

Memory, Death And Desire:

A New Protean Consciousness

In Saul Bellow's Fiction (4)

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The actions of an average Bellovian hero seem mad, and often touched by frenzy, as he is unable to find any personal meaning in socialized gestures. He is, in Sammler's words, a "registrar of madness" whose "postures are mocked by their opposites" (MSP, pp. 109–10). Herzog points out that the "Modern consciousness has this great need to explode its own postures" (H, p. 239). Such postures are typically expressed in religious, academic, familial, conventional or creative rituals. Joseph's mocking voice which ends *Dangling Man* continues to echo in the later novels as well. It expresses his disbelief in the military ritual to which he voluntarily subscribes (DM, p. 159). Herzog too discovers that the academic ritual of teaching and research does not provide him with any meaning and his academic interests decline. Augie March finds the institution of marriage and a settled life disturbing as it provides him with little meaning. He, therefore, seeks escape from it. Similarly, Charlie Citrine finds that his routine "creative" writing cease to have any meaning after some time. Though the play, *Von Trenk*, he wrote some time ago, provides him money and fame, it does not bring any genuine satisfaction. Charlie frequently gets into his "Chicago states." He describes it thus: "In a Chicago state I infinitely lack something, my heart swells, I feel a tearing eagerness. The sentient part of the soul wants to express itself" (HG, p. 67). In *Seize the Day*, Wilhelm's emotional breakdown in

the chapel, as already stated, marks the complete despair that overtakes him. He discovers that the religious ritual lies discredited.

In the absence of viable social rituals men must depend completely on themselves to structure experience. Herzog confesses at the beginning of the novel that he may be out of his mind (H, p. 7) after his second wife Madeleine Pontritter runs away with his neighbor-friend Valentine Gersbach. He goes after “reality with language” (H, p. 332). At the end of the novel he has been able to overcome his suffering: “At this time he had no messages for anyone. Nothing. Not a single word” (H, p. 416). He wishes to “explain,” “justify,” “clarify,” and “to make amends” so that he can distil the pain of his experience (H, p. 8). Madeleine has not been “just a wife, but an education” and “a childish person” like Herzog “has to be taught a lesson” (H, p. 239). After many violent emotional thrashings he feels “free from Madeleine.” The “grisly heaviness” lifts from his soul and the “sweetness of spirit,” a “tranquil fullness of heart” enters his “primordial” self (H, pp. 381–82). Towards the end Herzog, at his house in the Berkshires feels “a dizzy eagerness to *begin*” again. Humbled by experience he wants to “share with other human beings as far as possible and not destroy [his] remaining years in the same way” (H, p. 392).

Bellow portrays the madness of his protagonists and regards it endemic: “Of course, in an age of madness, to expect to be untouched by madness is a form of madness. But the pursuit of sanity can be a form of madness, too” (HRK, p. 27). Bellow believes that the American society “provides no effective form” to channel man’s energies.⁴⁸ Each must depend upon himself. When protagonists fail in life, specially in love, marriage, or vocation, they begin to be self-critical. Augie understands “how impossible it is to live without something infinitely mighty and great” (AAM, p. 413). Even a peripheral character, like

Allbee, embodies the awareness that he has no control over most events in his life: “The world wasn’t made exactly for me. What am I going to do about it?” (TV, p. 238).

Caught in the strong grip of incomprehensible forces, Wilhelm realizes the “day of reckoning” is at hand (STD, p. 103). Events follow in quick succession making him a victim of debilitating emotions. Frustration and rage racks his entire being when he reaches “the last limits of endurance.” Margaret continues to pester him for more money, while he begs her to give him some respite. In a fit of anger he attempts to tear off the telephone box from its fixtures at a public booth in Broadway when Margaret hangs up on him. Suddenly noticing that he is being watched by a horrified elderly lady he runs away “leaving a large amount of change on the shelf” (STD, p. 122). Then he resumes his search for the chameleonlike Tamkin and gets pushed by a Broadway crowd into the cool receptacle of a chapel where a funeral mass is in progress. Wilhelm seems fascinated by the “meditative look” of the dead man and feels a “splash of heartsickness.” He is awed by the actuality and immediacy of death. At that moment: “He caught his breath when he looked at the corpse, and his face swelled, his eyes shone hugely with instant tears” (STD, p. 124). He cries bitterly understanding his own failures, and the final failure of man symbolized in death, that now confronts him. “A man—another human creature, was what first went through his thoughts, but other and different things were torn from him. What’ll do? I’m stripped and kicked out... . Oh, Father, what do I ask of you” (STD, p. 125)? William James in his essay “The Sick Soul” points out that “our nature” seems “rooted in failure.” Failure engenders the “personal experience of humiliation” and helps the individual to reach “the deeper sense of life’s significance.” James continues: “Can things whose end is always dust and disappointment be the real goods which our souls require? Back of everything is the great scepter of uni-

versal death, the all-encompassing blackness.”⁴⁹

Wilhelm recognizes the significance of fellow-feeling and compassion when he confronts humiliation and disappointment in the form of another's death. Therefore, in his case, a new birth seems imminent, which is aptly suggested through the images of music and water. Water, a powerful image in the novel, acquires the force of a symbol as the novel reaches the end. In the beginning water threatens to overwhelm Wilhelm through tears when he feels shame and impotence (STD, p. 61). When he feels a sense of loneliness, of being let down, of letting down, “a glass of water” becomes “a hoop of brightness on the cloth;” it further becomes “an angel's mouth” where “truth for everybody may be found” (STD, p. 90). Water becomes a brilliance, a divine presence, the “truth” itself. Wilhelm's real self opens up as he walks beneath Times Square in the dark tunnel. He feels a deep sympathy and love for all city dwellers, and “all of a sudden, unsought, a general love for all these imperfect and lurid-looking people burst out in Wilhelm's breast.” In a “blaze of love” he sees them as “my brothers and my sisters” and blesses them all including himself (STD, p. 91). Water purifies his soul and releases feelings of love and community. The soul becomes the fish, “the mysterious being beneath the water” (STD, p. 100). Wilhelm does not want to cry before others, but when he controls himself he feels he is drowning (STD, p. 112). The strong need to cry pursues him relentlessly. Looking for Tamkin, Wilhelm enters the latter's room at Gloriana and watches the “tidal river” as he hears the “pianos” and voices singing “scales and opera” (STD, p. 114). The water image gets repeated again. Wilhelm goes to the health club, the swimming pool, looking for Tamkin and finds naked men, including his father, lying there. There he is once again rejected by his father (STD, pp. 115–7). Wilhelm is at his wits end. The soul, “the mysterious being beneath the water,” can be revealed only when he cries. And finally when he

cries uncontrollably in the chapel he hears “the heavy sea-like music” of his soul and he moves slowly “towards the consummation of his heart’s ultimate need” (STD, p. 126). Wilhelm has undergone a kind of humanistic purification by water, emerging as a new man to take hold of his destiny afresh.

Experiencing failure in life the protagonist is willing to understand others and accept things as they are. The acceptance of disorder and dislocation as facts of existence is expressed powerfully through the image of broken teeth. Dr. Shawmut in his sixties, “without ego defenses,” is in a confessional mode in the story *Him With His Foot in His Mouth*. He feels sorry for the hurt caused to Miss Rose about thirty-five years ago and wants “to make amends” in “this life between birth and death while it is still possible.” Apart from countless other physical ailments he has “teeth with cracked roots” (HWHFIHM, pp. 3–4). During the horse fall, Augie breaks a few teeth and because of it his smile bears an altered look (AAM, p. 489). It becomes symbolic of the new wisdom he has learned and that is to care for others and not to clutch at things that are going away: “The way must be not to care, but in that case you must know how really to care, and understand what’s pleasing or displeasing in yourself” (AAM, p. 401). Since he knows that he must not hold on to things when they are going away, he feels that pleading with Thea (in Mexico) to forgive him and stay would be utterly foolish.

The “Reality Instructors” in Bellow, at times, become a foil and at others impart wisdom to the protagonist (H, p. 42). They seek direction from experience itself and lead the hero, through a few traumatic experiences hastening his development. Operational and somewhat successful, they exhibit a pragmatic, sometimes a cruel maturity as a measure of urban survival. Though they live by a personal code of conduct, they also understand social obligation and existen-

tial human predicament. They are serious individuals but bring a playful attitude to life. Herzog acknowledges the realism of such a reality instructor in Simkin. However Herzog is quick to point out that, "It's the cruelty that gets me, not the realism" (H, p. 42). Herzog is probably thinking about Sandor Himmelstein, Gersbach and Madeleine when he says: "*Reality instructors. They want to teach you—to punish you with—the lessons of the Real*" (H, p. 157). Einhorn (in *The Adventures of Augie March*) and Cantabile (in *Humboldt's Gift*) and Dr. Tamkin (in *Seize the Day*) are obvious examples.

Dr. Tamkin, in his fifties, perhaps treats imaginary patients, invests other's money in the stock market, writes poetry and calls himself a "psychological poet" (STD, p. 75). He possesses the ability to convince anyone and catches people "in a trance" (STD, p. 88). Undoubtedly he is a "rare peculiar bird." With his philosophy of the "here-and-now," or *carpe diem*, he claims to be treating Wilhelm "for sometime" without the latter's knowledge (STD, p. 78). He advertises himself as "a healer" who is "on loan" to himself. However, he declares that, treating humanity is his real business: "I belong to humanity" (STD, p. 103). Tamkin realizes that Wilhelm suffers from "lots of guilt" and that he will "never make it without help in a world like this" (STD, pp. 79, 87). Unlike Wilhelm who avoids a confrontation with death till the very end, Tamkin confronts it squarely and accepts the void. He passionately tries to convince Wilhelm that death means total extinction of the individual in scientific terms. "What are thou?" he asks and answers himself, "'Nothing. That's the answer. Nothing'" (STD, p. 76). Despite his belief in the complete destruction of the individual in death, Tamkin affirms life. He willingly goes to the funeral of his acquaintance and professes his love for a woman. He has been able to bring together the "craters of the spirit" (DM, p. 31) and the "snarled-shoelace-care-free-laundry-ticket plainness" of daily life (AAM, p. 194), which most charac-

ters fail to achieve. Tamkin is one of the survivors, the real operators of city culture; one with his elements.

Charlie realizes that it is really difficult for “the modern spirit” to reconcile the “junk and wretchedness” of daily life with “the superior power of the soul” (HG, p. 73). But Tamkin resolves this impasse by suggesting that man should reconcile the “real soul” that demands higher things with the “pretender soul” that craves for lower things. This is what gestalt therapists, like Fitz Perls, have been advocating. Perhaps, Tamkin swindles Wilhelm to make him aware of himself and lead a more meaningful life. To call Tamkin’s act immoral is to miss the point. Not an ethically motivated man, Tamkin may not see his deception as immoral.⁵⁰ Therefore, Bellow suggests that civility is important to communal living since it helps to maintain cohesion in civil society. Herzog advises people to “*manage some civility*” in all situations, even when the situation becomes “*unendurable*” (H, p. 30). In the absence of civility, Herzog believes, nothing would hold urban society together. In *The Victim*, civility is given another name and is termed as “dignity” (TV, p. 122).

Susanne Langer points out that “the old metaphors have lost their aptness, the old models are broken, and humanity—especially the most sensitive and thoughtful part of humanity, everywhere—has lost its mental orientation and moral certitude.”⁵¹ Bellow understands that man “must be satisfied with symbols;” however man must “choose higher representations” and not the “imitative anarchy of the streets.” Sammler too understands that “Humankind, crazy for symbols, trying to utter what it doesn’t know itself” (MSP, p. 23). Accepting the “inevitability of imitation” he suggests that modern man should not follow anarchic models like Fidel Castro or “Hollywood extras” but “imitate good things” and “release the high qualities” (MSP, p. 137). He campaigns for a new

“colony of the spirit” (DM, p. 32) where, in a peaceful environment that is recognizably America, a new urban ethic grows. In such an environment contemporary man would find new ways of understanding the world and himself. Herzog imagines that in “the post-quixotic, post-Copernican U.S.A., where a mind freely poised in space might discover relationships utterly unsuspected by the seventeenth century man sealed in his smaller universe.” But he argues that “a quixotic was a Christian, and Moses E. Herzog was no Christian” (H, p. 349). Benn Crader, a great visionary like Humboldt, contemplates flowers and can visualize “behind the appearances” (MDHB, p. 253). However he loses faith in his visionary power and falls from grace.

Man must, Bellow suggests, retain his childhood innocence in adulthood if he wishes to make life endurable. Observing Roger’s composure and demeanor (Roger is Renata’s son from her first marriage and has been abandoned by her), Charlie feels that: “In early childhood this invisible work of the conceiving spirit may still be going on.” But as one grows up everything becomes “ordinary or dull.” Childhood innocence or “the home-world” (Humboldt’s observation) gets destroyed by “the prison house” of adult boredom. Humboldt himself is destroyed by this very prison house, so are others who wear the “costume of the higher misery” (HG, p. 431).

Frequent references to birds and insects underscore the importance of innocence. The repeated image of pigeons in the novels suggest innocence and sexual freedom necessary to rejuvenate man. It stands for the meaning life can acquire through it. Bellow, however, cautions us that a complete dependence upon childhood innocence would imply a belief in the complete centrality of self and may relegate responsibility to the periphery. Herzog is about to have a candle-light dinner with Ramona. The setting is romantically perfect: a bottle of

Pouilly Fuisse, shrimp remoulade and Turkish Mohammad al Bakkar singing in the background. Herzog finds the dinner “delicious” and tears of curious, mixed origin came into his eyes.” On the window-sill “the pigeons fluttered and went to sleep again.” The pigeons symbolize things which are simple, natural and homely. However Herzog seems to be “running away” from such domestic bliss. (H, p. 231). The pigeons also express the innocence Ramona possesses and the abandon she brings to their sexual union. Incidentally, Bellow finds the pigeons as the only delicate and graceful birds that still inhabit the city. Similarly, the locusts are used to denote the Dionysian, sexual abandon and the child-like curiosity some women, like Demmie Vonghel and Mimi Villars, possess. Charlie feels that the “slight silken scrape” of Demmie’s “knock-knees” would send him “soaring over mountain ranges” as if he were a locust (HG, p. 151). True enough when Demmie dies in an aircraft crash in South America, Charlie searches for the wreckage and her remains for months. His intensity of feeling is conveyed by just a single sentence: “I spent several months in the jungle looking for her” (HG, p. 165). However, when she was alive he skirted the issue of marriage: “what she mostly wanted of course was an engagement ring” (HG, p. 165). His incorrigible doubt prevents him from establishing a lasting relationship with Denise, or with any other woman, and this becomes a pattern around which the novel is built.

VI

The schematic pattern in Bellow centers around the uncertainty and doubt characters feel about their lives, especially their contact and rupture with women. In *Dangling Man*, as Joseph awaits a life in the army he questions his decision. Asa Leventhal wonders if he has really committed an offense against Kirby Allbee and should he compensate him. In *Seize the Day*, Wilhelm exam-

ines the purpose of his life, beliefs and relationships. Herzog vacillates between a commitment to a staid marital life and dynamic academic life. Modern doubt seems to be the topic around which subsequent novels, from *The Adventures of Augie March* to *The Dean's December* are built. Regret seems to be the predominant emotion uniting the novels. Herzog experiences regret upon the departure of Madeleine, while Augie suffers from anxiety upon encountering death. Corde finds Valiere's impending death somewhat unnerving and disturbing. Fearing the loss of material goods urban life provides, characters multiply love relationships and intensify their effort to achieve money and fame. Fearing failure in love, Augie multiplies his areas of contact, while Charlie tries to acquire greater fame and money. These three topics occupy the average Bellovian protagonist completely and bind the novel together.

The repetition of similar situations intensifies the rhythm in the novels and expresses the pain of characters succinctly. Madeleine's departure in *Herzog* becomes the central motif. The novel begins with an implicit statement of separation from Madeleine and then describes the bitterness that ensues (H, pp. 7–19). The third and fourth sections deal with Herzog's extra-marital affairs (H, pp. 19–29). The story then returns to Ramona and the chapter ends (H, pp. 33–7). Through repetition, the story returning to Madeleine, establishes the centrality of the event. Similarly in *Seize the Day*, Wilhelm seeks financial and emotional sustenance from his father, Dr. Adler, but is repeatedly denied help. Irving Howe finds that Bellow effectively employs different styles mixing them with the Yiddish syntax and transforming them to suit the American idiom.⁵² Bellow uses alliterative phrases and erudite sentences to generate mild surprise and subdued irony. He dexterously combines the expansive Biblical rhythms with the sonorous rhythm of Yiddish. His alliterative prose seems both musical and somewhat comic.

Self-mockery and intellectual terseness seem to characterize Herzog's style. His letters to the living and the dead are often mocking and self-incriminating. The "disorganized" condition of his valise filled with unsorted "bushels of notes" highlights his hysteria. Occasionally disjointed, probing and self-questioning his prose seems agitated:

Herzog made himself dull by repeating what was right. He was maddening, too. He realized it. He appeared to know how everything ought to go, down to the smallest detail (under the category of "Free Concrete Mind," misapprehension of a universal by the developing consciousness—reality opposing the "law of the heart," "alien necessity gruesomely crushing individuality, (*undsoweiter*). Oh, Herzog granted that he was in the wrong. But all he asked, it seemed to him, was a bit of cooperation in his effort, benefiting everyone, to work toward a meaningful life. Hegel was curiously significant but also utterly cockeyed. Of course. That was the whole point. Simpler and without such elaborate metaphysical rigmarole was Spinoza's Prop XXXVII; man's desire to have others rejoice in the good in which he rejoices, not to make others live according to his way of thinking—*ex ipsius ingenio*

(H, p. 154).

Allusions to Hegel and Spinoza, phrases from German and Latin and self-incriminating logic, force the reader to come to grips with the intellectual quality of Bellow's mind. The style exactly assesses Herzog's thought-process but remains skeptical about its own evaluation. Herzog mocks the intellectual traditions of Europe with statements like, "Hegel was curiously significant but utterly cockeyed" and "misapprehension of a universal by the developing consciousness." Writing a letter to Edwin Schrodinger on the latter's book *What is*

Life? Herzog says:

In your remarks on entropy ... How the organism maintains itself against death—in your words, against thermodynamic equilibrium ... Being an unstable organization of matter, the body threatens to rush away from us. It leaves. It is real. It! Not we! Not I! This organism, while it has the power to hold its own form and suck what it needs from its environment, attracting a negative stream of entropy, the being of other things which it uses, returning the residue to the world in simpler form. Dung. Nitrogenous wastes. Ammonia.

(H, p. 220, emphasis in the original).

Herzog questions Schrodinger's scientific theory by using exclamation marks. "It! Not we! Not I!" Yet he wonders if Schrodinger could be right and after all the individual might be finally reduced to "*Dung. Nitrogenous wastes. Ammonia.*" Herzog's letters, as Philip Rahv asserts, "teem with ideas, thus converting Herzog's personal crisis into the more impersonal crisis of modern thinking."⁵³ An ideal protagonist in Bellow tries to maintain "the passageway between various states of consciousness."⁵⁴ Therefore Bellow's novels lack a strong plot structure.

The inability to make sense of events haunting the characters seem to be expressed through the fragmentary style. The "nonsense, syllables, exclamations, twisted proverbs and quotations" (H, p. 9) show Herzog's confusion. While taking a night-class in a New York school, he suddenly stops and begins writing furiously some Yiddish sayings he remembers from childhood. He writes:

Death—die—live again—die again—live.

No person, no death.

And, On the knees of your soul? Might as well be

Useful. Scrub the floor.

Next, Answer a fool according to his folly lest he be wise in his own conceit.

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be like unto him.

Choose one.

(Emphasis in the original, H, p.9)

The disjointed prose also mocks some of the ideas of Jewish tradition. Bellow's style in *Herzog* and *Humboldt's Gift* becomes intense and authentic as he only has to look within and write.

Bellow creates stylistic buoyancy through alliteration. However, in *The Adventures of Augie March* alliteration becomes a cheap gimmick. Observe page 137 of the novel:

Giving herself these feminine cares in the brightness of her suite in the soft-blown-open summer beauty, she was not satisfied without social digging and the toil of grievances and antipathies.

And still his wife is stupid as her own feet, and she drinks, and the daughter is a drunkard too... .

—the bellhop goes out and buys them a bottle of bourbon and bets on a horse for them... .

You needed a strong constitution to stick to your splendor of morning in the face of these damnation chats. I had to struggle when she called out her whole force of frights... .

Take another one on page 244: "...I don't doubt, sick eyes through the clear gray panes where the kids were warring and shooting snowballs that splatted on the

black trunks and soared in the elegant scheme of twigs.”

Bellow employs hyphenated words to portray the hyphenated nature of the American-Jewish protagonists and the atomization of the experience city life fosters. He creates new words to suit the needs of the urban reality he represents. In *The Adventures of Augie March*, on page 47, there are more than a dozen hyphenated words representing city life and its inhabitants. They are “big-time,” “dim-witted,” “high-heeled,” “love-galled,” “fever-feeding,” “high-piled,” and “heavy-stepping.”

Bellow’s style changes according to the demands of his fiction. The type of emotion to be portrayed becomes the main criterion for the choice of a particular style. In *The Dangling Man* Joseph must find a way to articulate his anxiety of future and death. He has left his job at Inter-American Travel Bureau and awaits indictment into the U.S. Army. The three-and-a-half months waiting period is anxiety-filled. He depends upon himself for guidance and starts keeping a diary to organize his thoughts. The diary also covers a three-and-a-half months period and is Joseph’s best companion. It is his best method to assuage the pain of the unknown in his present “state of demoralization” (DM, p. 7).

Poetic prose is the hallmark of Bellow’s esthetic sensibility and expresses the feelings his protagonists bring to capturing details. Disgusted with the boredom of bureaucratic meetings, Herzog writes, “I try to look right and proper but my face turns dead with boredom, my fantasy spills soup and gravy on everybody, and I want to scream out or faint away” (H, p. 39). Bellow’s intense passion for detail is reflected in the description of Sandor’s feelings as Herzog goes to Sandor for some legal advice on the issue of his divorce from Madeleine. While giving Herzog advice Sandor gets angry and this is described as the “lava

of that heart may have pushed those ribs out of shape and the force of that hellish tongue made his teeth protrude” (H, pp. 109–10). This force is evident early in Bellow’s second novel *The Victim*, and becomes strongest in *Humboldt’s Gift*.

Bellow has destroyed our old understanding of self and belief in traditional ways of philosophizing. He has shown how new tensions dismay contemporary man as he confronts the world of “formless turbulence, news, slogans, mysterious crisis, and unreal configurations.”⁵⁵ In a “Forward” to *Something To Remember Me By* Bellow points out that “Our consciousness is a staging area, a field of operations for all kinds of enterprises, which make free use of it.” It is true that “we are at liberty to think our own thoughts” but we have to live with “ideas and notions” taught by “‘idea men,’ advertisers, communications people, columnists, anchormen, et cetera.” In the midst of these “mass of distractions” we must try “to maintain internal order.” (STRMB, pp. viii–ix). Therefore, doubt and belief, pain and joy are feelings that coexist in his novels. Questionably man has changed, just as the reality he interacts with has altered. “We have so completely debunked the old idea of the self that we can hardly continue in the same way,” says Bellow.⁵⁶ The belief in fate or destiny is over and a new protean entropy ensues. In the absence of an earlier world-view, a new protean world-view prevails professing the functional aspect of individuals—“these particles may have functions but certainly lack fates” (AAM, p. 516). In a time when tradition lies discredited, Bellow advocates that man’s happiness depends upon his reliance on intuition and not on religion or metaphysics. “Perhaps some power within us will tell us what we are,” says Bellow, “now that old misconceptions have been laid low.”⁵⁷ In his fiction Bellow amply demonstrates the preponderance of this “power.”

Notes and References

48. Saul Bellow, "Hemingway and the Image of Man," *Partisan Review*, XX, No. 20 (May/June 1953), p. 342
49. James, p. 120. James enunciates the conditions, when met, can lead to morbidity: "a little loss of animal toughness, a little irritable weakness and descent of the pain-threshold, will bring the worm at the core of all our usual springs of delight into full view, and turn us into melancholy metaphysicians," (pp. 120–21).
50. Tamkin retains his innocence and yet accepts the responsibility of adulthood; he is a great teacher to Wilhelm. Some critics find Tamkin dishonest and manipulative. Gilead Morahg thinks that there "can be little doubt that Tamkin is an unabashed liar and manipulator." However, he admits that after his encounter with Tamkin, Wilhelm "emerges a better, freer, and more aware individual..." (Gilead Morahg, "The Art of Dr. Tamkin: Matter and Manner in *Seize the Day*," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 25, No. 1, [Spring 1979], p. 105). Another critic, holding the same opinion, is William J. Handy (*Modern Fiction: A Formalistic Approach* [Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1971], p. 125). Daniel Fuchs while studying Bellow's revised drafts of *Seize the Day* concludes that Bellow works at clarifying "the paradox of transfiguration through suffering" in each successive draft. "Maybe life's most important work was being done in suffering, as Wilhelm once thought." (Daniel Fuchs, *Saul Bellow: Vision and Revision* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1984] pp. 96–97). Some other critics find Tamkin's character unreliable—and do not understand the protean nature of his personality—and as such wanting in character. Some of these critics are: Keith M. Opdahl (*The Novels of Saul Bellow* [Univ. Park: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1967], pp. 108–9); Maxell Geismar (*American Moderns: From Rebellion to Conformity*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1968, p. 219); Richard Chase, ("The Adventures of Saul Bellow: The Progress of a Novelist," *Commentary*, Vol. 27, [April 1959], p. 326; J. C. Levenson ("Bellow's *Dangling Man*," *Critique*, Vol. 3, No. 3 [Summer 1960], p. 9); and R. R. Dutton, *Saul Bellow* [New York: Twayne], 1971, p. 93). A third group of critics, which finds Tamkin's ideas contradicting his actions, fails to see his operational behavior. Some of these critics are: John J. Clayton (*Saul Bellow: In Defense of Man* [Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1971], p. 29); David D. Galloway (*The Absurd Hero in American Fiction*, rev. ed. [Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1970], p. 105), Marons Klein (*After Alienation: American Novels A Mid-Century* [Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Co., 1964], p. 40), and Howard M. Harper (*Desperate Faith* [Chapel Hill:

Univ. of Carolina Press, 1967], p. 38).

51. Langer, p. 145.

52. Howe, p. 594.

53. Rahv, p. 394.

54. Anais Nin, *The Novel of the Future* (New York: Collier Books, 1972), p. 32.

55. Saul Bellow, "Recent American Fiction," *American Studies International*, XV, No. 3 (Spring 1977), p. 9.

56. *Ibid*, p. 18.

57. *Ibid*.