The Art of Control:
Theatrical Watching, Apostrophe and Acting in Saul Bellow's Herzog

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Abstract
So wide-ranging is Bellow's employment of the acting image and hence of personas in Herzog that references to stage, acting and script-writing are dispersed everywhere in the novel. A vigilant study of this image reveals that the mutual relationships and social encounters of major characters bear on dramatic scenes written, directed, and performed by the characters themselves.

But what does Bellow try to discover through the medium of acting and hence persona? How is it reflected in his treatment of his main themes and characters? And does it affect the narrative point of view? In order to understand the image more deeply and answer these questions, I will study it in relation to three groups of characters: first, Madeleine, Gersbach, and some of Herzog's friends; second, Ramona (the newest girl friend) and his parents and relatives; and third, Herzog, the versatile actor-audience and the ever writer of the unsent letters or the multiple character.

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In his 1984 contentious article, Philip Wander examines and criticizes many aspects of rhetorical techniques employed to refer to links in social spheres. According to him, the complexity of meaning comes from its intention as well as the intended audience to receive it. He writes, "The 'meaning' of a speech will vary with the audience." In consequence, interpretation is likely to be greatly distinct from the intended meaning of communiqué. In addition, Wander notices that "through the speech and/or the speaking situation" some audiences he calls "the Third Persona" are treated as "not present," or worse, they are "rejected or negated" (Wander, 1984 208–209).

This perception of the "Third Persona" correlates to the First Persona (the speaker and his intent) or the "I" in speech, and the Second Persona, that is, the "you" in discourse, both of whom enjoy open channels of contact and free possibilities of links and expressions. The Third Persona, however, is "the 'it' that is not present, that is objectified in a way that 'you' and 'I' are not" (Wander, 209). As a theory, the "Third Persona" is, thus, grounded in ethical roots as it emphasizes the liberation of "human potential" (Wander 205) and the recognition of the oppressed social voice. As such, it applies to groups as well individuals who have been historically deprived of human rights, or have been biased against due to their age, sexual preference, gender, citizenship, race, or religion (Lucaites, Condit and Caudill, 1999 370).

Although Wander's theory is judgmental and affirms very decidedly moral standards, it nonetheless asserts the clear dominant role of a single mode of persona and rejects ambiguity of meaning and interpretation. This entails that man basically possesses a master situation, a situation of situations according to which reality is fixed and objective rather than plastic and subjective and that society presumes a common accepted goal which requires an ad hoc social cohesion. Moreover, it considers the first persona as permanently a negative situation while the third persona is the ultimate condition of the oppressed and the victim. Since the theory itself relates to social contexts and human discourse, it denies what it naturally connotes. I mean the context that the theory describes is theatrical and people can play roles which are not often calculatedly or non-intentionally transparent or consistent. Therefore, it is only natural that people can simultaneously play different roles, their utterances may signify various and even contrasting messages and the audiences are likely to receive a mixture of meanings or give various interpretations to the same code. I am not referring to evil intentions of the players regardless of the persona they endorse. One can be a third persona to others and first to himself or be a first persona to himself while others see him as a third persona. The same human can be both and other. That is how Socrates got the Hemlock: he was a first persona to himself and treated his crew as second personas and to the democratic voter's viewpoint he presented a mixture of personas, and he knowingly played on it. Perhaps this means that there is some kind of transaction, dialogue, dialectic and a meeting of the different personas and they have a dynamic potential. Furthermore, Wander's theory seeks to explore the silent voices thus ruling out the possibility that third personas can and should take the initiative of voicing their demands.

Wander's theory is mostly germane to understanding Bellow's Herzog. Nowhere are Bellow's various characters and personas seen as clearly as the scene where the narrator presents Herzog, seeing himself retrospectively from "his sofa in New York now" (8) contemplating Madeleine, his ex-wife and himself. The narrator says:

She had prepared the event with a certain theatrical genius of her own. She wore black stockings, high heels, a lavender dress with Indian brocade from Central America…. Her nose…. worked slightly when she was peculiarly stirred. To Herzog even this tic was precious. There was a flavor of subjugation in his love for Madeleine. Since she was domineering, and since her loved her, he had to accept the flavor that was given. (8)

The scene centers upon the words: scriptwriting, acting and show and the characters are extremely conscious of acting. Madeleine, the "domineering," "theatrical genius," is depicted as an appalling brand of a third persona while practicing her amazing power as such. She is a playwright who is also playing the prime actress in a script which she imposes on Herzog, whom she regards as the silenced audience-actor, a third persona. Through Herzog's eyes, the narrator makes it clear that self-examiner Herzog is both an engaged spectator and a theater critic, whose stated admiration of Madeleine's acting talents is undermined by his ironical tone and his implicit censorious attitude. As such, Herzog and the narrator represent no particular persona but a blend of personas. It appears one can have a role in life other than the three personas proposed by Wander. He is still a third persona but he has by no means submitted to import of the role as dictated by Madeleine. To the contrary, he is the silent persona who measures the standards of all personas. Herzog's sense of active engagement isn't contradicted by the implied sense of indifferent passivity. He does not simply succumb to the role of a mute actor or a silent spectator in Madeleine's script; rather he plays a role of his choice.

So wide-ranging is Bellow's employment of the acting image and hence of personas in Herzog that referencesto stage, acting and script-writing are dispersed everywhere in the novel. A vigilant study of this image reveals that the mutual relationships and social encounters of major characters bear on dramatic scenes written, directed, and performed by the characters themselves. These scenes involve assigning certain attitudes to others, shaping situations and making assertions regarding reality for purposes of persuading an audience or bringing about a change in them. Acting becomes a form of tyranny when playwrights or actors portray themselves as first personas seeking to impose submissive positions on their audience regarding them as the meek recipients, the obedient spouses and the inferior characters or the negated third personas. Acting becomes commendable, however, when both opposing sides function in accordance with the appropriate type of persona, i. e. agree on common plans, contrive dialogic situations, have open channels of interaction both ways and obtain mutual benefits.

But what does Bellow try to discover through the medium of acting and hence persona? How is it reflected in his treatment of his main themes and characters? And does it affect the narrative point of view? In order to understand the image more deeply and answer these questions, I will study it in relation to three groups of characters: first, Madeleine,
Gersbach, and some of Herzog's friends; second, Ramona (the newest girl friend) and his parents and relatives; and third, Herzog, the versatile actor-audience and the ever writer of the unsent letters or the multiple character.

With regard to the first group of characters, represented by Madeleine, Herzog's ex-wife, it may well be assumed that she conducts a script which she tries to impose on Valentine Gersbach, Herzog's best andickle friend, Tennie Ponttriters, Madeleine's mother; Zelda, Herzog's aunt; Dr. Edvig, the psychiatrist and others, who all pretend to embrace the roles of the good version of the first and second personas. In fact, they are negative reorientations of these personas acting in life as if on a stage in a play which they wrote. They are landlocked friends hiding within a facade of a collective set of values, but using it as a masquerade to veil their moral inertia. According to their script, their spiritual, economical and racial superiority to others outside of their power circle gives them the right to be representatives of the first persona. They act as they wish when they wish and therefore lack the desire to convince anyone of anything except their right to do as they please when they please.

Madeleine's remarkable theatrical skills can perhaps be related to her background. Her father was "a famous impresario" (8) who "ran a school for actors" (28) while her mother kept a house "which looked like a stage set" (28). Herzog becomes witness to her theatricality before their marriage, when he, like a spectator, watches her transform herself into an older person so as to look mature and fit for the church. He says,

As said by Herzog, to enact her show Madeleine employs an array of plots all of which are directed against him. One is Herzog as a voiceless audience. Herzog crossly believes: "Madeleine had to assure the success of her show: rise, fame and alluring —

According to Herzog, "Conversion was a theatrical event for Madeleine. Theater—the art of upstarts, opportunists, would-be aristocrats…. Obviously she had religious feeling, but the glamour and the social climbing were more important" (112; italics in source). Clearly, the quotation opposes reality and authenticity to falsity and glamour. The latter category which is linked to theater has the upper hand. Madeleine regards conversion as a theatrical show or a medium of manipulation that lets her practice her first persona freely to attain her goals: rise, fame and allure. She also uses renowned people or actors to assure the success of her show: "Monsignor himself was an actor. One role, but a fat one. ... You are famous for converting celebrities, and she went to you" (112; Italics in source).

In effect, Madeleine uses an array of theatrical schemes to achieve her purposes. Like a true playwright and an obsessed first persona, she writes her own script, defines her purposes, insists on its reality and imposes it on her friends and acquaintances asking them to keep to the rigid boundaries of the play. The same idea of associating the theme of power with scriptwriting is expressed in The Adventures of Augie March, where each character tries to impose scripts on others. Augie makes it clear that the world is "made up of these inventors or artists, each in his own way trying to recruit other people to play a supporting role and sustain him in his make-believe. The great chiefs and leaders recruit the greatest number, and that's what their power is" (March 1977, 448). On the face of it, Madeleine seems to endorse Goffman's concept of the "team," where a group of individuals "co-operate" in performance, attempting to enhance the group's performance and to achieve common goals. Every team member is dedicated to a front that is perceived to boost the group's performance. In cases of incongruity, the divergent member is penalized by the group (79).

As said by Herzog, to enact her show Madeleine employs an array of plots all of which are directed against him. One is psychological. In an attempt to explicate this technique to his aunt Zelda, Herzog crossly believes: "Madeleine had convinced Zelda that she too was exceptional. Everyone close to Madeleine, everyone drawn into the drama of her life became exceptional, deeply gifted, brilliant" (38). The word "drama" keeps the acting imagery vibrantly before our eyes.
while the phrase "convincing Zelda that she too was exceptional," exposes her conniving mode in conscripting people to her show. No one is immune against her wickedness.

Worse, Herzog supposes that Madeleine runs a thorough female script. When he fails to win Zelda to his script, he flies into rage and adopts an all-inclusive mind-set against all women. So, he yells at Zelda in one of his unsent letter claiming that,

*Of course if you considered me dangerous it was your duty to lie…. Female deceit. Thrills of guile. Sexual complicity, conspiracy..... I watched you bully Herman to get a second car and I know how you can bitch! You thought I might kill Mady and Valentine…. I see you had tremendous pleasure, double excitement, lying from an overflowing heart.* (Italics in source; 41)

Clearly, Herzog is sure there is a female script that panders to the worst in women: treachery, sensual connivance, abuse, excessive pleasure and lies. Ironically, the actresses are willingly committed to strict discipline and have deep sense of authenticity in lying.

Another technique is disclosed following his meetings with Dr. Edvig. In accordance with Herzog, Madeleine has such a fascinating character that she through swindling can take over people from a distance on account of her temperament and actions. Summarizing how she manages to have power over Edvig, Herzog states that she “became the principal figure in the analysis, and dominated it as she dominated me. And come to dominate you…. You said you could see why she had fascinated me….she enriched her record by conning you!” (55).

In a letter to Shapiro, Herzog divulges another trick which exposes an extra aspect of Madeleine's character. In line with Herzog's perceptions, she "lured me out of the learned world, got in herself, slammed the door, and is still in there, gossiping about me" (77). The word "lure" by and large suggests temptation by arousing desire but it also has positive connotations intensifying the mystery of Madeleine's wicked systems of functioning. What is more, the quotation sheds more light on Madeleine's astounding intelligence manifested in her treading the academic sphere and in defeating a prominent figure there. Additionally, it indicates the strenuous effort invested in her well-studied scheme and the callousness of her endeavor to dispossess Herzog of an exceptional asset over and above besmirching his reputation.

Furthermore, Madeleine confuses Herzog's world and fights him with his own tools. To be more precise, she appoints herself as Herzog's teacher, the dominant first persona, and lectures him. “The more Madeleine and Gersbach lectured me,” he said, “the more I thought that my only purpose was to lead a quiet, regular life. She said my quietness was more of my scheming” (192). Sardonically, the switch in roles and the turn upside down-world she creates is reminiscent of the theatrical sphere and is not very far removed from Bakhtin's world of carnivalesque. In the carnivals of popular culture, he argues, the social hierarchies of everyday life are blasphemed and turned on their head by generally oppressed energies and voices (Robert Stam, 1989 86). But while the carnival spirit is an anti-hegemonic strategy to escape the hierarchy, or tyrannical power like the church, or capitalism followed by the restoration of the social order, Madeleine intends to maintain her despotic authority over Herzog. Ironically, when her authority is obeyed, she has reason to believe that his silence is a role he has learnt to play.

By far and away, her most treacherous design is when she conscripts Gersbach to her script to co-direct Herzog's "every step" (53). What adds insult to injury is the fact that Herzog has not been aware of their scheme. Worse still, after depriving him of his roles as a father, a husband, a scholar and an owner, he is kicked out of his place. “All the decisions were made by them…. And when they decided that I had to go, they worked out all the details…” (194) Herzog grumbles. Madeleine's conduct is evidence that she and Valentine treat Herzog to the principle of Wander's notion of the third persona, i. e. the "unacceptable, undesirable, insignificant" audience (1984, 209). Undeniably, Herzog is the "it" that is not present. Coincidently, Herzog is a classical paradigm of Goffman's idea of "non-person." Madeleine and Gersbach consider him an individual who is present during the performance, but they usually ignore him and view him as if he were not there, to quote Goffman (1959, 132). And after Herzog is expelled, he, in an unsent letter to Edvig, bitterly exposes their deceit, depicting Martin Buber's concept of the "I-it relationship" (64). Whilst Wander, Goffman and Buberseek to acknowledge the unappreciated social voice, advocate a relationship of mutuality and fight detachment and oppression, Madeleine hunts for the attainment of her absolute power. She becomes the negative convoy of the first person who considers all people as worthless third personas.

What makes Madeleine further assure her image as a first persona in complete control of the show is also her ability to choose recruits who are by nature committed to artificiality, phoniness, deception, and wickedness. So she trusts them to run their own independent shows to foster the master play. The list of this group includes Valentine Gersbach; Tennie Pontritters; Zelda; Dr. Edvig, the psychiatrist and others. For the sake of brevity, however, I will discuss two of them: Gersbach and Tennie.

Gersbach is the most prominent actor in Madeleine's script. He is basically a negative type of the second persona who blindly plays roles assigned to him by Madeleine. He is molded in the milieu of the American literary convention of the "Confidence Man" characterized by Karen Halttunen as "a skilled actor" who knows how to effortlessly "deceive others through false appearances." Through promising friendship and entertainment, he leads untutored youths into "a gorgeous theater - the seducer's natural habitat" (Halttunen 1982, 2). Like a real "Confidence Man," 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" (193). When, for instance, Herzog complains against Madeleine, Gersbach says she is a "bitch" (61). In another event he claims that
Herzog and Madeleine, "meant more to him than wife and child," and their fight "was tearing him to pieces" (194). He lets Herzog believe he thinks Madeleine is "a psychopath" (194).

Gersbach's ability to play these roles is a sign of his various talents particularly the one he uses to detect the needs of people. As said by Herzog.

"He's a ringmaster, popularizer, liaison for the elites. He grabs up the celebrities and brings then before the public. And makes all sorts of people feel that he has exactly what they've been looking for. Subtlety for the subtlety. Warmth for the warm. For the crude, crudity. For the crooks, hypocrisy. Atrocity for the atrocious. Whatever your heart desires." (215)

Gersbach mannerisms are reminiscent of two real-life people admired by Saul Bellow: a notable Chicago confidence man called "the Yellow Kid" and the Soviet premier Khrushchev. Like Gersbach, their gestures and manners are described as convincing theatrical performances associated with lying and deceit, and violence. In his interview with the Kid, Bellow asserts that the Kid's power lies in his thinking skills which guide his role-playing. The Kid says, "How was I to live? My power lay in words. In words I became a commander. Moreover, I could not lead a tame life of monotony. I need excitement, variety, danger, intellectual stimulus" (1956, 43). The Kid's philosophy is analogous with Gersbach's thinking. Through words the Kid regards himself as an actor who directs and writes his own script as he goes, trying, getting rid of, adding onto, contrasting and fabricating new roles. This is perhaps one implication of what the Kid means by saying that he became a "commander" in quest of "excitement, variety, danger, intellectual stimulus." In an endeavour to explain his strategies, The Kid adds

"I was a psychologist," he went on. "My domain was the human mind. A Chinese scholar with whom I once studied told me, 'People always see themselves in you.' With this understanding I entered the lives of my dupes. The man who lives by an idea enjoys great superiority over those who live by none. To make money is not an idea; that doesn't count. I meant a real idea. It was very simple. My purpose was invisible. When they looked at me they saw themselves. I only showed them their own purpose." (1956, 43)

The quotation above parallels the philosophies of Gersbach who, as Herzog says, "makes all sorts of people feel that he has exactly what they've been looking for." At the core of the Kid's and Gersbach's viewpoint is the idea of considering people as silenced audiences, and themselves as playwrights, first personas. Furthermore, they are both presented as persecuting doubles, a motif which suggests links with psychoanalytical theorizations, particularly the works of Otto Rank. In other words, what the Kid says about himself and Herzog about Gersbach is applicable to Rank, who maintains that the narcissistic esteem of one's own ego, the horror of the destruction of the self, leads to the creation of an image similar to the self in the double, thus assuring oneself of a second life (1971, 85). Perhaps that is why Herzog says to Ramona, "I sometimes see all three of us as a comedy team ... with me playing the straight man. People say that Gersbach imitates me—my walk, my expressions. I'm his second Herzog" (190).

Gersbach's similarity to the Russian Premier is even more vigorous. Just as the Russian leader, whom Herzog witnessed when "he pounded the desk with his shoe" (161) dominates the press, TV screens, the UN Assembly and the midtown streets although he was an uninvited, most unwanted guest, Gersbach is "all over the place. On committees, in the papers.... He's on television! Fantastic.... And now he's turned out to be a terrific operator—covers the city in his Lincoln Continental, wearing a tweed coat of a sort of salmon-ruke color" (96). Herzog's words need no further discussion. Both are actors and enjoy the crowd's attention. According to Bellow, Khrushchev "played up to the crowd and luxuriated in its attention, behaving like a comic artist in a show written and directed by himself" (1961, 106). Bellow's description of Khrushchev is unquestionably true of Gersbach. Beyond Bellow's enthusiastic affirmation of Khrushchev's ability to write, direct and to have an absolute control of "the center of the stage," stands Khrushchev's mastery of "the privilege of direct emotional self-expression" which enables him to compel Americans to think about him (1961, 107). This implies that for Bellow the world is a stage where some people are actors while others are audience members; both should lend themselves to passionate outbursts so as to be in close touch with reality and lead a convincing life/play. This conceivably elucidates why Herzog usually refers to Gersbach as an "actor." Attacking Simkin's proposition that Gersbach can be a good father, Herzog with revulsion labels him as "a tragic-love actor," (217) and distastefully insists that Madeleine, "loves the actor" (219).

Tennie Pontottires, Madeleine's mother, is another crucial actress in Madeleine's script. She sets the ground for Madeleine's script and helps it thrive. Upon meeting Herzog, Tennie, the wife of the "famous impression"(8), improvises an act to set Herzog up. Investing a pitiful tone immersed with pathetic words and decorated by a corresponding conduct, she addresses him with an eye to arousing his mercy: "You'll have to give the child the only thing that can help her." Tennie took off her elaborate glasses, now making no effort to disguise her weeping...." (109). Undoubtedly, Tennie does not try to conceal her artificiality from Herzog, who says, "There was a measure of hypocrisy and calculation in Tennie's method, but behind this, again, was real feeling for her daughter and her husband; and behind this real feeling there was something still more meaningful and somber" (109). Much as he is repulsed by her theatrical deceit, Herzog is, nonetheless, struck by the authenticity of her maternal emotions. Conspicuously, the antithesis is contained within the thesis. Behind the monarchy of outward shows which asserts an outwardly first persona, the theater exposes a genuine reality of a third persons. On the one hand, the narrator asserts that the theater image puts Herzog, Bellow and the readers into the same dubious dominion of artificiality as the theater of the absurd represented by Pirandello, Ionesco, and Genet. The narrator makes it clear that "Herzog was all too well aware of the layers upon layers of reality—loathsomeness, arrogance, deceit, and then—God help us all!—truth, as well" (109). Reality, he maintains, consists of a layer of masks all of which are appalling and deplorable. When one dreadful mask falls another terrible one comes into sight. On the other hand, the narrator points out that when the last layer is stripped, Herzog, and behind him the readers, undergoes a moment of shock
and terror as the mother is disclosed in the vulnerability of her unsocialized reality. Herzog understands that "Tennie was setting him up" that "he was being manipulated by" her but that has been a mask under which she hides her worry (109). This is exactly what Goffman's notion of people proposes in his notion of theatricality. As maintained by him, people in society are apt to split themselves into groups of actors and spectators with the latter responding to the acting roles approved of by the former. So every actor is masked. When the mask falls, "the individual who performs the character will be seen for what he largely is, a solitary player involved in a harried concern for his production. Behind many masks and many characters, each performer tends to wear a single look, a naked un-socialized look" (Goffman 207).

This situation implies that the people we know are covered by a thick layer of masks that they adopt different types of personas and that it is difficult to define which persona they foster or which mask the wear. It denotes as well that our world is far from being real and transparent. Does this mean that the theater promote the sphere of falsehood? But as we see the theatrical falsity is penetrated by Herzog even before that last layer is taken off. Thus, it might be said that life has common ties with the deceptiveness of the stage but it might also be said that the theater unveils the indisputable level of reality, the realm of authenticity beneath the sphere of facades.

Madeleine's theater is counter-balanced by other groups of actors who do not exclude others from their relationships or acts of communication and offer healthy and peaceful bonds. Herzog offers two teams of such safe stages: the domestic stage and the love stage. In a letter to Nachman, Herzog expresses relief over his "family theater" (136) which is free from links governed by the offensive view of others as alienated audiences. Rather, it has room for all personas as long as they are associated with decent feelings, moral suffering and dignity. The members of this team includes father Herzog, his wife, the children, Tante Zipporah and Ravitch; the stage is often a rundown neighbourhood, and the play often features the father's failed adventures or his experiences as an estranged third persona. Describing how Father Herzog returns home on foot after being hijacked with Voplonsky, Herzog says,

That was how he entered the dark kitchen on Napoleon Street. We were all there. It was gloomy March, and anyway the light seldom reached the room. It was a cavern. We were like cave dwellers. "Sarah!" he said. "Children!" he showed his cut face. He spread his arms so we could see his tatters, and the white of his body under them. Then he turned his pockets inside out—empty. As he did this, he began to cry, and the children standing about him all cried. (147)

No attempt is made to hide the truth, or alienate through words or intention any group or individual. Goffman's proposition of man putting on a layer of masks is challenged. Father Herzog is a victim of oppression, a silenced third persona but to his children he is a good mingling of personas. His life is a "theater lived," to quote Michel Leiris's terms (quoted in Greenblatt in Davis ed. 1989, 434). Father Herzog's behavior is reminiscent of Tennie's. Both parents adopt theatrical routines in the process of trying to provide for their children and make no effort to hide them. Yet, Tennie's role is affiliated with the bad kind of the third persona, the "theater played" where actions are insincerely experienced (Greenblatt, 434). Owing to her ethnic belonging and socio-economic position, she is maltreated. But she presents a role of a third persona which is full of hypocrisy and deception even when it comes to providing for her child and is, in consequence, in radical contrast with her real life. Father Herzog, on the other hand, combines between the two personas; he acts in harmony with the principles of honesty, authenticity and truthfulness in the teeth of suffering. More important, Tennie's theatricality lacks skill, is morally low and arouses the audience disgust whereas Father Herzog's is sophisticated: it merges the comic with the tragic; it is decent and therefore very profoundly affects the audience, i. e. his children who are cast in the position of the fine version of third personas.

Father Herzog's refined theatricality is detected in another comic-tragic scene. In spite of his suffering, Father Herzog's intercourse with Ravitch, who looks like a "tragic actor" (134) on the Yiddish stage, amuses the children. "It amused the boys to hear how their father coaxed drunken Ravitch to get on his feet. It was a family theater... The boys pressed together in the cold, smiling" (136). In the face of poverty and ill treatment outside the house (roles of third personas), the children enjoyed the warmth of their life, richness of their relationships and comfort of their home; each can choose any persona that is devoid of all negative characteristics. More significantly, he obstinately fights to support his family despite his difficulty and desperate poverty. Herzog pleasantly remembers that "all of Papa's violence went into the drama of his life, into family strife and sentiment" (146).

Ramona's "theater of love," to quote James M. Millard, is another type of theater which gives comfort to Herzog (1979, 80). Aware of Ramona's acting, Herzog is willing to join her theater, for she is an ambassador of the laudable side of the first persona. Seeing Herzog as a second persona, she takes upon herself the task of ridding him of all bad features of the third persona which is imposed upon him. She transforms his miseries into sexual excitements and turns his grief into useful directions. Through the flesh, she believes, she can renew the spirit (184-5). When Herzog first introduces Ramona, he reveals how it delights her "to come playfully in the role of a tough Spanish broad - una navaja en la liga" (16). He believes Ramona is "a natural masterpiece" (67). During his visit to her place, he is fascinated by her dramatic manner in arranging their love-making; the reception, the lights, music and the atmosphere of suspense she creates are all theatrical elements. "Her appearance" reckons Herzog, "was always dramatic and worth waiting for" (200). Herzog also feels comfortable with Sono, whose room looks like the Far East in the movies" (179).

The third group of characters is represented by Herzog, who is in effect an assemblage of characters, roles or personas. Through his prime role as a spectator, a representative of personas of his own design, Herzog is spotted playing three key dramatic parts. He, as already discussed, is the spectator who initially watches himself playing the role of a silenced
audience, the third persona, in the script of Madeleine and Gersbach. Then, he is dismissed from their play and, in consequence, he observes himself cast in the role of a spectator coping with his attempts to abandon his position among the audience and ascend the stage to attain the second persona. Attached to these roles is his letter-writing practice which, thanks to the element of apostrophe, is intensely correlated to scriptwriting and first persona. Eventually he is glimpsed lying on a hammock in Berkshires watching the stars but his spectatorial inclinations and tendency to apostrophize people are less rigorous. In fact, he possesses such good attributes which qualify him to be on the stage where he can enjoy his “first persona” with connotations different from the ones proposed by Madeleine.

Throughout Herzog’s self-examination, he learns that Madeleine has been the scriptwriter, the principal actress, the power setting the rules and the first persona that treated him as the alienated audience, the silenced actor, and the third persona who does not have the power to take part in discourse, be heard in public or protest. Compared with Madeleine’s wicked attitude and first persona, Herzog’s is founded on moral standards and refined human emotions. This explains his self-revaluation when he considers attacking her; he is vexed by the possibility of himself falling under the spell of viciousness. He says, “What if he had knocked her down… dragging her screaming and fighting around the room flogged her until her buttocks bled…. He rejected this mental violence, sighing” (10). Instead, Herzog insists on his peaceful mind and goodness hoping he “could win by the appeal of passivity, of personality, win on the ground of being, after all, Moses—Moses Elekanah Herzog—a good man, and Madeleine’s particular benefactor” (10). So, unlike Wander, Herzog holds passivity positively because it is based on his willpower to pursue his moral attitudes.

Yet, after he is dismissed from Madeleine’s life and script, he senses the menace of becoming an unheeded audience, an alienated, silenced persona in the sense designed by Madeleine, and, therefore, dreads the loss of his real persona through the defeat of his moral principles: “By his dismissal from Madeleine’s life, sent back into the darkness, he became a spectator again” (38). This implies that Herzog ascribes truth, goodness and life to the rank of good actors, which represents the good side of the first persona. Those who watch for no reason, however, are placed within a context of third persona associated with plain blackness, obscurity and evil and, in consequence, they lose a great deal of their humanity. But by a terrible paradox, if the performer is like Madeleine, who eliminates the audience’s humanity or authenticity, the very actress repudiates her own humanity and gives a negative image of the first persona. By the same token, when the audience eradicates the actors’ humanity or authenticity, the very audience denies its own humanity and, in consequence, adopts a negative representation of the third persona. To be more specific, the threat to a third persona lies not in the act of watching but in the plan to turn the watching into a permanent status or medium that serves no aspirations save the desire to find flaws in other’s performances or maintain oneself as a voiceless victim. This indeed explains why Herzog, like Bellow himself, is constantly worried concerning his persona. More than anything, he wants to explore his true identity. He asks, "What sort of character was it?" (4). Viewing his whole life, he, the narrator maintains, recognizes “that he had mismanaged everything—everything” (3). Some people alleged he was "cracked" (1), and so he had reason to believe that he was occasionally under the "power" of his "eccentricities" and that "There is someone inside me. I am in his grip" (11). Beyond the element of moral deterioration, there is an intensification of the acting motif. Herzog fears he is playing a wicked role imposed upon him by an evil spirit inside him. Alerted, Herzog is curious to explore "what it means to be a man" (201). Putting it differently, man needs to discover essence of his creation. Once this is granted, man is required to secure his "stability" which is attained by endorsing the "desire to exist" (96). This desire, as Herzog reckons, must be intertwined by a solid determination "to change" (165). How can this change be achieved? Herzog says that man’s “duty was to live. To be sane, and to live, and to look after the kids” (27). Noticeably, Herzog refers to man’s obligation to morality attained by choosing a variety of good personas that support one’s dedication to life, rationality and sense of responsibility for himself, his family and future generations.

In an attempt to attain such a role, Herzog seizes his location among the audience to become more engaged in the drama he is watching to influence his attitudes and, his deeds, and to improve his insights and feelings. His ideas and remembrances are rendered as types of internal play-observation in which the cognizant identity examines its own past, present or future. When Herzog watches the others and himself play, he is shown the play in the manner Madeleine planned it to be; the actors are dragging him as a distant spectator (third persona and as a self-examiner) into the drama, more willingly than compelling him to fashion it in his own head or his own imagination. Watching becomes a far more touching experience for Herzog, and it impacts him far more effortlessly than when he was involved in it. He obtains the skill of the dramatist and the art of those who interpret it, direct it and act it, i. e. the agents of the first and second personas: Madeleine, Gersbach and their group. He can see the facial expressions and body language and even hear the voice and tonal inflections of Madeleine and her team, his loved ones as well as himself. He is not an alienated third persona, but a free persona equipped with a more insightful and unprejudiced angle.

What helps Herzog dig out his self-consciousness, become more engaged in his social environment, play more important theatrical roles and receive extra energy is his imagined letter-writing. Herzog, the narrator maintains, "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” (1). These letters are characterized, among other things, with the conversational tone coupled with the dramatic elements of here and now. I am referring to the technique of "apostrophe," defined by Barbara Johnson, as “a form of ventriloquism through which the speaker throws voice, life, and human form into the addressee, turning its silence into mute responsiveness” (in Davis and Schleifer eds., 1998 221). The technique suggests theater: the word "ventriloquism," as demonstrated by The Lexicon Webster Dictionary is an act of “stagecraft” in which a ventriloquist alters his or her voice making it appear coming from elsewhere. Undeniably, upon endorsing this technique, Herzog becomes a dramatist, a first persona, who, through granting life to the addressees, writes down a play and provides actors with roles he designs. Though the letters are never sent, Herzog rids himself of the silenced role imposed by Madeleine, maintains a spacious and intensive network of roles and relationships and shows an astonishing skill at issues that transcend his immediate social circle. More important, he is able to correct the lopsided relationship between the first and
the third persons by manipulating its structure so that an "inanimate entity is... made present, animate, and anthropomorphic" to quote Johnson. In other words, Herzog grounds his letter-writing in the liberation of human promise turning the ignored social voice into announcement; he argues with his opponents and reasons with his enemies far from all types of discrimination. Consider, for example, the first letter in the beginning of the novel:

Dear Mama, As to why I haven't visited your grave in so long...

Dear Wanda, Dear Zinka, Dear Libbie, Dear Ramona, Dear Sono, I need help in the worst way.... Dear Edvig, the fact is that madness also has been denied me.... Dear President, Internal Revenue regulations will turn us into a nation of bookkeepers. The life of every citizen is becoming a business... Dear Daisy, ... I know it's my turn to visit Marco in camp on Parents' Day but this year I'm afraid my presence might disturb him.... It s fortunately true, however, that he blames me for the breakup with Madeleine and feels I have deserted also his little half-sister. (11; italics in source)

The letter presents a sample of the people he often writes to, confirms his humanistic approach invested with theatrical motif and reveals a trend in Herzog's thinking. Herzog starts by apologizing to his mother for failing to fulfill his family commitments. It is not a mere incident that he initiates the letter by addressing his mother, the person who, as his inner watching indicates, gave him life and taught him essential lessons concerning struggle, patience, achievements and death. Recalling his past, Herzog is shown as a family man of multi-personas who has always loved his relatives, and emphasized their human suffering, their dignity and warmth while apologetically regretting his wrongdoings and shortcomings. His talk with Daisy again exemplifies his apologetic and pathetic position entwined with family commitments. The same humanistic and pitiable tone is sensed in his fervent appeal to his various girl-friends and Edvig. And his petition to the president tells about the type of people he writes to, his deep engagement in general affairs and his concern with the welfare of the American citizen. More often than not, Herzog conducts serious conversations with philosophers, scientists, politicians, intellectuals and leaders while giving precedence to neglected voices and alienated communities thus doing his utmost to eradicate the negative connotations of the third persona.

All in all, Herzog's purpose in his letters has been to explain misunderstood things, complete tasks that were left unfinished or undone, discuss controversial issues and, above all, disagree with his opponents and judge their morality, and accent his subdued voice. On account of his letter-writing, Herzog gets the joy of creating a live but made-up theater which permits him to take pleasure in the involved and incomparable sense of communication between the performers and himself, promoting first and second personas relationships. His shaped theater places him at the heart of the action, where he benefits from a unique ability to see, hear, and feel the action as it opens out. The notion of an instantaneous response of a live performance is the key cause that keeps Herzog, a formerly world-renowned academic and speaker (hence an actor and first persona) currently a negated third persona, marching the stage, albeit illusory, night after night. Besides, Herzog's live but false performances provide a supreme way to bring culture, diversity, and entertainment into his own life.

Not only this, the enjoyment at his live theater comes from taking himself on an attention-grabbing tour to the realm of history (represented by his childhood, parents and relatives), fantasy, and art (signed by letter writing).

Still, within the folds of the thesis, however, reclines the antithesis. Despite the countless merits Herzog obtains from his letter-writing, he remains muted. Herzog's theater is artificial and far from being real. Unless Herzog's imaginary performances are given up, his alienation, as perceived by Madeleine, will become a lasting state of affairs, and his redemption will turn out to be unfeasible.

The change does occur inside a courthouse which has the context of a real theater. While waiting for his lawyer's message, Herzog happens to attend a few court hearings, two of which confront him with human misery in its worst forms and, as a sequence, have profound impact on him. He begins as a spectator bored with "dull routines" (226). His boredom is intensified when he witnesses the case of Alice/Aleck, the feminine boy who willingly gives a false and cheap representation of what it means to be human. In spite of this, neither the magistrate nor the audiences give a damn to this despicable depiction of the human image. Instead, Herzog notices that the magistrate was "putting an act for the idlers on the benches (including Herzog)" (227). Seeing that people are false actors playing a cheap performance witnessed by indifferent crowds, Herzog is infuriated to be part of this stage. "Oh, these actors! I thought Moses. Actors all!!" (228). Herzog's utterance affirms the theatricality of his world. The whole world is a stage: each character is possibly both viewer of the play of others and performer himself in the drama of life. What currently annoys Herzog is Alec's futile notion of acting and the world. Herzog believes that Alec "seemed to be giving the world comedy for comedy, joke for joke." So Herzog decides that "With his dyed hair and his round eyes, traces of mascara still on them, the tight provocative pants... he was a dream actor" (229). Worse, Alec does not have the slightest understanding of his role or of himself: purity becomes a phase of contamination and dirtiness while lying is intermingled with righteousness. In his opinion, "He was purer, lofter than any square, did not lie" (229). Thus, he offers a new type of person which has conflicting qualities. First, it is freely adopted by Alec in the wake of no impositions. Second, it isolates him from his fellow humans although he is not silenced or victimized. To the contrary, he is given a stage to voice his ideas shamelessly and state his double sexuality or lack of gender. So to himself he is a first persona; the audiences in the court, supposedly the representatives of the average man, show no evaluative response. They lack any persona. It is Herzog, and hence, the narrator, who is shocked by his acting and thus regards him as a contemptible convoy of the third persona.

But soon he is engulfed by powerful emotions at witnessing a murder trial involving a woman accused of hitting her three-year-old child to death by throwing him against a wall. Like Livia, the woman whom Schlossberg depicted in The Victim to illustrate his notion of bad acting in the wake of her ruthlessly killing her husband, this woman's cruelty sends a shudder down Herzog's spine. The woman gives Herzog a clear-crystal glimpse of unimaginable human ferociousness. In fact, the scene is reminiscent of another familial scene of brutality where Asa Leventhal, the protagonist of The Victim, witnesses
from his window a man beating a woman at the street in presence of two indifferent soldiers. First, the two scenes provide a literal theater (one indoor, the other is outdoor), making it likely that we must consider the whole world as a stage. Furthermore, the two scenes indicate the doubleness of role played by each character: each is potentially both spectator of the actions played by others and actor on a wider stage. To be more specific, the two soldiers are an audience watching the beating scene and actors watched by another audience - Asa. Similarly, Herzog is a spectator of the courtroom hearings but he is also watched by himself. More importantly, the two scenes signal that Bellow's notion of acting and audience alternates between two levels: the falsity of acted performances (first personas) compared to the truth of real human suffering (third personas), the danger inherent in the role of detached spectators (third personas of their own free choice) compared to the significance of engaged audiences (the good side of third personas). What is meant here is that the two soldiers, who watch the suffering of the two women for their own amusement, lose much of their humanity and become less than human, to use Schlossberg's standards, and third personas. Correspondingly, the audience watching the trial are devoid of such human emotions that should naturally fit the incident of a woman killing mercilessly her own real child. Both audiences regard the scene as an acted performance, while Asa and Herzog, who focuses on the reality of the suffering, achieve a deeper insight into the performance going on before them and, consequently, initiate a change within themselves; both develop a moral standpoint, so to speak. In so behaving, Asa rises on Schlossberg's scale of acting he becomes a good actor for choosing a role charged with moral principles (a good representative of all personas).

To be more specific, Herzog's experience in the courtroom not only gives him insight into the absurdity and viciousness of human behavior or cheap acting. Rather, it reminds him of his commitment to his role as a father on the domestic stage, where his daughter Junie, as a letter from Junie's babysitter indicated, was locked in Gersbach's car while he and Madeleine argued inside the house. With his desire to kill, Herzog is in danger of becoming a negative version of the first persona who is tempted to convert a first persona into a third deprived of his voice once and for all. He steals his father's pistol and hides outside the Chicago house ready to silence the "love actors." Much to his surprise, Herzog sees through the window, "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" (258). Gersbach bathes June with obvious love, and June enjoys being bathed. The sight makes Herzog recover some detachment from his own violence. He cannot kill anyone. The dramatic switch in his attitude is due to the return to his position as a detached but engaged spectator. As such, Herzog is ashamed of his evil violence, his theatricality and is astounded by the actuality of Val's tenderness and genuineness. Again the theatrical first persona now adopted by Herzog is connected with cheap conduct, distasteful comedy, falsity and evil and is, thus, "ludicrous," while the realm of reality now embraced by a second persona allied with tenderness and authenticity is praiseworthy since it represents good acting. Does this mean that Gersbach is a good actor? Perhaps Herzog isn't completely right when he states, "People say that Gersbach imitates me - my walk, my expressions. He's second Herzog" (190).

It seems that Herzog's goodness is not subject to reservation. The truth is that he is fated to misconstrue himself, people and life over and over again. All over the novel, as Jack Richardson says, Herzog hunts incessantly a reality which resists stooping to the misconceptions shaped by his "imaginative intelligence." One day, Richardson maintains, "life seems a madman's dream, but no sooner has one armed oneself against this flamboyant guise than it changes into something small and ordinary" (Richardson, 1969).

Although Herzog seems to be more successful as a free third-persona-spectator than as a first-persona-actor, his attempts to go up the stage are not given up. The next day he escorts his daughter to the aquarium. Unfortunately, Herzog gets involved in a car accident which is concluded with him being accused of illegally carrying a loaded gun. His brother Will, helps him out and offers generous help. Subsequently, Herzog returns to Ludewyville, the house he bought with his father's money when he was at the prime of success. There he is re-united with Will, the representative of his Herzog's family, ethnic belonging and past, who suggests that Herzog have himself checked at an institution. Thankful, Herzog rejects the offer feeling that he has come to terms with his life. What increases his sense of improvement is Ramona, who arrives to join him for a night. Relieved, Herzog sets upon the task of repairing his messy house and life. The novel closes by Herzog taking pleasure in pure nature: watching the stars, feeling the cold water, wandering in the woods and picking some flowers. Above all, he is determined to quit his letter-writing just as he stopped his "theatrical window-peering" (303). Herzog is ready to ascend the stage of the world.

In conclusion, how did Wander's thesis affect Bellow's portrayal of the character, treatment of theme and handling of narrative point of view? We have seen that Wander's model has helped us draw a clear, comprehensive image of the different types of characters in the story. Yet, owing to its descriptive and deterministic approach, Wander's model fails to account for all the possible range of characters and does not totally define the moral and psychological truths that underlie human behavior. In his novel, Bellow, through Herzog, manages to combine all these elements together and provides novel perceptions into the vibrant potential of the trope transformed a few decades after Herzog was written into a critical approach.
Bellow explores the inner lives of his main character as he tries to understand the meaning of being a man and as he grapples with difficult ethical choices derived from his social links and in trying situations. Although Herzog is placed amid an inauthentic system of reality, he does not give up. Instead, Herzog is always occupied with questions of exploring the self, understanding the real meaning of life and knowing what it means to be human. In addition, he is interested in finding out how he ought to live in this world, what it means to be a decent human being and how he maintains his dignity in the chaotic mechanized theater of the world. As such, he is similar to all Bellow's protagonists who are always engaged in a mission to promote their spiritual uniqueness and finding significance to their life in a beautiful world (Cronin and Treganier, 2013 1). "Who - who was I?" cried Henderson (74) and "what's the best way to live?" he inquires . Joseph also wonders, "How should a good man live; what ought he to do?” (34). The same questions, as we have seen, are asked by Herzog: "What sort of character was it?"(4). He is often engulfed by a strong sense of "communion--brotherhood," (177) and human "intimacy" (27) and contact (180) even in their "cheapest forms" (177).

In an attempt to direct his protagonist, Bellow employs the acting motif extensively to demonstrate that the real world tends to imitate the theater and that human life is in significant ways comparable to participation in a play. Through the acting motif Bellow also allows Herzog to deal not only with realistic details and detailed physical descriptions but also to investigate the enigmas of sin and redemption, good and evil. Evil occurs when one character plays the role of the negative version of the first persona, male or female, and depicts the other in the role of the negative side of the third persona attempting to dominate the destiny of another. Good is attained through the ability to choose a good role where you seek to be the first persona characterized by personal integrity, commitment and responsibility and through the ability to discern the good or the bad in others' personas and cope with it rather than cast them in the fixed and condemnable aspects of the second or the third persons. But Herzog, and Bellow, does not rule out the possibility of one choosing a second or a third persona as long as it is associated with moral codes and not intended to be the ultimate goal.

Bellow's technical brilliance can be seen in his control of point of view. He uses an impersonal and discreet third-person narrator, a commenting author, who manages both to reveal the characters' emotions with subtle psychological analysis and describe external realism of physical detail. More often than not, he achieves this goal by his treatment of the acting metaphor presented in the manner of a maze. The third-person narrator who merges into Herzog's perspective sees the events of the whole novel through Herzog's eyes. So the narrator, as it in a maze, plays the role of an audience, within audience within audience. To be more specific, the narrator watches Herzog, the audience, who watches himself playing the role of an ignored audience in Madeleine's script. Although the narrator, and Herzog, is at least at two removes from the real event, the accurate and thorough account of the different scenes are vividly brought before the readers' eyes. This creates another loop in this labyrinth of inspection where all the characters, the narrator and the readers are in the audience giving a vote to the old-dated metaphor that the world is a stage and people are mere players. In other words, the reader is not a passive third persona. Rather, the narrator and Herzog also put the reader in a labyrinth of scenes in which every watched scene reveals and depends on another. That is to say, the narrator and Herzog are playing a game with the reader by setting him a puzzle when they place him in the heart of a maze entwined with scenes varying in their participants, place and time. Before the second-persona reader can climb the walls of one maze to perceive the exit, he finds himself in another maze. What helps the narrator attain his goal is the fact that he manipulates his vision of time. Time is not presented as a series of chronological moments but as an uninterrupted stream in the consciousness of Herzog, with the past incessantly merging into future events and retrospect blending into expectation. The past is continuously coloring Herzog's present reaction and when he digs into his consciousness he can discover the entire truth about himself without waiting for a logical succession of time to take him through a chain of testing situations.

One lesson the reader is led to conclude is that he is the audience to Herzog's performance, his re-interpretation of his life and the narrator's performance and interpretation of Herzog's life. Soon he learns that he is a spectator in Madeleine's play. He is a direct audience to her manners and thoughts and is made to undergo Herzog's alienation, deprivation of voice and identity. As a result, the narrator means to arouse the reader's sympathy for the hero and his disgust and contempt for the irrational and corrupt nature of Madeleine's team controlled by their foolish desires and passions. So, the reader is teased to react and to have a voice.

The reader is also allowed to be audience to the narrator's performance. He is at a third remove from the events, having to reinterpret the dramatizing rhetoric of the narrator, functioning in his turn as the "audience" of his own "acting", rhetoric roles or reading activities.

Being aware of this fact, the narrator's goal is perhaps to win the reader over. Bellow's choice of such a narrator who fuses within Herzog's vision ascertainment that there does arise a form of what Iser calls "the point at which the author and reader converge" (Iser 1974, in Davis ed., 1986, 389). Both the narrator and Herzog as the audience re-examine Herzog's "text," namely Herzog's interpretation of reality. In so doing, the narrator gives a vote for Herzog's acting, self examination and interpretation. But since Herzog's re-examination which is held as a performance, is coupled with the narrator's interpretation of Herzog's life, then the narrator is displaying his own power and skills both as a participant and a director and hence he is virtually hailing his own acting, which is mixed with Herzog's rhetoric.

This gives the narrator control over his art; he is the fine representative of the first persona treating his art not as silent, alienated text but as loudly speaking one; he assumes a didactic role with a mixture of personas in which he promotes the values of a better world inhabited by multi-persona-people motivated by their moral stances. Through this fusion, Bellow guarantees himself a prestigious place among our finest novelists (a first persona vs. first personas).
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