect and embracing the other,he envisages a direction for modern man, whom he sees as aspiring to a spiritual life. "To live in a inspired condition, to know truth, to be free, to love another,to abide with death in claritity of consciousness in no longer a rarefied project" (Hz,205), he writes. He finally makes a synthesis of technology and moral values,transformed into practical questions, which he sees as ultimate questions. He writes:

> Just as machinery has embodies ideas of good, so the technology of destruction has also acquired a metaphysical character.The practical questions have thus become the ultimate questions as well. Annihilation is no longer a metaphor. Good and Evil are real. The inspired condition is therefore no visionary matter.It is reserved for gods, kings, poets, priests, shrines, but belongs to makind and to all existence. (Hz, 205).

Herzog at this point of his letter has touched on another theme that, as we have already said, he is developing: his rejection of a view of the artist as "the only contemporary link with an age of gold, forced to watch the

→

sewage flowing in the Thames, every aspect of modern civilisation doing violence to his (artist patrician)feelings."[11] This theme, together with his rejection of the isolation of the artist, is part of the synthesis he is going to reach, and at the same time it gives an image of the society contemporary man lives in: a mass society in which there may be no place for uniqueness, but in which we cannot deny man's hope for a better spiritual life.

Herzog ends his letter displaying his trust in reason, an idea to which the structure of the book itself tends: Herzog reaches his synthesis through reason "without which the disorder of the world will never be controlled by mere organization." (Hz, 205) His very last words, however, show his mind back in the self, counter-pointing his previous assertion. "Eisinhower's report on National Aims," he says, "if I had had anything to do with it, would have pondered the private and inward existence of Americans first of all..." (Hz, 205)

The letter to Pulver is followed by a direct talk with the reader, in which Herzog acknowledges his process of changing, not a change concerning reason, but rather concerning heart. "I want you to see how I, Moses E. Herzog,am changing. I ask you to witness the miracle of his altered heart," he says. The omniscient narrator takes up the word displaying an image of hope built up with antagonistic elements,which show Herzog beginning to open himself towards a possibility of integration in society, also indexed by his direct addressing to the reader, using <u>you</u>. The narrator says:

→

> ... hearing the pounds of slum clearance in the next block and watching the white dust of plaster in the serene air of metamorphic New York, he communicates with the mighty of this world, or speaks words of understanding and prophecy...(Hz, 206)

The omniscient narrator, not leaving Herzog's mind, goes on with piercing observations on his still confusing state, while at the level of action Herzog prepares himself for the dinner at Ramona's. Herzog is shown as divided between his actual humaneness and his dream of high qualities. The narrator describes him as:

> Powerless to reject the hedonistic joke of a mammoth industrial civilization on the spiritual desires, the high cravings of a Herzog, on his moral suffering, his longing for the good, the true. (Hz, 206)

These considerations take Herzog back to his dilemma between heart and intellect. He hated the "humiliating comedy of heartache," but he asks himself, "Can thought wake you from the dream of existence?" He acknowledges that "not if it becomes a second realm of confusion, another more complicated dream, the dream of intellect, the delusion of total *explanations*." (Hz, 206)

This theme, the delusion of total explanations, is going to be more and more recurrent in Herzog's thoughts, and is an integrating part of his synthesis. The world should love lovers; but not theoreticians. Never theoreticians!" (Hz, 211) he says.

Some pages ahead, Herzog again feels attracted by the Romantic idea of the self while he thinks of the enormous quantity of people in the world, "each with some possessions, each a microcosmos. Each infinitely precious, each with a

→

peculiar treasure." (Hz, 217) He feels his heart overcoming his mind, the aching heart, he tries to get rid of, and in higly poetic language he thinks of it. We are given then an image of his inescapable attraction for a paradisical state, which he refutes at a conscious level. Once more we see Herzog divided between extremes, trying to reach a synthesis. He thinks of his heart "in a distant garden where curious objects grow, and there, in a lovely dusk of green, the heart of Moses E. Herzog hangs like a peach." (Hz,217) However, soon, the inmumerable million human beings which had come to his mind are actualized in the passengers at the station, when at the level of action he takes a train to Ramona's, and a feeling of communion, not of isolation,comes to him. "The more individuals are destroyed," he thinks, "the worse their yearning for collectivity. Worse because they return to the mass agitated, made fervent by their failure." (Hz, 218) Bellow, talking of Herzog in an interview has said:

> Many people feel a "private life" to be an affliction. In some sense it is a genuine affliction; it cuts one off from a common life. To me a significant theme of Herzog is the imprisonment of the individual in a shameful and impotent privacy. He feels humiliated by it; he struggles comically with it; and he comes to realize at last that what he considered his intellectual "privilege" has proved to be another form of bondage.[12]

Making a tour of the platform, Herzog observes the "prayers and wit of the crowd" on the mutilated posters.Examining the writings of these unknown artists led Herzog to write a note to Willie the Actor, the famous bank robber now serving a life sentence. His mind went into a long reflec

→

tion on the work of the genius. He sees Willie's robberies as creative work. His description of Willie's planning a gateway to evade prison and his almost making it — his elaborate mental survey and his master plan, crawling through pipes, digging under the walls — displays an image of the power of imagination and creativity, human faculties which tend to be constricted in our society. Herzog writes, "the power and completeness of all human systems must be continually tested, outwitted, at the risk of freedom, of life." (Hz, 220).

Herzog goes on with his thoughts in a letter to Dr. Schrodinger, in which he reaches a high point in his arguing on man's potential ingenuity. He begins talking of Dr. Schrodinger's remarks on enthropy, how he sees the organism maintaining itself against death — an image of the supremacy of life with its potentialities. Based on Dr. Schrodinger's assertion that "in all nature only man hesitates to cause pain," and that this is coupled with the necessity to devour, Herzog develops an argument "which consists in admitting and denying evil at the same time." This line of thought leads him to a discussion that is part of his synthesis: the dialectical aspect of man. He writes:

> To have a human life, and also an inhuman life. In fact, to have everything, to combine all elements with immense ingenuity and greed. To bite, to swallow. At the same time to pity your food. To have sentiment. At the same time to behave brutally. It has been suggested (and why not!) that relutance to cause pain is actually an extreme form, a delicious form of sensuality, and that we increase the luxuries of pain by the injection of a moral pathos. Thus working in both sides of the street. (Hz, 220-221)

→

Herzog's arguments on man support his rejection of a radical view of history. If man's nature itself is the result of opposing forces trying to reach an equilibrium,then a historical view of man has also to come from a synthesis.

Later, when Herzog is at Ramona's, with his mind turned to his own confusing state, he writes to Spinosa. "Thoughts not casually connected were said by you to cause pain," he writes. He agrees with Spinoza saying that "random association, when the intellect is passive, is a form of bondage." That was not his case though; again he thinks of reason as a way to reach clarity, and also of this way as a process, a concept which is very important in his questioning. He writes, "Believing that reason can make steady progress from disorder to harmony and that the conquest of chaos need not be begun anew everyday." (Hz, 225) We see in these comments not only Herzog considering reason as a fundamental aspect in the process of reaching consciousness but also his believing in history not as a cyclic sequence, but as a process — "the conquest of chaos need not be begun anew everyday." The reason he believes in, though, is creative, not passive.

The narrator points out Herzog's belief in the potentiality of man, which can liberate him from his conditionof an instrument of technological progress. He says:

> ... Herzog behaved like a philosophe who cared only about the very highest thing — creative reason, how to render good for evil, and all the wisdom of old books. Because he thought and cared about belief. (Without which human life is simply the raw material of technological transformation, of fashion, salesmanship, industry,politics,

→

> finance, experiment, automatism, et cetera, et cetera. The whole inventory of disgraces which one is glad to terminate in death) (Hz, 229)

While, in the ritual of love, Herzog waits for Ramona's preparation, he thinks of her as a reality instructor—"she was trying to teach him something and he was trying to learn from her." He thinks that the description of the lesson might begin with his wild internal disorder. His mind is led to consider the condition of man in our society. He asks himself:

> What it means to be a man. In a city. In a century. In transition. In a mass. Transformed by science. Under Organized Power. Subject to tremendous controls. In a condition caused by mechanization. After the late failure of radical hopes. In a society that was no community and devalued the person. Owing to the multiplied power of numbers which made the self negligible...(Hz,248)

After pondering upon the position of the individual in contemporary society, displaying a view of total constriction of the person in relation to the higher powers of a system, Herzog comes back to his considerations on the potentialities of man. "At the same time," he says, continuing his questioning on the multiplied power of numbers, "the pressure of human millions who have discovered what concerted efforts and thoughts can do." Once more we have evidence of the dialectical way Herzog's thoughts work; counterpointing opposing images, he shows not only his rejection to radical positions but also his belief in the creative potentialities of man which give him the possibility of overcoming crisis as well as adapting himself to the real.

Herzog also returns to a theme he has already begun to develop: his objection to the isolation of the intellectual →

from reality, from actual life. Rejecting a society in which the power of material progress dwarfs man, he isolates himself from it and thus denies life itself. He thinks of mass society now as a new era, as reality from which he is isolating himself, attached to the past. The image he displays now when he talks of "beautiful supermachinery," radically contradicts the previous one and this shocking opposition stresses his disapproval of himself as a representative of the contemporary intellectual who, longing for the past, alienates himself from the process of change itself and denies life. He says:

> The beautiful supermachinery opening a new life for innumerable mankind. Would you deny them the right to exist? Would you ask them to labor and go hungry while you enjoyed delicious old-fashioned Values? You—you yourself are a child of this mass and a brother to all the rest. Or else an ingrate, dilettante, idiot (Hz, 248)

Herzog's reflections on himself and, by extension, on man in contemporary society, show throughout the novel the confrontation of conflicting ideas revealing his need to a synthesis.

At this point in the novel there is a connection between the two levels, that of action and that of deep reflection. Herzog is becoming conscious that the struggle in his personal life is but an escape from his own necessity to define the position of man in contemporary society and consequently in history. But he is also conscious of his emotional side which he cannot deny. He thinks of Mermelstein, an excellent scholar, who two years before had scooped him, and reflects, "At least he must be free from personal drama and

→

able to give the world an example of order, thus deserving a place in the human community." But "he, Herzog," he goes on thinking, "had committed a sin of some kind against his own heart, while in pursuit of a grand synthesis." (Hz,255) His emotional life is one side of the equation. He has another moment of depression, and through the omniscient narrator he says:

> It's the hysterical individual who allows his life to be polarized by simple extreme antitheses like *strength-weakness, potency-impotence*, health-sickness. He feels challenged but unable to struggle with social injustice, too weak, so he struggles with women, with children, with his "unhappiness." (Hz, 255)

He thinks of Hoberly, the man who wants Ramona, as a typical emotional type in our society, longing for hope which he sees in her. Thinking of him, Herzog reflects on the dialectical aspect of man in contemporary society: bearing witness to the failure of individual existence, subdued to forces he is impotent to fight against, and at the same time desperately longing for hope. He says of Hoberly:

> He pushes love to the point of absurdity to discredit it forever. And in that way prepares to serve the Leviathan of organization even more devotedely. But another possibility was that a man bursting with unrecognized needs, imperatives, desires for activity, for brotherhood, desperate with longing for reality, for God, could not wait but threw himself wildly upon anything resembling hope. (Hz, 256)

At this point of the novel Herzog is getting near to reaching awareness. At the level of action we have him going to the City Courthouse to meet Simkin, a lawyer friend, who is going to help him in his process of getting his daughter's custody. There for the first time, he had a chance

→

to face reality, and this experience, we will see,transformed him from a passive into an active person, accelerating his process of reaching full consciousness of reality. In the short space of time he stayed at the Courthouse, we see him witness a series of trials which led him to analyze the position of man subject to both the abstract mechanisms of law and those of a consumer society.

Herzog was deeply affected by what he saw at the Courthouse. It impressed him to the point of almost paralyzing his movements. When he finally managed to get up to leave the room to make a telephone call, he became conscious of his deep disturbance. The narrator describes his psychological state at that moment:

> As soon as he was on his feet, he realized that there was something the matter with him. He felt as though something terrible, inflammatory,bitter, had been grated into his bloodstream and stung and burned his veins, his face, his heart. He knew he was turning white, although the pulses beat violently in his head (Hz, 282)

To see people in the hands of the law agitated Herzog. "I have come here today for a look at something diffetent," he thought. This experience with the real leads Herzog to reflect deeply on death and consequently on the human condition. "When we have come to better terms with death, we'll wear a different expression, we human beings," he thinks. Again, he is taken by a wave of gloom and his mind goes back to his youth, to the time of his mother's death. He remembers her offering him a proof of man's being made of earth, by rubbing the palm of her hand with a finger until something dark appeared. He considers now the fact and thinks she

→

might have done that in a spirit of comedy. He reflects, "The wit you can have only when you consider death very plainly, when you consider what a human being really is." (Hz, 285)

At the very moment of his mother's death, he remembers, he was studying The Decline of the West, and the reminiscences lead him to ponder again on the theory that had attracted him in his youth — the theory of the decline of the West with implications that the great age for Jews had disappeared. He thinks:

> I was poring over Spengler now, struggling and drowning in the oceanic visions of that sinister Kraut. First there was antiquity, for which all men sigh — beautiful Greece! Then the Magian era, and the Faustian. I learned that I, a Jew, was born Magian and that we Magians had already had our great age, forever past. No matter how hard I tried, I would never grasp the Christian and Faustian world idea, forever alien to me (Hz,286)

He was still grasped by these thougts, remembering how he felt about our age, while waiting for his turn at the phone booth. He remembers he was at the furnace room and thinks, "I was angry; I burned like that furnace, reading more, sick with rage." (Hz, 286)

In this gloomy state he comes back to the Courthouse to look for Simkin; in the first courtroom he entered, and as a consequence of his process of facing the real he found himself witnessing a jury trial — a young couple, a woman and the man she had been living with in a slum hotel were being tried for the murder of her son, a child of three. Within a few minutes he had forgotten Simkin entirely, so impressed was he by the scene. The lack of emotion and the crudeness

→

of the murder shocked him, The narrator comments:

> All this seemed to Herzog exceptionally low-pitched. All — the lawyers, the jury, the mother, her tough friend, the judge — behaved with much restraint, extremely well controlled and quiet-spoken. (...) Judge, jury, lawyers and the accused, all looked utterly unemotional. (Hz, 290)

Herzog was puzzled as he found himself face to face with real facts. Once more he was led to question his own position of a highly intellectual man, a humanist, who, though involved in humane studies was so distant from real humanity. He fails to understand and acknowledge his failure as he reflects, "I fail to... but this is the difficulty with people who spend their lives in humane studies and therefore imagine once cruelty has been described in books it is ended." (Hz, 292)

He began to feel how pretentious he was in wanting to explain everything and in being turned to his own self as if he was the center of the universe. The narrator observes, "Of course he really knew better — understood that human beings would not live so as to be understood by the Herzogs." (Hz, 292) This, not only shows Herzog's rejection of the romantic overvaluation of the self but is also the embryo of another theme he is going to develop, which is central in his process of coming to terms with reality: the inessentiality of intellectual explanation for survival.

Herzog did not wait for the end of the trial, his strength failed him. Reaching the corridor, "he felt as if he had gotten too close to a fire and scolded his lungs." He was unable to think; scenes of trial succeeded in his mind obsessively. The narrator observes, "Herzog experienced

→

nothing but his own *human feelings*, in which he found nothing of use." (Hz, 294) He felt free from any self censorship that might restrain him from feeling moved to cry or pray, but he was still under the epell of a gloomy disposition and he reflected, as commented by the omniscient narrator,"... what was there in modern, post... post-Christian America to pray for?" These thoughts show Herzog still too attached to an idealized world of the past, denying the present, but the final image in this scene shows him turned to man in the contemporary world. Reconstructing the scene of the murder in his mind, he displays an image of man in contemporary society, stressing his essential characteristic: passivity, together with omission and indifference, which leads consequently to cruelty. The scene is reconstructed very powerfully:

> The child screamed, clung, but with both arms the girl hurled it against the wall. On her legs was ruddy hair. And her lover, too, with long jaws and zooty sideburns, watching on the bed. Lying down to copulate, and standing up to kill. Some kill, then cry. Others, not even that. (Hz, 294)

We have said that by experiencing the scenes in the Courthouse Herzog has suffered a transformation, he has changed from a passive to an active person. So far he has been complaining, conjecturing, making plans; now he has decided to act. The murder of the child aroused his feelings for his own child, and he felt an urge to fly to Chicago to see his daughter, confront Madeleine and Gersbach.

In Chicago, he rented a car to go to his old father's house; there, his mind was busy thinking of the role of money in his own family and concluded that even he, whose main concern was not money, had no problems with it. These conclusions

→

led him to consider his own position: a man who having a privi leged situation in our organizational society has become alienated from reality. He was now on his way towards full consciousness. The omniscient narrator speaks for him:

> Poverty was not his portion: unemployment, slums, the perverts, thieves, victims in court, (...). He could still take the superjet to Chicago when he had the impulse, could rent a teal-blue Falcon, drive to the old house. Thus he realized with peculiar clarity his position in the scale of prerogatives — of affluence, of insolence, of untruth, if you like. (Hz, 298)

On the level of action, as we have discussed, the scene which follows is the central point in the novel — when Herzog, with the purpose of killing Madeleine and Gersbach, goes to see them and on witnessing a domestic scene, which shows Gersbach bathing June, fails to act and come to real ize his irrationality. Madeleine and Gersbach cease at that moment to be part of Herzog's mind, and become real. Herzog reflects:

> ... And I apparently believe that if the child does not have a life resembling mine, educated according to the Herzog standards of "heart" and all the rest of it, she will fail to become a human being. This is sheer irrationality, and yet some part of my mind takes it as self-evident. (Hz, 315).

Herzog leaves the place, and on his way to his friend's house he reflects deeply on the complexity of man's nature, taking again his questioning on the dialectical aspect of man and by extension of history and society. Once again we see him reject radial views which would provide a unilateral interpretation of man in history and society. "It's all around us," he reflects, displaying a meaningful image of the pluridimentionality of man, "Buddha and Lao-tse must

→

be walking the earth somewhere. And Tiberius and Nero. Everything horrible, everything sublime, and things not imagined yet. And you, part-time visionary, cheerful,tragical mammal." He also shows in his reflections an urge to touch the real, to liberate himself from an obsessive attachment to an idealized past. He thinks, "In ancient days, the genius of man went largely into metaphors. But now into facts... Francis Bacon, Instruments." 'Hz, 316)

We can follow Herzog's change. On the level of action we see him change from an obsessive necessity to satisfy his pride to a full awareness of his ludicrous behavior, when he realises the absurdity of his shooting Madeleine and Gersbach. The narrator comments then, "Only self-hatred could lead him to ruin himself because his heart was "broken". How could it be broken by such a pair!" At the deeper level we have been discussing, we can follow the change of his thoughts and attitudes through his reflections, and we notice the two levels go parallel. At the point he realizes the foolishness of his intentions with Madeleine, he also questions personal life through his reflections, and we notice him tend to see man rather in a historical process in society than as an individual. His true contact with the real leads him to think deeply on the relation man and society, and he reflects on how the abstract mechanisms of society can do more for man than individual intentions. Through his reflections, he displays a most meaningful image of man in contemporary society: the constriction of his individual life,the reduction of his human possibilities of acting, of creating,of partici

→

pating. He reflects:

> The historical process, putting clothes on our backs, shoes on our feet, meat in the mouth, does infinitely more for us by the indifferent method than anyone does by intention. And since these good commodities are the gifts of anonymous planning and labor, what intentional goodness can achieve (When the good are amateurs) becomes the question. (Hz, 323)

Herzog goes with his reflections on the position of the individual in our organizational society, and his complaint about the reducing of the individual to patterns is stressed. He sees man getting so used to his condition to the point of denying his own human qualities. "A creature of deep peculiarities, a web of feeling intricacies and ideas," he thinks, "now approaching a level of organization and automatism where he can hope to be free from human dependency." (Hz, 324)

After the long reflection we have been commenting on, Herzog comes to a fundamental realization which connects back to a theme he began to develop: the inessentiality of intellectual explanation for survival. The narrator says:

> ... then he realized that he did not need to perform elaborate abstract intellectual work—work he had always thrown himself into as if it were the struggle for survival. But not thinking is not necessarily fatal. Did I really believe that I would die when thinking stopped? (Hz, 324)

Herzog's realization reaches a point that is also fundamental to his coming to terms with himself and reality: the consciousness that life is above everything and that a man has a history—his own life. This line of thinking follows him to his final state of freedom and peace: man overcomes crisis through his own sense of life, an to be part

→

of a historical process is life. He looks back on his own life, as the omniscient narrator says, "...willingly accpeting the necessary quota of consequent lies, he had set himself up with his emotional goodies — truth, friendship, devotion to children." This observation is very significant and summarizes his own life — he was an alienated particle of society, "willingly accpeting." He goes ahead though to further questioning, and we see him conscious that this "is not the whole story. It only begins to approach the start of true consciousness." He reflects, "... a man is somehow more than his "characteristics," all the emotions, strivings, tastes, and constructions which it pleases him to call "My life." (Hz, 325)

Herzog becomes conscious that man is led by his own sense of life, which is above any codifiable thing. "Go through what is comprehensible and you conclude that only the incomprehensible gives any light," he says. This is a key point for his synthesis: contemporary man is part of an organizational society which denies spiritual values, but he himself is more than a particle in this organization, he is imbued with a sense of mystery, a sense of life. "We have ground to hope that Life is something more than such a cloud of particles, mere facticity," he says. (Hz, 325) Thus, contemporary man is not really reduced to mere "facticity," and his own sense of life will drive him to overcome the crisis of values he is living. Bellow himself, talking of Herzog, has stressed this point saying:

> I think a good deal of Herzog can be explained simply by the implicit assumption that existence,

→

> quite a part from any of our judgments, has value, that existence is worthful. Here it is possible, however that the desire to go on with his creaturely career vulgarly betrays Herzog. He wants to live? what of it! The clay that frames him contains this common want.[13]

As we have said, the level of deep reflection goes parallel to that of action and they interact whith each other. The flashes of the real Herzog has to face, and his own actions, as well as objects and places related to them, may have symbolic connotations that reinforce the ideas Herzog conveys through his reflections. Thus, the periscope he buys for his little daughter is mentioned at the moment he is reflecting on the supremacy of life. He says, "Let the child find life. The plainer the better, perhaps." (Hz, 326) It also connotes the pluridimentional aspect of life he wants his daughter to get acquainted with.

The theme of the supremacy of life is taken up again some pages ahead, when Herzog is trying to convice his friend Asphalter to give up the exercices with death he is performing, following a book he has been reading. He says:

> It all goes back to those German existentialists who tell you how good dread is for you, how it saves you from distraction and gives you your freedom and makes you authentic. God is no more but Death is. That's their story. And we live in a hedonistic world in which happiness is set up on a mechanical model! (...) And so these other theorists introduce the tension of guilt and dread as a corrective. But human life is far subtler than any of these models... (Hz, 332)

Herzog goes ahead on his lecturing, showing again his rejection of the philosophies of nihilism and death. "The new attitude which makes life a trifle not worth anyone's anguish threatens the heart of civilization," he says. He still believes in man's heart, and that he can survive through his

→

own human qualities. He believes in the power of brotherhood and rejects the preachers who state that others only distract you from metaphysical freedom. "The real and essential question is one of our employment by other human beings and their employment by us," he says. He is really inspired for his lecturing and quotes the Bible to reinforce his belief in life and in man's possibilities. This messianic attitude shows him following a line of thinking radically opposed to the romantic isolation of the individual as well as to the philosophies which preach that ours is a doomed age. He says:

> I really believe that brotherhood is what makes a man human. If "Man liveth not by self alone but in his brother's face... Each shall behold the Eternal Father and love and joy abound."(Hz, 333)

Herzog feels he has not touched reality in its essence and he struggles for it. The narrator observes, "Moses had to see reality. Perhaps he was somewhat spared from it so that he might see it better, not fall asleep in its thick embrace." He struggles against passivity and alienation. "Awareness was his work; extended consciousness was his line, his business. Vigilance,"(Hz, 340) says the narrator.

Some pages ahead, when we see Herzog taken to the police station for carrying a gun while involved in a traffic accident, he still feels far from reality, distant from the present. He sees the need to admit the reality of the present, different from that of the past with its own challenges. The omniscient narrator says:

> ... He might have stopped being quixotic. For he

→

> was not a quixote was he? A quixote imitated great models. What models did he imitate? A quixote was a Christian, and Moses E. Herzog was no Christian. This was the post-quixotic, post-Copernican U.S.A, where a mind freely poised in space might discover relationships utterly unsuspected by a seventeenth-century man sealed in his smaller universe. (Hz, 349)

Waiting in the cell for his lawyer with two other men, Herzog had time for thinking and writing. The misery that surrounded him, the bad smell, the wretchedness of faces made him reflect, "The man who has eyes, nostrils, ears, let him hear, smell, see. The man who has intellect, heart, let him consider." (Hz, 369) Then he put his mind to work and "wrote on his knee with cheerful eagerness." After writing some notes on Freud's interpretation of the criminal feature of man and rejecting it, he writes, "The dream of man's heart, however much we may distrust and resent it, is that life may complete itself in significant pattern." He is thus admitting that man looks for a meaning in life. Then he writes a letter to Edvig, his lawyer, in which he takes again a most significant point of his questioning: civilized man's denial of the civilization that makes his life possible. His reflection upon this point has recurred frequently, but only now does he show full consciousness of his position: disapproval of the individual who creates an imaginary human situation he idealizes and denies reality. This is a point with which Herzog himself needs to come to terms, for only now is he willing to accept reality; so far he has been alienated from it. He writes to Edvig:

> ... I am much better now at ambiguities. I think I can say, however, that I have been spared the chief ambiguity that afflicts intellectuals, and

→

> this is that civilized individuals hate and resent the civilization that makes their lives possible. What they love is an imaginary human situation invented by their own genius and which they believe is the only true and the only human reality. How odd! But the best-treated, most favored and intelligent part of any society os often most ungrateful. (Hz, 370)

A little further in the book, Herzog reaches full awareness of his position as an intellectual, isolated in his subjectivity and thus denying his participation in the historical and social process. He compares himself with the doctor who is examining him, whom he considers a person who "knows-the-world-for-what-it-is", and thinks, "Whereas a man like me has shown the arbitrary withdrawl of proud subjectivity from the collective and historical progress of mankind." (Hz, 374) Bellow himself talking about Herzog in an interview touches on this aspect saying:

> Many people feel a "private life" to be an affliction. In some aspect it is a genuine affliction; it cuts one off from a common life. To me, a significant theme of Herzog is the imprisonment of the individual in a shameful and impotent privacy. He feels humiliated by it; he struggles comically with it; and he comes to realize at last that what he considered his intellectual "privilege" has proved to be another form of bondage.[14]

Herzog goes on thinking of himself, but his considerations stand rather for an image of the modern writer, who shut up in his imaginary world thinks, as Bellow himself stated, "...every aspect of modern civilization is doing violence to his (artist-patrician) feelings."[15] Thus he goes ahead with his thinking:

> And that is true of the lower-class emotional boys and girls who adapt the aesthetic mode, the mode of rich sensibility. Seeking to sustain their own version of existence under the crushing weight of mass, what Marx described as that "material weight." (Hz, 374)

→

We are back now to the same point where the novel began — Herzog is back in Ludeyville, his country house. On the fifth line of the first page, the narrator says "But now, though he still behaved oddly, he felt confident, cheerful, clairvoyant, and strong." We have reached this point now,when Herzog feels reborn after so much struggle. "What a struggle I waged! — left-handed but fierce," he thinks, "But enough of that—here I am. Hineni! How marvellously beautiful it is today." (Hz, 377) The scenery that contextualizes these statements suggests not only Herzog's sense of freedom but also his acceptance of the real — flowers and wild onions are mixed together under the same light. The narrator says,"He stopped in the overgrown yard, shut his eyes in the sun, against flashes of crimson, and drew in the odors of catalpa -bells, soil, honey-suckle, wild onions and herbs."(Hz,377)

We feel Herzog has come to terms with himself and society, but he still has letters to write, explanations to give. His mind is still working at full speeed. "The human intellect is one of the great forces of the universe. It can't safely remain unused," he reflects. Then he considers the soul,"The soul requires intensity. At the same time virtue bores mankind." (Hz, 379) We see that his line of thinking is still that of opposition to isolation: man is complex, life is complex and we have to live it to experience its reality. Once more he considers the dialectical aspect of man when he writes his final letter to Edvig addressing him, "My dear sage and imbecilic Edvig." (Hz, 381)

Herzog was surprised with his contentment. "What he

→

wanted now was peace — peace and clarity," observes the narrator. He writes a letter to Ramona from whom he tried to run away and with whom he was prepared to be now, as we discussed on the level of action. He shows, in his letter, his freedom from a sense of bondage to personal life and confusion. He writes:

> I hesitate to make too many assertions yet, but at least I can admit what I never stopped asserting anyway, or feeling. The light of truth is never far away, and no human being is too negligible or corrupt to come into it. (...) But to accept ineffectuality, banishment to personal life, confusion... (Hz, 382)

Hergog's letter to Professor Mermelstein gives a kind of summary of all his questionings. He begins by praising Mermelstein for his book on Romanticism, which has scooped his own, and connecting it with other significant books on history and philosophy, including his own, in which he says he included a section on Heaven and Hell in apocalyptic Romanticism, thus revealing his preoccupations with apocalyptic philosophies, Commenting on Shapiro's book and ideas which he considers extremist, he stresses his rejection of these philosophies of doom, showing how our generation is attracted by them and how it may affect us. He writes:

> ... this fellow Shapiro is something of an eccentric, and I mention him as an extreme case. How we all love extreme cases and apocalypses, fires, drownings, stranglings, and the rest of it.The bigger our mild, basically ethical, safe middle classes grow the more radical excitement is in demand. Mild or moderate truthfulness or accuracy seems to have no pull at all. (Hz, 385)

He shows awareness of how these extreme ideas may be negative to the manifestation of life itself. Addressing the reader in the middle of the letter, he writes, "("When a dog

→

is drowning, you offer him a cup of water," Papa used to say, bitterly)." His rejection of these ideas shows his preoccupation with the destiny of contemporary man: exposed to these ideas, man's quest for freedom may be compromised. He does not deny there is a bit of truth in these philosophies; feeding humanity with them is what he disapproves of and fears. We see here his views of man on contemporary world facing not only a social system which denies true human values but also facing these doomed ideas. He comments bitterly on another extremist, a Russian, "who sees the souls of monads as the legions of the damned, (...) and warns that Lucifer must take charge of collectivized mankind, devoid of spiritual character and true personality," (Hz, 385)

Herzog does not only show his rejection of these extremist views of makind but also fears their interference in its process of reaching spiritual freedom. He writes, "I do worry that such ideas,because of the bit of suggestive truth in them, may land us in the same old suffocating churches and synagogues." (Hz, 385)

Herzog's rejection of the wasteland attitude reaches its highest point in this letter. He goes on making observations on Mermeltein's book and praises its sections called "Interpretations of Suffering" and "Towards a Theory of Boredom." He dislikes, however, the treatment given to Kiekergaard, saying that it was frivolous, and gives his opinion of the matter. For him, Kiekergaard considers that man has distanced himself from truth and that only suffering will make mankind serious again. Herzog does not see this. He

→

writes:

> I venture to say Kiekergaard meant that truth has lost its force with us and horrible pain and evil must teach it to us again,the eternal punishments of Hell will have to regain their reality before mankind turns serious once more. I do not see this. (Hz, 385)

No more can Herzog accept Spengler's interpretation of history, as we have seen, than he can accept Kiekergaard's philosophy and his followers. The view that our age is worse than any in the past is one that we have seen Herzog struggling to refute throughout the book, and now we see his definite rejection of it. He writes:

> Let us set aside the fact that such convictions in the mouth of safe, comfortable people playing at crisis, alieanation, apocalypse and desperation make me sick. We must get it out of our heads that this is a doomed time, that we are waiting for the end, and the rest of it, mere junk from fashionable magazines. Things are grim enough without these shivery games. (Hz, 386).

Herzog goes now to what he says is a main point—the interpretation of suffering. We know that the theme of suffering pervades the whole novel — Herzog himself is a sufferer, a comic sufferer in the whole context. We touched on this point when we discussed the meaning of the past,when we saw Herzog lamenting the impossibility of a heroic and individual suffering in our contemporary society.Suffering, for him, is part of our Western civilization, and seems to have become part of our human nature. But he does not accept suffering as interpreted by Christianity, as a way towards redemption and freedom, or of reaching truth as Kierkgaard preaches. He sees salvation through consciousness and reason rather than through suffering. And more important,optional

→

suffering does not have any meaning for him, it is empty,it is part of "convictions in the mouth of safe, comfortable people..." Only after witnessing suffering,not optional but compulsory suffering,does he seem to be prepared for a final conclusion in the matter. What is more relevant in his assertions is not the ineffectiveness of suffering but its negative effects upon the participation of man in the historical process. it helps lead man to passivity. He writes:

> ... the advocacy and praise of suffering take us in the wrong direction and those of us who remain loyal to civilization must not go for it. You have to have the power to employ pain,to repent, to be illuminated, you must have the opportunity and even the time. With the religious, the love of suffering is a form of gratitude to experience or an opportunity to experience evil and change it into good. They believe the spiritual cycle can and will be completed in a man's existence and he will somehow make use of this suffering, (...) But this is a special exercice. More commonly suffering breaks people, crushes them, and is simply unilluminating. (Hz, 386)

Herzog considers his own suffering and cannot take any moral credit for it. "I am willing," he writes,"whithout further exercices in pain to open my heart. And this needs no doctrine or theology of suffering." He shows his saturation with too much theorizing on crisis, on apocalypses, thus displaying his view of the position of man in contemporary society, who, besides being subject to dehumanizing forces in society, faces these grim philosophies. He writes, "We love apocalypses too much, and crisis ethics and florid extremism with its thrilling language."

Herzog finishes his letter stressing once more his rejection of suffering as a form of reaching the truth. He says to Mermelstein, after showing his new view of himself,

→

and consequently of man, as simply a human being,willing to live:

> You have a taste for metaphors. (...) I'm sure you can come up with a grand metaphor for me.But don't forget to say that I will never expound suffering for anyone or call for Hell to make us serious and truthful. (Hz, 387)

At this point we see clearly the comic face of Herzog's suffering. His romantic suffering loses its meaning for him after he experiences reality. Now we can look back and see how ingeniously Bellow managed to be serious while giving a comic treatment of Herzog's suffering, which is reinforced by Asphalter's grotesque form of suffering—suffering for the death of a monkey: an image of the lack of human communication in our contemporary society.

Herzog goes on writing, returning to all the questionings he has been engaged in throughout the novel.He writes a letter to Nietzsche criticing his philosophy of destruction and defending once more the necessity of reaching a middle ground for mankind. "Now we've seen enough destruction to test the power of the Dionysian spirit amply," he writes ironically, considering Nietchzsche's philosophy too distant from reality. "And where are the heroes who have recovered from it?" he asks. The valuing of life above all persists in his writings. "I am lying in a hammock, chin on breast, hands clasped, mind jammed with thoughts, agitated, yes,but also cheerfull," he writes.

There are points in Nietzsche's philosophy Herzog has sympathy for. Her writes:

> Herr Nietzsche, I have great admiration for you. Sympathy. You want to make us able to live with

→

> the void. No lie ourselves into good-naturedness, trust, ordinary middling human considerations,but to question as has never been questioned before, relentlessly, with iron determination, into evil, past evil, accepting no abject comfort. The most absolute, the most piercing questions.(Hz,389)

What Herzog really refuses to accept is Nietzsche's view of the commom man, his extreme rejection of mankind as it is, the elitism of his romantic theories. He goes on with his letter saying:

> Rejecting mankind as it is, that ordinary, practical, thieving, stinking, unilluminated, sodden rabble, not only the laboring rabble, but even worse the "educated" rabble with its books and concerts and lectures,its liberalism and its romantic theatrical "loves" and "passions" — it all deserves to die, it will die. Okay. Still, your extremists must survive. No survival, no Amor Fati. Your immoralists also eat meat. They ride the bus. They are only the most bus-sick travellers. Humankind lives mainly upon perverted ideas. Perverted, your ideas are no better than those of the Christianity you condemn. (Hz, 389)

Herzog now resumes his questionings on the pursuit of an explanation for survival. Once more he rejects the position of those who think that a condition for survival is to explain life, "A curious result of the increase of historical consciousness is that people think that explanation is a necessity of survival," he writes. He reaches now a definite position in the subject, recognizing the mystery of life, and showing the impossibility of a more favorable accpetance of life by a full explanation of human condition. He reflects:

> They have to explain their condition. And if the unexplained life is not worth living, the explained life is unbearable, too. "Synthesize or perish." Is that the new law? But when you see what strange notions, hallucinations, projections, issue from the human mind you begin to believe in Providence again. To survive these idiocies...(Hz,392)

He also shows in this letter his rejection of the

→

intellectual, who, lost in abstract speculation, denies life itself and becomes a Separatist. "Anyway," he writes, "the intellectual has been a Separatist. And what kind of synthesis is a Separatist likely to come up with?" He talks of the intellectual in general but makes some restrictions to himself, saying:

> Luckily for me, I didn't have the means to get too far away from our common life. I am glad of that. I mean to share with other human beings as far as possible and not destroy my remaining years in the same way. (Hz, 392)

These words show Herzog finally coming to terms with himself and with society, glad to have gotten rid of the imprisonment of his own subjectivity and thus be free to live. This is the end of his way into clarity. His acceptance of the real was his form of salvation: he is willing now to share with other human beings and participate in the social process. He had needed though, to use Bellow's own words, "to dismiss a great mass of irrelevancy and nonsense in order to survive."[16]

Herzog, in refuting the isolation of the writer from society, is being a spokesman of Bellow's own ideas. A comment Bellow made on current American novelists, though reflecting on him as well, reveals his consciousness of the problem. He said:

> American novelists are not ungenerous, far from it, but as their idea of society is fairly shallow, their moral indignation in non-specific. What seems to be lacking is a firm sense of a common world, a coherent community, a genuine purpose in life.[17]

The narrator comments, "Herzog felt a deep, dizzy eagerness to *begin*," and this yearn to commence a proper life, to →

participate in ordinary existence, we infer as revealing Bellow's own concern with the isolation of contemporary man. Herzog, as well as most of Bellow's work, might be seen as an image of man imprisoned in his own subjectivity. A great deal is thought about and talked about, but very little is enacted or actually experienced. The lone individual, passive and locked-up in himself, sees things but does not relate to them, talks to himself but not to the world, till he reaches a moment of awareness of his own isolation and is ready to share with others.

In turning so often in his novels to the predicament of the isolated individual, Bellow is of course revealing his concern with a deep problem of our age. In a review of Gide he showed how aware he was of the problem when saying:

> ... as human isolation increases while education and abilities multiply, the most vital questions and asnwers become the internal ones. Sadly enough the number of intelligent people whose most vital conversation is with themselves is growing.[18]

Though Herzog has reached sanity and the point of contact with life, he still goes on for some time with his reflections. Now he makes a summary of the history of thought, reflecting that we have, in our time, turned back to metaphysical preoccupations, and consequently turned away from reality again. He writes:

> In the seventeenth century the passionate search for absolute truth stopped so that mankind might transform the world. Something practical was done with thought. The mental became also the real. Relied from the pursuit of absolutes made life pleasant. (...) But our revolutions, including nuclear terror, return the metaphysical dimention to us. All practical activity has reached this culmination: everything may go now, civilization,

→

history, meaning, nature.Everything! (Hz, 393)

Herzog reaches a point of complete freedom and peace. The bucolic setting we have at the end of the novel is an image of the supremacy of life: "He lay down near the locust trees.They bloomed with a light, tiny but delicious flower —he was sorry to have missed that." The novel has completed its cycle, Herzog connects himself to the very beginning: "...he was lying as he had lain less than a week ago in his dirty little sofa in New York. But was it a week—five days?"(Hz, 397).

He has reached a moment of clarity: life is worth living in spite of everything. "How different he felt! Confident, even happy in his excitement, stable," he thought. He is conscious that this may be a frugal moment but it is worth experiencing. He is prepared now to face the facts of life and live them — the important point is that he has experienced the real and is willing to share it. "The bitter cup would came round again, by and by. This rest and well-being were only a momentary difference in the strange lining or variable silk between life and void," (Hz,397)but it was part of life.

Having brooded with great intensity on his own position and extensively on the position of man in the contemporary world, as a historical being, part of a society and subject to extreme tendencies of thought, and refusing to accept the verdict that ours is a doomed civilization,Herzog reaches a state of clarity that leaves him with a "dizzy eagerness to *begin*."

→

His final reflection is about man's sense of life which shows his positive attitude towards life:

> ... I look at myself and see chest, things, feet—a head. This strange organization, I know it will die. And inside — something, something, happiness... "Thou movest me." That leaves no choice. Something produces intensity, a holy feeling, as oranges produce orange, as grass green, as birds heat. (...) But this intensity, doesn't it mean anything? Is it an idiot joy that makes this animal, the most peculiar animal of all, exclaim something? And he thinks this reaction a sign, a proof of eternity? And he has it in his breast? But I have no arguments to make about it. "Thou movest me." (Hz, 414)

The last lines of his reflections show clearly his praise for existence itself, his rejection of nihilistic views of life and his willingness to participate in the social and historical process in wich mankind is engaged. He reflects:

> "But that is just it — not a solitary thing. I am pretty well satisfied to be, to be just as it is willed, and for as long as I may remain in occupancy." (Hz, 414)

The novel reaches full circle at the end, for Herzog has never actually left Ludeyville.

NOTES

[1]Rodrigues, in his thesis on Bellow's novels, says that "Bellow presents the thoughts of a man trying to grapple with the social problems of the world he lives in,trying to grasp the tormeting paradoxes of modern history,science and philosophy." (RODRIGUES,E.L. Quest for Human: Theme and structure in the Novels of Saul Bellow. Thesis. Ph.D University of Pensylvania, 1970, p.250).

[2]CHAPMAN, Abraham. "The image of Man as Portrayed by Saul Bellow." CLA Journal, Vol.10-11 (sep-june),1966-68, pp.288.

[3]See Cultural Creation, p.

[4]Ibid, p. 78

[5]"Saul Bellow's Herzog." p. 271

[6]Goldmann, discussing the concept of potential consciousness says that there "is an extremely important fact which sends particularly to call into questions all contemporary sociology insofar as it is centered,more in the concept of *real* consciousness than on that of potential consciousness. In its descriptive methods, its methods of inquiry, this sociology is in fact interested only in what people actually think. But — I have often cited this example — surppose one used methods a thousand times more accurate than those at our disposal today, the most precise possible inquiry into Russian peasants in January 1917 would probably have found that the great majority were loyal to the Tsar and did not even envisage the possibility of overthrowing the monarchy. Yet by the end of the year, this real consciousness of the peasants had changed radically on that point. ("The Concept of Potential Consciousness." In:Cultural Creation, p.32).

[7]"Saul Bellow's Herzog." pg.276

[8]"Saul Bellow - An Interview." Paris Review, (Winter 1966), p.62.

[9]To give an idea of the letter, part of it reads as follows, "...goodness has become a free commodity like air, or nearly free like a subway ride. Best of everything for everybody — hed yourself. No one much cares. The honest

→

look, recommended by Ben Franklin as a business asset, has a predestinarian Calvinistic background. You don't cast doubts on another man's election, You may damage his credit rating. ...(Hz, 199).

[10]"Bellow's to Herzog." p.268

[11]"Saul Bellow — An Interview." p.62

[12]Ibid. p.60

[13]Ibid. p.68

[14]Ibid. p.62

[15]Ibid. p.63

[16]Ibid. p. 71

[17]TANNER, Tony. "Isolation and Affirmation." In Saul Bellow. London, Oliver & Boyd, 1965, p. 109.

[18]Ibid,, p.108

CHAPTER ELEVEN
REACHING A SYNTHESIS

In the section "Herzog vs Madeleine", in which we discussed the level of action, using the title as a comprehensive significative structure, we delimited some features of contemporary society, dramatized in the novel by the characters. In Herzog, Bellow gives us a view of man in society deprived of the possibility of consciousness. Herzog, on one side of the equation, as well as Madeleine on the other, are involved in the same complex and kaleidoscopic world, but while the protagonist becomes conscious of it and struggles to reach a state of clarity, Madeleine and the other characters involved in the action keep their state of alienation.

The essential idea implied in the meaningful structure, as we have discussed, is that Herzog represents moral values in relation to the other characters who are integrated in a money-oriented society, appearing as caricatures. Zéraffa, when discussing "Alienation and Subjectivism," makes comments which are pertinent to the way Bellow conceives his work concerning the level of action, so that we think it relevant to quote him here:

→

> The heroes are victims of the split between the ideal and reality. They are consumed by the desire not only to know the cause of their torment but also to end it by devoting their energies to reconstructing these two apparently irreconcilable domains, or levels of existence, into some harmonious whole. As against this, the secondary characters are conformists. They are integrated into a contingent social world from which they submit without a word.[1]

The linking element, thus, of all levels in the novel is Herzog's struggle to reach clarity, which pervades the whole novel, and which we have discussed. The elements which stand as antagonistic forces to his search extrapolate the level of action to the deeper level of Herzog's conscience and to the stylistic level. The process of reaching a synthesis, in which Herzog is engaged, comes against a whole context, suggesting chaos. Before coming to the main point in this section — the discussion of the synthesis Herzog reaches — we think it relevant to make some comments on the elements which contribute to make the whole context suggest chaos.

The lack of clarity, which is present on all levels of the novel, and against which Herzog fights, mirrors the society contemporary man lives in. We have already discussed this element in the level of action, as well as in the deeper level of Herzog's mind, which is in a state of confusion,as the narrator says at the very beginning of the novel—"Some people thought he was cracked and for a time he himself had doubted that he was all there." Now we will make some observations about the stylistic level in which all the elements suggest lack of clarity, stressing the pervading sense of confusion Herzog fights against. Herzog himself is an

→

index of the impossibility of drawing definite lines in our contemporary world. He is a Jew obsessed with Jewish morals lost in the past, behaving and feeling as a Christian — the sufferer longing for redemption.

The physical environment in the novel recurrently suggests chaos. Surrounding Herzog's apartment building in New York there is a confusion of buildings going up or being demolished, depriving him of a clear view. The description of these surroundings create an image of chaos and speedy change:

> At the corner he paused to watch the work of the wrecking crew.(...) There rose a white tranquil cloud of plaster dust. The afternoon was ending, and in the widening area of demolition was a fire, fed by the wreckage.(...) The workmen heaping the bonfire with wood, threw strips of molding like javelins. (...) The old flooring hurned gratefully — the funeral of exhausted objects. Scaffolds walled, with pink, white, green doors quivered as the six-wheeled trucks carried off fallen bricks. (Hz, 217)

Another description of physical environment, inserted in a passage showing Herzog riding in a taxi in New York, provides the same image of chaos, which serves as an object correlative for Herzog's own mind:

> They made a sweeping turn into Park avenue and Herzog clutched the broken window handle. It wouldn't open. But if it opened dust would pour in. They were demolishing and raising buildings. The Avenue was filled with concrete-mixing trucks, smells of wet sand and powdery gray cement. Crashing, stamping pile-driving below, and, higher, structural steel, interminably and hungrily going up into the cooler, more delicate blue. (Hz, 44)

Herzog's relationship with Sono Ogudi, one of his mistresses, is also connected with a physical environment suggesting disorder, though she herself might have been a

→

chance for him to reach a state of clarity, had he been prepared for that. Thus the confusion suggested by the setting is symbolic of Herzog's own internal disorder. The description of her appartment provides an image of lack or order:

> Something was always frying or brewing in her kitchen, a dark closet rank with fish and soy sauce, (...) The plumbing was always out of order. (...) Sono kept two cats; their pan was never clean. (Hz, 212?

Herzog's own appearance sometimes suggests his disordered mind. For instance, when he goes to see Aunt Zelda, after being deserted by Madeleine, his personal appearance indexes his internal disorder. "He tried to get a grip on himself," says the narrator. "Half buttoned, red-eyed, unshaved, he looked disgraceful. Incedent" (Hz, 50). Herzog cannot keep his house in order, which is also symbolic of his own mind, as well as of the impossibility of one's keeping up with the demands of accelerated transformations in our world.

The multiple focusing narrative of the novel is a relevant device to stress lack of clarity. Madeleine, for instance, is seen through multiple visions, and the voice of omniscient narrator blurs with Herzog's own voice throughout the novel. There is a constant shifting from subjective to objective narration as well as from omniscient to limited visions. Time shifts with such frequency that sometimes it is hard to find the main stream of the narrative.All these stylistic devices combine to communicate an image of confusion that not only reflects Herzog's confused mind,but also echoes our contemporary world in its fluidity.

→

One thing that is central to Herzog's questionings, as being an agent of confusion and consequently of passivity, is the excess of information to which contemporary man is subjected. Tony Tanner, discussing Roth's and Bellow's protagonists, makes relevant comments on this aspect, which we may consider to be directly connected to Herzog's seeking for a new form of integration, out of a profusion of ideas and theories. He says:

> Both Herzog and Portnoy, in their differing ways, have been subjected to too much control, too much information, too many alien patternings of reality — (...) In company with most American protagonists of the last decade, their main desire is to gain a measure of freedom from the conditioning forces, and some release (even immunity) from those behavioral and intellectual versions of reality which have helped to bring them to their present state of immobility.[2]

Further in his essay, Tanner comes back to the same point, commeting on Bellow's preoccupation with the ammount of information and experiences contemporary man is subjected to. He says that in Herzog, Bellow "is attempting to combine what he discerned as the separate strands of the American novel, by depicting a sensibility oppressed by too much information." He goes on making comments on Herzog's struggle to establish some coherence amidst the randomness presented by the modern world, concluding that there are so many systems to choose from, that is "possible that this very plurality of 'Ideas' or versions is the most toxic part of the multitudinousness which vexes Herzog's weary and inflamed consciousness."[3] All these considerations about Herzog we have gone through in the previous section. Our preocupation now is to depict the kind of synthesis Herzog reached after

→

facing this "multitudinousness" and going through it with a spirit avid for clarity.

The kind of synthesis we infer Herzog reaches, and which we are going to discuss, is that man is inside a process from which he cannot isolate, neither by living the past and denying the present nor by shutting himself in and denying participation, nor yet by embracing nihilism and denying his own sense of life. He is part of this process and has his own potentialities to overcome his predicament and participate in life.

Herzog's letters and internal monologues build up a dialectic between man's state and his possibilities of salvation. He must think his way into clarity in order to reach a conscious and realistic view of himself as well as of man in general. William Sewel, studying Herzog, discusses this point, corroborating our argument. He says:

> It is the historical process of synthesizing that Herzog engages in actually to find an explanation for his personal circumtances. Thus if we take Herzog's letters on the rise and decline of historical man for what they are, we can see Bellow's attempt through his protagonist to construct an historical dialectic as one way of defining man's existence in the modern world.[4]

Herzog's synthesis is the result of Bellow's attempt to construct an historical dialectic which defines man's condition in contemporary society. Herzog's rejection of an interpretation of history which sees the present moment always as some crisis, some fall from either a paradisaical state or from classical greatness, is seen throughout the novel in his letters and reflections, showing him in constant alertness against either an Spenglerian or Christian view

→

of history. Discussing with Edvig about Madeleine's religious tendencies, Herzog comments on the Christian view of history and its effects on Western man, saying:

> I don't agree with Nietzsche that Jesus made the whole world sick, infected it with his slave morality. But Nietszche himself had a Christian view of history, seeing the present moment always as some crisis, some fall from classical greatness, some corruption or evil to be saved from. I call that Cristian. And Madeleine has it, all right. To some extent many of us do. Think we have to recover from some poison, need saving, ransoming. (Hz, 71).

In a long internal monologue, in which Herzog reflects on his own emotional confusion, comparing it with modern man's condition, we see him refuting the form of historicism we have been discussing, and acknowledging the deep meaning of human experience in opposition to an aesthetic critique of modern history. He reflects:

> Very tired of the modern form of historicism which sees in this civilization the defeat of the best hopes of Western religion and thought, what Heidegger calls the second Fall of Man into the quotidian or ordinary. No philosopher knows what the ordinary is, has not fallen into it deeply enough. The question of ordinary human experience is the principal question of these modern centuries,... (Hz. 133)

Herzog goes on thinking, and through his reflections we grasp Bellow's own historical view of contemporary man, not in a state of decline, but in a state of transformation, being himself an actor in the process. Herzog reflects,"One way or another the no doubt mad idea entered my mind that my own actions had historic importance." (Hz, 133)

Herzog's own nostalgia for the past, against which he struggles, corresponds to a negative view of history,and it is crucial to the view Bellow shows of contemporary man,

→

in need of a new definition for his condition. Commenting on Herzog's studies, the narrator gives information that corroborates our statement:

> Herzog tried to explain what it was about—that his study was supposed to have ended with a new angle on the modern condition, showing how life could be lived by renewing connections; overturning the last of the Romantic errors about the uniqueness of the self; revising the old Western, Faustian ideology; investigating the social meaning of Nothingness. (Hz, 53)

Herzog's propositions show clearly his rejection of absolute ideologies and their irrelevance for contemporary man. The synthesis he reaches at the end had already been outlined in the book he never finished. Harold Mosher's comments on Romaticism and Spenglerianism, concerning Herzog, show how both theories imply radical interpretations of history and do not answer Herzog's questions as a contemporary man. Mosher says:

> ... Both theories of history limit Herzog because, being exaggerated and therefore false, they distort his view of the present and above all of himself. They either tempt him away from solving his present problems or discourage his attempt at reform by convincing him that he has not kept up with the progress of civilization or that he is bound to decline with the rest of humanity. As an historian of ideas, Herzog has been too well schooled by opposing doctrines. Rousseau on the one hand and Spengler on the other.[5]

Struggling for synthesis, looking for a point of equilibrium that might bring him stability and clarity, Herzog questions the romantic concept of self that brings man to a state of isolation. We see him throughout the novel trying to move away from selfhood, recognizing the values of brotherhood and community. For the greater part of the novel, Herzog, shut in his own world, carries his own version of

→

reality. Clayton, in his study of Herzog corroborates our statement commenting:

> Herzog has been carrying the world in his shoulders. That is, he has been carrying his own world, his special version. After the trip to Chicago he can put it down He can stop trying to control the world with words and ideas and instead simply live in it. He can stop defending his "special destiny," his individuality,and live unencumbered as another creature in the world that is.[6]

Herzog's rejection of the romantic overvaluation of the self does not mean that he is indifferent to the massification of man — it rather indexes his rejection of radical theories. We have witnessed his worries about the fact that individuals do not seem to count much any more in our society, but we also have seen him irritated with his own imprisonment in the self. This attitude leads Herzog to the affirmation of reality, and consequently to a questioning of theories and systems that have the claim to shape and orient man's life. Abraham Chapman talking about Bellow's characters touched at this point saying that"they are trying to make sense out of life and people without a priori systems of belief or thought."[7] In his own process towards clarity, Herzog reaches awareness of his being an intellectual with his own narrow conception of human reality, imprisoned in his own mind by theories and systems, which prevent him from experiencing reality. Abraham Chapman, again corroborates our argument when he considers Bellow, whose voice we identify with Herzog's, distrustful of abstractions. He states:

> Bellow is distrustful of abstractions which sub

→

> stitute theory for the complexity, diversity, and contradictoriness of human life. He is distrustful of ideologies, distrustful of all programs, theories, and systems of ideas which believe they have solved the mystery of human existence and presume to tell mankind how to live.[8]

Herzog's own sense of history, rejecting cyclic and evoluationary interpretations in favor of a dialectical one, prevents him from being nihilist, another relevant aspect of Herzog's struggle for clarity. Gilbert Porter, discussing Herzog's letters, says that "the comments which cost Herzog the most effort are those in which he tries to shout down the prophets of dread, the preachers of alienation and anxiety."[9] This is really the most relevant aspect of his questioning, since it challenges his own sense of history, and what is more, his own sense of life. Bellow himself, when asked about Herzog's rejection of fashionable ideas — "ideas à la Sartre or à la Camus", has confirmed Herzog's struggle, saying, "I think he tests them first upon his own sense of life and against his own desperate need for clarity." [10]

Discussing the aspects of dialectical synthesis, Bornheim talks of the work of art seeing it as a process in which the contradictions meet towards stability, and achieving its stability, the work of art also reaches the completeness of a synthesis.[11] Herzog, as a novel of ideas, shows this process in its own structure, as we have seen, and the stability of the novel is the very stability the protagonist reaches. Thus, from a state of absolute confusion, Herzog goes through a confrontation of ideas to reach a state of balance. The overcoming of contradictions in the process Herzog engages himself is seen through his rejection of radical ideas and →

theories with which he himself and society are infected.Thus though displaying, throughout the novel, his defense of individualism against anonymity and philosophies which view man mechanistically, he fights against the romantic over-valuation of the self. Though attracted in his youth by Spengler's theories, he fights against accepting the view that the modern age represents a moment of decline in history. In spite of witnessing the crush of human values in a money-oriented world, he fights against philosophies of nihilism and doom, recognizing that the "new attitude which makes life a triffle not worth anyone's anguish threatens the heart of civilization" (Hz, 322). He tries to affirm man's possibilities, voicing Bellow's own beliefs in the supremacy of life,[12] which is shown in the novel through the sense of hope displayed by Herzog. As Conrad said,commenting on the "acts of faith" required from the artist, "to be hopeful in an artistic sense it is not necessary to think that the world is good. It is enough to belive that there is no impossibility of its being made so."[13]

Though being himself, throughout the novel, an intellectual with a narrow conception of human reality, Herzog struggles against being imprisoned in an idealized world,as the omniscient narrator says, "Moses had to see reality. Perhaps he was somehow spared from it so that he might see it better, not fall asleep in its thick embrace." (Hz, 340) After being in court and seeing the real world of cold facts, Herzog comes to realize that he can no longer protect himself by living in an idealized world. As is clear in the letter

→

he writes to Dr. Edvig, his psychiatrist, he can no longer avoid life through the abstractions he has set up for himself. (Hz, 370). He must learn to live with reality without denying his vital part.

Though Herzog, as an intellectual, shows his belief in reason, he comes to reject, as we have discussed, the radical idea that only reason can save man, and this is the culminating point of his search: his awareness of the impossibility of reaching a true synthesis, a synthesis that might fully explain and orient contemporary man. Bellow himself, talking about Herzog, touches at this point saying:

> The book is not anti-intellectual, as some have said. It simply points to the comic impossibility of arriving at a synthesis that can satisfy modern demand. This is to say, full awareness of all major problems, together with the necessary knowledge of history, of science and philosophy.[14]

The main interest in Herzog's search is to reach an adequate notion of contemporary man and of himself, recognizing the need for synthesizing absolute views and positions, and though his conclusion is the impossibility of full consciousness, we surely see him reach awareness, after his dialectial discussion, of man's individual possibilities for survival, not necessarily depending on his intellectual ability. This seems to be the reassuring truth Herzog grasps, after so much struggle and thinking out of the confusion in which he found himself. It is also the core of the comedy in the book, for though Herzog is very serious in his purpuse as a humanist intellectual, he is seen by himself and by the omniscient narrator, throughout the novel, as a comic figure.[15] This paradoxical aspect points to the impossibility of one's

→

making sense of contemporary life, so that the only true synthesis Herzog can reach, which reality itself cannot deny, is man's potential ability to overcome crisis, which is translated in Herzog into a sense of hope and peace Herzog reaches at the end.

Bellow, talking of the comic aspect of Herzog, connects it with the efforts at making sense of our confused world, giving relevant support to our discussion. He says:

> One of the sources of comedy in my book is the endless struggle of people to make sense of life and to sort out all the issues and to get the proper historical perspective on oneself... The whole world runs through your head like an oceanic tide and you have to, for the sake of your balance and even sanity, sort everything out... We live in these tides of information and fact which sway us back and forth. The human mind seems to be not prepared for the kind of unprecedent modern crisis, and it is the humor of that kind of floundering that I try to get into Herzog. Even the qualified intellectual doesn't know what he is doing.[16]

Bellow was undoubtedly successful in what he says to have tried to get into Herzog, for Moses Herzog tries painfully, to the point of comedy, to understand the actual chaos of his personal life in terms of the theoretical wisdom he possesses as a scholar, but he reaches awareness, through exhaustive analyses and questionings, that not even his doctoral degree in history has fitted him to cope with the demands of contemporary experience.

Thus Herzog ends his inquiries and questionings on the individual, the social and the historical man, starting from his own existential world into the social, moral, philosophical and historical one, trying to reach a clear view of his own life and contemporary man's, but reaching, actually a sense

→

of hope and active acceptance of reality that might give him the force to begin again.

NOTES

[1]The Novel and Social Reality. pp. 46-47

[2]"Fictionalized Recall" p.297

[3]Ibid. p.300

[4]Literary Structure and Judgement in the Novel of Saul Bellow. p. 24.

[5]"The Synthesis of Past and Present in Bellow's Herzog." p. 205.

[6]Saul Bellow: In Defense of Man. p.225

[7]"The Image of Man as Portrayed by Saul Bellow." p. 297.

[8]Ibid. p. 289

[9]PORTER, Gilbert. Whence the Power? The Artistry and Humanity of Saul Bellow. Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1974, p. 152.

[10]"Saul Bellow — An Interview." p.70

[11]Bornheim says textually, "se tomarmos uma obra de arte, um quadro, sem dúvida elucidá-lo a partir de uma série de contradições, tanto exteriores à própria obra, quanto inerentes ao processo de composição — mas o quadro em si mesmo, uma vez realizado, é uma síntese, e chega a ser síntese através da superação das contradições. Enquanto obra de arte, o quadro é um estar em si, e, na medida em que alcança essa sua "estabilidade", realiza a plenitude de uma síntese." (BORNHEIM, Gerd. Dialética Teoria Práxis. Porto Alegre, Editora Globo, 1977, p.303)

[12]Bellow, in a talk called "The Next Necessary Thing," says, "If the human pride of artists has indeed exhausted the miracle of this world then nothing in art is necessary, all is superflous. But here is the living man, and the last word concerning him cannot be imagined. We shall never know him in his entirety. Now, waiting in darkness to be reanimated by fresh impulse we feel painfully the weight of everything superfluous. ...But we know that something necessary, something not to be evaded, is due and overdue."(Cited in: TANNER, Tony. Saul Bellow. p. 117)

→

[13]CONRAD, Joseph. Notes on Life and Letters, London, Bodley Head, 1949, p.9.

[14]"Saul Bellow - An Interview." p.68.

[15]For the sake of illustration we are going to quote some passages in the novel which show Herzog either satirized or as a comic figure:

> Herzog smiled at this earlier avatar of his life, at Herzog the victim, Herzog the would-be lover, Herzog the man on whom the world depended for certain intellectual work, to change history, to influence the development of civilization (Hz, 131).

> The progress of civilization -- indeed, the survival of civilization — depended on the successes of Moses E. Herzog. (Hz, 156).

> ... Turning this thing, "my personal life," into a circus, into gladiatorial combat. Or tamer form of entertainment. (Hz, 375.

CONCLUSION

The main purpuse of this study, as stated in our introduction, was to show Bellow's view of man in contemporary society expressed in Herzog, and we hope to have accomplished this through the analysis of the two levels of the novel: the level of action and the deeper level of Herzog's conscience, applying Goldmann' methodological process of interpretation and explanation.[1] We have also justified in the introduction, basing our arguments on Goldmann's theories of the relation between the novel and social reality, our inference in considering Herzog's voice as Bellow's own, so that in the last two chapters of the second part of our study, which deal with Herzog's conscience, we have Bellow's own voice through Herzog's. His synthesis is Bellow's synthesis.

The synthesis Herzog reached, which, as we have already discussed in the previous chapter, is but an awareness of the impossibility of contemporary man reaching a synthesis that "can satisfy modern demands," was showed in the two levels of the novel. On the level of action, Herzog came to realize his own comic suffering, his isolation from so

→

ciety, his distancing from reality, at the same time as Bellow displayed through the dramatization of a particular situation the complexity of the contemporary world and the condition of man in it. As Zēraffa said, when talking of some outstanding writers as interpreters of social reality, corroborating our arguments:

> Even if their characters, "involved" in the world as they are, speak in a fictional language different from the language of historical reality, these two languages are still related to the same code, comprehending for example, class conflict and the multiplicity of contradictions between the dreams of the individual and the determinism that rules society. Whether they live out the ideology, or the myths, of a social milieu, whether they undergo the servitude we now call alienation or try to resolve the conflicts and contradictions of an entire society (...), these characters are not just bearing testimony to a period symptomatic of it. They imply the existence of a true parallel between society and the novel.[2]

Through the conflict established in the novel, Bellow managed to show an image of contemporary society, portraying a reality which the protagonist is unable to interpret fully; though an intellectual, Herzog displays the image of the clown, whose main characteristic is the inability to interpret reality. Bellow, when asked why he used comic elements to express in Herzog concerns and difficulties fundamentally serious, answered, "I got very tired of the solemnity of complaint, altogether impatient with complaint. Obliged to choose between complaint and comedy, I chose comedy, as more energetic, wiser and manlier."[3] Thus, through a structure whose prevailing element is comedy, Bellow succeeded in displaying his view of contemporary capitalist society in which

→

man, alienated, deprived of the possibilities of keeping a true identity, is compulsorily moved by the supremacy of money over moral values in a society which, due to its complexity and confusional features, he is unable to interpret.

In structuring the universe of the novel, which is a metaphor for society itself, Bellow succeeded in showing conflict in terms of opposing forces, which we defined as a main meaningful structure, homologous to the social structure itself, concerning the position of the individual in relation to the patterns of society. Thus Herzog, the protagonist, who is a victim of the split between the ideal and the real, struggles against a set of characters, mainly represented by Madeleine, who are conformists, integrated in a social reality from which they profit and to which they submit, without actually participating in the plane of decisions and deliberations, as was discussed throughout the second part of this study. The establishing of this conflict connected the level of action to the deeper level of Herzog's conscience, in which we saw him struggling to reach a synthesis that might put together, in a dialectical process,the ideal and the real, but that only brought him awareness of "an unbridgeable gulf of unmeaning between a universal idea of man and the contingent social reality which he sees around him."[4]

Herzog's awareness of the impossibility of synthesizing a universal idea of man and contingent social reality brought him salvation,enabling him to come to terms with society and integrate in the social reality. This attitude

→

of acceptance, a conscious acceptance, which,different from that of other characters, is rather the possibility of overcoming his predicament, displays Bellow's own view of man, who though confined to an alienating pattern of society has not lost his mysterious sense of life, as observed by David Galloway in his essay "Moses-Bloom-Herzog: Bellow's Everyman":

> Herzog must learn to live with reality without sacrificing heart, without crippling the "vital part," without denying "spirit; courage;center." Only contact and engagement can keep the law of the heart alive; only brotherhood can legimate feeling.[5]

Herzog's attempt at a reconciliation by means of intellectual explanation, though it proved ineffectual, provided an interpretation of history, which, pertinent to the methodological approach that supports this study, we infer to be Bellow's own interpretation. Thus Bellow's view of man in contemporary society, which we have been engaged in showing, also implies an historical view that is consequently connected to philosophical interpetations. Bellow attacks, through Herzog's questioning and confrontation, an historical view which sees man in a state of decline, in favor of an interpretation that sees man in a state of transformation, in which Herzog fits with his sense of hope for a new fresh life.

Unlike writers to whom social reality in literally fatal to man and humanity, Bellow shows through Herzog's unmailed letters and interior monologues his rejection of the romantic isolation, and discards intellectual alienation, intellectual separatism. "What kind of a synthesis is a

Separatist likely to come up with?" Herzog thinks. On realizing that intellectual explanation was not necessarily vital for survival, he was also realizing the writer's isolation from society when lost in theorizing and abstracting. Bellow himself corroborates Herzog's position when he stated in his essay "Deep Readers of the World,Beware":

> Novels are being published today which consist entirely of abstractions, meanings, and while our need for meanings is certainly great our need for concreteness, for particulars, is even greater. We need to see how human beings act after they have appropriated or assimilated the meanings. Meanings themselves are a dime a dozen. In literature humankind becomes abstract when we begin to dislike it.[6]

Coherent with his view of history, which refuses to see the modern age as worse than any others in the past, Bellow rejects a wasteland outlook of modern civilization as well as a nihilistic view of man. Having written Herzog in the sixties, he was able to grasp the latent tendencies developing in our contemporary society to discard the nihilistic interpretation of life which had prevailed in the previous decades.

Although, as we have discussed, Herzog is a victim of a variety of conflicts and contradictions, these same contradictions were envisaged by Bellow as an ordered pattern, so that, though Herzog as a protagonist did not reach a true synthesis, Bellow was able to synthesize the conflicting forces into a coherent universe, into a world view, by means of some basic ideological principles, those we discussed throughout our analysis and summarized in this conclusion, displaying thus his comprehensive view of man

→

in society.

The book ends, as we have already discussed, showing Herzog blooming with life and peace, prepared to live, after the intense struggle he had been engaged in. This cannot be seen as an easy solution for the conflict Bellow has created in the universe of the novel — it is rather an integrating part of Bellow's view of man, which accords with what we pointed to in our introduction:his belief in the possiblities of man overcoming crisis, his belief in the mysterious force of life itself, which enables man to fight.

Bellow himself, giving his opinion on Herzog, has acknowledged its appeal to the "unconscious sympathies of many people," corroborating our arguments, supported on Goldmann's theories, that the conflicting forces Bellow synthesized in a world view, were elaborated by his own social group, so that the book reached the latent consciousness of the group. Bellow said:

> ... I haven't yet discovered the sin. I do think that a book like Herzog, which ought to have been an obscure book with a total sale of 8000, has such a reception because it appeals to the unconscious sympathies of many people, I know from the mail I've received that the book described a commom predicament, Herzog appealed to Jewish readers, to those who have been divorced, to those who talk to themselves, to college graduates, readers of paperbacks, autodidacts, to those who yet hope to live a while, etc.[7]

→

NOTES

[1]William Maryl in his introduction to Goldmann's Cultural Creation in Modern Society explains Goldmann's metho dological processes of interpretation and explanation stat ing, "Interpretation involves the dewcription of the immanent strucuture of the object under study.Explanation is nothing more than the insertion of the interpreted structure into an immediately umcompassing structure. Thus explanation informs us the genesis and function of the object under study.Thus, what was explanation becames interpretation, and explanatory research must be related to a new structure which is even wider, (Cultural Creation. p.3)

[2]The Novel and Social Reality. p.31

[3]"Saul Bellow — An Interview." p.62

[4]The Novel and Social Reality. p.46

[5]"Moses-Bloom-Herzog: Bellow's Everyman." p.63

[6]"The Image of man as Portrayed by Saul Bellow." p.289.

[7]"Saul Bellow — An Interview." p.60

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. ALLEN, Mary Lee. The Flower and the Chalk: The Comic Sense of Saul Bellow. Thesis. Ph.D. Stanford University, 1968, 288p.

2. The Art of Fiction XXXVII. "Saul Bellow: An Interview." Paris Review:52-73, Winter 1966.

3. BORNHEIM, Gerd. Dialētica. Teoria Prāxis.Porto Alegre, Editora Globo, 1977, 340p.

4. BAIM, Joseph. "Escape from Intellection: Saul Bellow's Dangling Man." University Review. 37:28-34,1969.

5. BRADBURY, Malcolm. "Saul Bellow's Herzog." Critical Quartely:269-278, Auntumn 1961.

6. _____. "Saul Bellow and the Naturalist Tradition." Review of English Literature, 4:80-92, October 1963.

7. BERGER, Peter, L. Invitation to Sociology: A Humanist Perspective. U.S.A., Anchor Books, 1963, 191 p.

8. BELLOW, Saul. "Some Notes on Recent American Fiction." In KLEIN, Marcus, ed. The American Novel Since World War II. Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1969 pp. 59-75.

9. _____. Dangling Man. New York, Avon Books,1975, 126p.

10. _____. The Victim. New York, Avon Books, 1975, 256p.

11. _____. The Adventures of Angie March. New York, Avon Books, 1977, 599 p.

12. _____. Seize the Day. Greenwich, Conn., Fawcet Publications, 1968, 128 p.

13. _____. Henderson the Rain King. Greenwich, Conn., Fawcet Publications, 1959, 286 p.

14. _____. Herzog. New York, Avon Books, 1976, 416 p.

15. _____. Mr Samler's Planet. London, Penguin Books,1972, 252p.

16. _____. Humboldt's Gift. New York, Avon Books, 1976, 471 p.

17. BOTTOMORE, T.B. Introdução à Sociologia. Trad.Waltensin Dutra. Rio de Janeiro, Zahar Editores, 1967. 188 p.

18. CHAPMAN, Abraham. "The Image of Man as Portrayed by Saul Bellow." CLA Journal (10-11):285-298, sept-june 1966 -1968.

19. CARR, E.H. "The New Society." In: Man in Contemporary Society. New York, Columbia University Press, v.1 , 1955, 949p.

20. CLAY, George R. "Jewish Hero in American Fiction." The Reporter, 17:43-46. september 11, 1956.

21. CLAYTON, J.J. Saul Bellow: In Defense of Man. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1971, 273 p.

22. CONRAD, Joseph. Notes on Life and Letters,London,Bodley Head, 1949, 178 p.

23. COHEN, Sarah B. The Comic Elements in the Novels of Saul Bellow. Thesis. Ph.D. Northwestern University, Illinois, 1969, 275 p.

24. CHASE, Richard. "The Adventures of Saul Bellow." Commentary, 27:323-30, April 1959.

25. DURKHEIM, Emile. The Rules of Sociological Method. Chicago, Free Press, 1950, 295 p.

26. FORD, F.M. The Old Man: The Question of Henry James, London, Bodley Head, 1964, 205 p.

27. FOULQUIÉ, Paul. O Existencialismo. Trad. J. Guinsberg. S.Paulo, Difusão Européia do Livro, 1961, 98p.

28. FRANK, Reuben. "Saul Bellow: The Evolution of a Contemporary Novelist." Western Review:101-102,Winter,1954.

29. GERTH, H.H. and MILLS, C. Wright. From Max Weber:Essays on Sociology. New York, Oxford University Press,1946, 482 p.

30. GALLOWAY, David. "Moses-Bloom-Herzog: Bellow's Everyman." The Southem Review:61-76, Winter,1966.

31. GOLDMANN, Lucien. Towards a Sociology of the Novel. Trans. Allan Sheridan. London, Tavistock, 1975, 223p.

32. _____. Cultural Creation in Modern Society. Trans. Bart Grahl. Saint Louis, Telos Press, Ltd. 1976, 175p.

33. _____. The Human Sciences and Philosophy. Trans. Hayden V. White and Robert Anchor. London, Jonathan Cape, 1969, 168 p.

34. HOWE, Irving. "Mass Society and Post-Modern Fiction." Partisan Review XXVI:421-36, Summer, 1959.

35. JAMES, Henry. "The Art of Fiction." In:ELMANN, R. & FEIDELSON, Jr., C. The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds of Modern Literature. New York, Oxford University Press, 1965, pp.426-43.

36. KAZIN, Alfred. "My Friend Saul Bellow" Atlantic Monthly, 215:51-4 (Jan,1965)

37. KLEIN, Marcus. "A Discipline of Nobility: Saul Bellow's Fiction." Kenyon Review, 24:203-26, Spring,1962.

38. LEHAN, Richard. "Existentialism in Recent American Fiction: The Demonic Quest." Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 1 (Spring 1959), 181-202.

39. LUKÁCS, Georg. Writer and Critic and Other Essays. New York, 1971.

40. MANHEIM, Karl. Ideologia e Utopia. Trad. Sérgio Magalhães Santeiro. Rio de Janeiro, Zahar Editores,1972, 278 p.

41. MARKOS, Donald William. The Humanism of Saul Bellow. Thesis. Ph.D. University of Illinois, 1966, 214p.

42. MARIN, Daniel. Voice and Structure in Saul Bellow's Novels. Thesis. Ph.D. The University of Iowa, 1972, 272 p.

43. MERTON, Robert. Social Theory and Social Structure. Chicago, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1957, 264p.

44. MORROW, Patrick. "Threat and Accomodation. The Novels of Saul Bellow." Midwest Quarterly, 8:389-411,1967.

45. MOSHER, H.F. "The Synthesis of Past and Present in Bellow's Herzog." Wascana Review, 1(6):30.48,1971.

46. NEWMAN, Charles. "Lives of the Artists." Harpers' Magazine, 251:82-5, 1975.

→

47. PAZ, Otávio. "Ambiguidade do Romance." In: Signos de Rotação, S.Paulo, Perspectiva :63-74, 1976.

48. PEARCE, Richard. "The Walker: Modern American Hero." Massachussetts Review, 5:761-64(Summer 1964)

49. POIRIER, Richard. "Herzog, or, Bellow in Trouble." In: Saul Bellow - A Collection of Critical Essays, Earl Rovit, ed, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1975,pp. 81-89.

50. _____. "Bellow's to Herzog." Partisan Review XXXII :264-271, Spring,1965.

51. PORTER, Gilbert. The Novels of Saul Bellow: A Formalist Reading. Thesis, Ph.D. University of Oregon, 1969, 235p.

52. _____. "Herzog: A Transcedental Solution to an Existential Problem." Forum,7:32-36, Spring, 1969.

53. _____. Whence she Power? The Artistry and Humanity of Saul Bellow. Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1974, 209 p.

54. RANS,Geoffrey. "The Novels of Saul Bellow." Review of English Literature, 4:18-30, October, 1963.

55. RATNER, Marc L. "Saul Bellow: Searcher in the City." (unpublished material).

56. RODRIGUES, Euzebio Leo. Quest for the Human: Theme and Structure in the Novels of Saul Bellow. Thesis.Ph.D. University of Pensylvania, 1970, 279 p.

57. ROSS,Theodore J. "Notes on Saul Bellow." Chicago Jewish Forum, 18:21-27, Winter 1959.

58. ROGER, Sale. "The Realms of Gold." Hudson Review, 28: 616-26, Winter, 1975.

59. SANDERS, Scott. D.H.Lawrence - The World of the Major Novels. London, Clarke, Dible & Brendon Ltd., 1973, 224p.

60. SARTRE, Jean Paul. O Existencialismo é um Humanismo. Trad. Vergílio Ferreira, 3a. ed. Lisboa, Editorial Presença, 1970, 298 p.

61. SCHULMAN, Robery. "The Style of Bellow's Comedy." PMLA, 83:109-17, March 1968.

62. SEWEL, W.J. Literary Structure and Value Judgement in the Novels of Saul Bellow. Thesis. Ph.D. Duke University, 1974, 271p.

→

63. SIMMEL, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." In: The Sociology of Georg Simmel. Trans and ed. by Kurt H. Wolf. Glencoe, The Free Press, 1950, pp.409-24.

64. STOCK, Irvin. "The Novels of Saul Bellow." Southern Review, 3:395-403, January, 1967.

65. SOLOTAROFF, Theodore (ed). Writers and Issues.New York, Mentor Book, 1969, 304 p.

66. TANNER, Tony. "Finctionalized Recall - or "The Settling of Scores! The Pursuit of Dreams!" In: City of Words, New York, 1971, pp.295-321.

67. _____. "Isolation and Affirmation." In:Saul Bellow. London, Oliver & Boyd, 1965, pp.103-117.

68. _____. "The Fighting Lazarus." In Saul Bellow.pp.71-86.

69. TODDY, Richard. "Scaping False Categories." Atlantic Monthly, 236:83-84, September, 1975.

70. TOFFLER, Alvin. Future Shock. New York, Random House, Inc. 1974, 561 p.

71. VELHO, Otávio Guilherme (org.) O Fenômeno Urbano. Rio, Zahar Editores, 2a. ed., 1973, 133p.

72. WEBER, Ronald. "Bellow's Thinkers." Western Humanities Review, 22:305-13, Autumn, 1968.

73. WIDMER, Kingsey. "Poetic Naturalism in the Contemporary Novel." Partisan Review, 26:467-72, Summer 1959.

74. WIETING, Molly Stark. A Quest for Order: The Novels of Saul Bellow. Thesis. Ph.D. The University of Texas, 1969, 228p.

75. WILLIAMS, Patricia. Saul Bellow's Fiction: A Critical Question. Thesis. Ph.D. Texas, A & M University,1972, 256p.

76. WIRTH,Louis. "O Urbanismo como Modo de Vida." Trad.Marina Correa Trenherz. In: VELHO, O.G. (org.) O Fenômeno Urbano. pp-90-113.

77. ZERAFFA, Michel. The Novel and Social Reality. Trans. Katherine Burns and Torn Burns. Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1976, 153 p.