

**“Imaginary Homelands”: Henderson the Rain King and the Spiritual Quest****Ramzi B. Mohamed MARROUCHI**Department of English, Faculty of Languages and Communication  
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Terengganu, Malaysia**Abstract:**

This paper investigates how and why the spiritual quest of Saul Bellow's Henderson the Rain King (1959) enigmatically results in madness. The identity of the American subject should be investigated in the light of his/her restless search of “Other modes of freedom” and imaginary homelands. -Pondering upon this, the researcher realizes that three fundamental questions need to be addressed: What are the aspects of Henderson's spiritual quest? -As a Jewish hero, how could Henderson be associated with quest, victimization and madness? Can one think about identity or identities? To unmask these blind spots, the theme of the quest will be investigated, first. The researcher shall trace Henderson's movement from a material world – New York – to a spiritual and romantic one, Africa. Second, Henderson's failure to cope with the new world and therefore his failure to (re) – construct the identity of the American character will be examined in details. This safely allows us to argue for the madness of the hero. The conclusion is that there is no ‘absolute identity’ to the American subject. Henderson's attempts to re-construct a “new identity” shall be seen in line with poststructuralist premises regarding “difference, multiplicity, other, cultural diversity.”

**Key Words:** Alienation, Henderson the Rain King, Hegel, identity, Saul Bellow

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## 1.1 Introduction

In his attempt to achieve “the absolute knowledge,” to feel satisfaction in the world and to restore our lost identity, Hegel (1975) writes the following:

The ignorant man is not free, because what confronts him is an alien world, something outside him and in the offing, on which he depends, without his having made the foreign world for himself and therefore without being at home in it by himself as in something his own. The impulse of curiosity, the pressure for knowledge, from the lowest level up to the highest rung of philosophical insight arises only from the struggle to cancel this situation of unfreedom and to make the world one's own in one's ideas and thought. (p. 98)

In *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel, 1977, pp. 21-73), Hegel argues that the world should be a home to us. To explain this, he refers to knowledge crisis which is to be understood interchangeably with identify crisis. The philosopher intellectually reminds us that we have to look at the world rationally, and that reason must be awake, reflection must be applied. Philosophy, like the famous image of the owl of Minerva: the sacred bird of Minerva (or Athena) the goddess of wisdom, must take a reflective stance to end up the ignorance of ignorant men and cancel this situation of unfreedom.

## 1.2 Henderson's Spiritual Quest

In his desire to find some sense of intellectual and spiritual identity, Bellow's Henderson the Rain King seems to echo Hegel's philosophical project to restore his lost identity and to be familiar with the world-home. The bewildering questions enigmatically come out Who am I? What is 'M'e? What is this thing I live in, which men call the universe? Ambivalent answers are introduced in the form of new philosophical questions, to borrow the terms from Kant, “Who was I? What do I want? What can I do? What ought I do? What may I hope? What is a human being?” (Kant, 1996, p. 22). Bitterly enough, “How did I get here? How did 'here' get here in the first place? Is this, this brief life, all there is? How can it be? What should be the point of that” (Rushdie, 1990 b, p. 421)? Echoing the owl of Minerva, Henderson's “Philosophical journey” begins after the happenings of the day for only then it can reflect upon what has occurred and fulfill its role, to bring back one's lost identity.

### 1.2.1 *The Restless Search of the Self*

Henderson, the quester, and the philosopher, is projected as a lost soul in search of his identity face to face with madness and alone in the universe. The turmoil, as symmetrically mentioned in the Hegelian mind and Henderson's spirit, has become a bundle of paradoxical views and attitudes. Accordingly, the discourse in *Henderson the Rain King* creates and consolidates the Hegelian gesture to achieve a spiritual identity in a rational world, to turn that world to home and to be familiar with it.

The spiritual quest, therefore, addresses the striking interplay between the philosophical inquiry and the spiritual quest to bring the world home and to be familiar with it. Following this, the focus of this paper is on the identity of the individual as it is subtly wavering between reason

and spirit, philosophy and literature, assertion and erasure, visibility and invisibility, madness and reason. The point I hope to achieve at this level is that my investigation of the issue of identity should not be categorical.

Two paradoxical and yet surprisingly complementary themes shall be explored. On the one hand, there is "the ignorance of the philosopher in his world" or, to recall Foucault's words, the loss and the madness of Henderson. On the other hand, the previous findings in the light of Kant's and Hegel's moral philosophy shall be re-evaluated.

### 1.3 The Alienation of a Mad Quester

Bellow likes to open his narratives with stories of madness and alienation. The quest for identity is therefore logically legitimized by being on the brink of madness since it is "le déjà-là-of death" (Foucault, 1967, p. 16). The storyteller begins the narrative by stating that every-thing turns into chaos. The secrecies of the protagonist haunt the reader as we are following his words:

What made me take this trip to Africa? There is no quick explanation. Things got worse and worse. And pretty soon they were too complicated [...] all is grief. The facts begin to crowd me and soon I get a pressure in the chest- my parents, my wives, my girls, my children, my farm, my animals, [...] my drunkenness, my brutality, my soul. I have to cry, "No, no, get back curse you, let me alone. (Bellow, 1959, p. 7)

Henderson Strikingly reflects philosophical thinking as he is questioning the very ideas of existence, identity, morality, madness, meaning and values. As he strives to reach the absolute satisfaction and set certain logic in his world, he unexpectedly falls in a tragedy "But there comes a day, there always comes a day of tears and madness" (p. 24).

The reader wonders at Bellow's choice of these kinds of beginning. One possible answer is seen in Malcolm Bradbury's view of the novel as a remarkable journey of man's efforts to achieve identity in the face of nothingness (Bradbury, 1970, pp. 1-11). Henderson translates this view through his running away from the sad cities of New York and Chicago to the romantic space of Africa:

We were to travel for another week, a foot, a foot [...] I did not have the remotest idea where we were [...] I had great trust in Romilayu, the old fellow. So for days and days. He led me through villages, over mountain trails, and into deserts, far, far out. (Bellow, 1959, p. 41)

Henderson begins telling his own story, but he unconsciously ends up recounting the stories of anonymous people. The gesture, as the phrase goes, is highly reminiscent of the French poststructuralist and feminist philosopher Julia Kristeva who reminds us that humankind derives its identity from its ability to tell stories. The immediate implication of this is that our lust for identity remains a mere fiction which is already a story, or at least parts of some possible story (Davis, 2004, pp. 105, 135).

Herzog ironically echoes Henderson. He begins telling us about his madness and ends up reflecting upon the madness of the world. His awareness, or indeed, lack of awareness, acquaints us with a story of no place, no subjects, and no movement:

If I am out of my mind, it's all right with me', thought Moses Herzog [...] Hidden in the country, he wrote endlessly, fanatically, to the newspapers, to people in public life, to friends and relatives and at last to the dead, his obscure dead, and finally to the famous dead. (Bellow, 1967, p. 7)

The storyteller reminds us of the enigmatic and tragic movements from Chicago to New York and from New York to other unknown cities. The reader is left in darkness as he comes to discover that these very journeys are already stories in the mind of a mad hero. Space turns to be an imaginary homeland, and the subjects are a possible hope yet to come “*Dear Wanda, Dear Zinka, Dear Libbie, Dear Ramona, Dear Sono, I need help in the worst way. I am afraid of falling apart. Dear Edvig, the fact is that madness also has been denied me*” (Bellow, 1967, p. 19).

In *Dangling Man* (1944) *The Victim* (1947) *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1971) *Humboldt's Gift* (1975) *The Dean's December* (1980) *The Bellarosa Connection* (1997) *The Actual* (2000) and many other stories, Bellow seems to be an eloquent storyteller of madness and alienation. The flares of hope of a certain identity now appear to be illusory triumphs. In the process of the storytelling of his stories, the fictional figures make of themselves others and usurpers. The no space, no subjects, no movements in the narratives amount to a state of non-responsibility, and Bellow, therefore, underlines the benefits of the ambiguity of his thought or the non thought of his heroes. If they do escape and marginalize the outside world, they are ironically internalizing the loss of their identities. In writing *Henderson the Rain King*, Bellow is reclaiming a certain hope for identity, but the place from which he is speaking is no place, more an oblivion than a hope. The problematical issue, at this level, is that how for a man to guarantee an identity for his heroes when he, wavering in the nowhere, cannot identify himself. Saul Bellow tells us what madness and oblivion are but never attempts to tell us what identity is.

### ***1.3.1 Identity: the Alienation of Mad Quester(s)***

In light of the no place, no subject and no movement, *Henderson the Rain King* suggests that identity remains a story, a fiction. The storyteller never refers to a sense or a meaning in life. Herzog's celebration of madness and Henderson's utopian world envision the nonsense sense of identity. “The madm[e] n’ sense of the sense of [their] stori[es] is contaminated from the outset by [their] sense of the nonsense of stories in general. Stories are lies we tell ourselves about our lives” (Davis, 2004, p. 135). Louis Althusser reminds us “not to tell stories for ourselves” (*ne pas de raconter d'histoire*) lest we consider our stories our identities and we believe them (as cited in Davis, 2004, p. 135). Being immersed in psychoanalysis, Bellow is aware that this subject, spaces, movements do not tell a possible meaning as they only refer to chaos and madness announced by Henderson and Herzog from the onset of their stories. The reader, in the end, is satirically left in silence and void.

Recounting a possible story of identity, Henderson is projecting his eyes into another who is supposed to know and aggravate a certain sense to the nonsense of the world. Referring to Deleuze’s “difference and multiplicity,” Bellow is philosophically reflecting upon identities rather than identity. Henderson records the life of different tribes in Africa and various social categories in America, while Herzog interrogates and undermines major philosophical thoughts. Davis, (2004) stresses this fusion of selves and others in the loop of storytelling:

A story of [identity] cannot be just what a solipsistic subject recounts to itself. It is bound up in history, and it implies the existence of a community because it requires agents who act, witnesses who recount, and audiences who listen and recount in their turn. The essential function of the story is to identify a human subject who is the agent of the narrated actions and to find in him or her actions a significance that may have not been visible previously. (p. 133)

The other for Henderson are his wives, his money, his habits, his New York, his thoughts, Romilayu, the guide in Africa, the tribes, Africa, the sense, the nonsense of the sense, himself, Henderson. Henderson is other to Henderson. The other for Herzog the man is Madeleine, his wife, philosophers, poetry, Herzog the philosopher.

### *1.3.2 Fiction of Identities*

Bellow seems to be memorizing the major principles of the postmodernist thought that are unfathomably characterized by the death of a man. This gesture celebrates the decentring of the subject and denies human agency and freedom. His fictional heroes provide no basis for an ethics since they do not accept the universality of values. Suggesting the concepts of difference, multiplicity and otherness, Gilles Deleuze, an emblematic theorist of the postmodern thought, is tragically and unexpectedly theorising for an anti-humanist world. Being different from or other to does not enhance the sense of unity or togetherness. Rather, it generates a sphere of doubt and never ending meanings. Henderson sums up Deleuze's theory “So for God's sake make a move, Henderson, [...] you will die of this pestilence. Death will annihilate you and nothing will remain” (Bellow, 1959, p. 33). Again as he says “ Shall I run back into the desert [...] and stay there until the devil has passed out of me and I am fit to meet human kind again without driving it into despair” (p. 45)? The reader is enigmatically involved within this enterprise of ambiguity and then the possibilities of meaning, unity and identity turn to be only a possibility of madness.

One immediate conclusion is that Deleuze's theory of difference and unity is misleading in the Bellovian context. In this, the difference is an embodiment of the nonsense sense of the world. Unity, contrary to Spinoza's sense, engenders an illusory hope of identity. Henderson keeps shouting throughout the narrative “I want [...] I want [...] I was badly upset. I am probably the worst waiter in the world [...]” (p. 103). Henderson never reconciliates himself with the world, with home in Hegelian sense, as he never reaches any form of unity with the world “Your majesty, move over and I will die beside you. Or else be me and live; I never knew what to do with my life anyway [...] I will die any way” (p. 262). Death seems to be the last refugee for Henderson.

Herzog, echoing Henderson, never reconciles his conflicts with Madeleine, his wife. His intellectual meditations over philosophical issues are never settled. He begins the narrative as a mad figure, and he ends up telling the story of the story of madness in the world. Tommy Wilhelm in *Seize the Day* (1956), Harry Fonstein in *The Bellarosa Connection* (1989), Sammler in *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970) seem to face the same fate as they are respectively deterritorialized by marginalization, forgetfulness and the war.

### 1.3.3 Identity/Knowledge Crisis?

The identity crisis is a crisis of knowledge in a postmodern context to cite J.F. Lyotard. Bellow is aware of the complexity of the world in which he is living as a man, an author and a philosopher. In the light of this, he is deliberately trying to transfer the tension within identity to another tension within knowledge. Henderson the Rain King sums it up through the striking oppositions between the material world of New York and the romantic space of Africa, the urbanized American Society and the rural tribes in Africa, the scientific knowledge here and the spiritual belief there. Herzog's philosophical letters reveal, undermine and finally reject the contradictions and the blind spots in the western philosophical knowledge. White (1979) suggests an explanation to the crisis of knowledge by assuming that:

[...] we are at the end of one epistemic configuration and at the beginning of another. We exist in the gap between two *épistèmes*, one dying, the other not yet born-of which; however, the mad poets and artists of the last century and a half were the heralds. (p. 92)

These epistemological shifts in knowledge are symmetrically echoed in the despair, alienation, and madness of Henderson.

Pondering upon Bellow's novels, one can discover that the madness of the subject is much more like the alienation of the author. This can be proved on the account that Saul Bellow himself has been striving to identify his own way of telling. For this reason, he kept wavering between history, fiction, philosophy, epistolary style, autobiography and sometimes poetry in a Heideggerian manner. Reading, *The Victim* (1947) and *Dangling Man* (1944), one can only expect the author to be a historian who is not only interested in recounting the facts but also "in" recounting that he is recounting them; or a novelist who is fictionalizing history, the history of Jewish people. Going through *Henderson the Rain King*, the audience could not but perceive a storyteller speaking with tenderness and writing poetical words. Reading *Herzog*, the reader is moved by a philosophical discourse that has always depended for its existence on a sort of literary discourse to "dramatize" its fundamental issues.

Saul Bellow therefore is regarded as a philosopher in the Hegelian sense, a poet in the Heideggerian manner and a novelist/ philosopher in Derrida's way, once grounding my view on account of my previous findings. Thereby the author is shifting from questioning the problem of identity, to problematize the issue of knowledge in a Postmodern era and finally to revealing the function of philosophy as a critical discourse. The assumption behind these shifts, I need to assert, is not the loss of identity, as I argued before, nor is it the alienation or the madness of the storyteller,

but the very quality of the hero who is adopting a skeptical strategy to unravel the natural function of the philosopher.

### ***1.3.4 Henderson: Wise Jew, Unrecognised Philosopher?***

Can one still think about madness and alienation? Is it possible to overemphasize the uprootedness, the no identify of a person who is ceaselessly striving to philosophize the issue of identity, a person who is satirically trying to undermine the ordinary reading, the misreading, or, indeed, the non-reading of the term of identity? Saul Bellow, I need to acknowledge, is aware of his Jewish origins, and yet he is not addressing Jewish people nor does he intend to address a specific social category in the American or even the western society.

The point behind that is Bellow, being a citizen in the world, wants to bring the world home and to be familiar with it. Doing so, in what sense should I think about Henderson the Rain King as a philosopher? How should I prove it? Is it possible to refer to Foucault’s Strategy, in the process of my argumentation, concerning the marginal in its essentiality and the essential in its marginality? It is clear that we are hovering on a tentative sphere that requires a good insight and a high critical thought. Commenting on the very quality of the reader he is addressing, Saul Bellow reasonably says the following “I have in my mind another human being, a philosopher who will understand me. I count on this. Not on perfect understanding [...] but on approximate understanding and on a meeting of sympathies, which is human” (Harper, 1975, p. 13). Herzog responds by showing his awareness and wisdom “Justice! Look who wants justice! Most of mankind has lived and died without-totally- without it. People by the billions and for ages sweated, gyped, enslaved, suffocated, bled to death, buried with no more justice” (Bellow, 1967, p. 270). Echoing Herzog, Henderson magically typifies his wisdom and identity through the fusion of reason on the one hand and romanticism on the other one “Imagination is a force of nature. Is this not enough to make a person full of ecstasy? Imagination, imagination, imagination! It converts to actual. It sustains, it alerts, it redeems” (Bellow, 1959, pp. 228-229). Assuming that the power of life and identity in the Bellowian fictional world is endlessly demonstrating that all forms of madness are endeavoring to be infinite wisdom, Sammler in *Mr. Sammler’s Planet* reflects upon the logical and expected shift from madness to wisdom “madness is a masquerade, the project of a deep reason [...] madness is a diagnosis or verdict of some of our greatest doctors and geniuses, and their man-disappointed minds” (Bellow, 1971, p. 199).

At this level, the reader is highly invited to think philosophically with the heroes. Stern (2002) reminds us that any reader/thinker should:

Step back and apply “himself” reflectively (in a Hegelian manner) and ask how it is a problem has arisen in the first place; once we see that the problem has its source in a set of one-sided assumptions. If we can overcome that one-sidedness then the problem will simply dissolve and we can escape the "Oscillation" between one satisfactory stance and its equally unsatisfactory opposite. (pp. 16-17)

The immediate implication of this, therefore, is that Henderson's imaginary journey to Africa,

Herzog's philosophical letters, Sammler's meditations on the war and Fonstein's views over memory and forgetfulness are an attempt to understand their "Cognitive Capacities," to understand and identify the world around them, that is, "the scope of their intellectual capacities." The fictional movement in Bellow's novels to establish and consolidate a certain identity is a philosophical movement, in the metaphorical sense of it, to understand the world and to be able to criticize it. Robert Stern again aptly sums up the whole journey:

Only at the end of its journey is consciousness ready to understand what has happened to it and why; it is then able to think reflectively and self-consciously about the categorical shifts that have led it forward from one problematic position to the next, to the point at which it gets rid of the semblance of being burdened with something alien (p. 56), and can at last feel at home in the world. Before such home coming is possible, however, we must follow Hegel as (like Dante's Virgil) he guides us through the journey of the soul, so that it may purify itself for the life of the spirit, and achieve finally through a completed experience of itself, the awareness of what it really is in itself. (Stern, 2002, p. 42)

One possible reading of this passage suggests double layers of consciousness. The first is self-consciousness. While the second is consciousness of the world. Throughout his imaginary journey in the romantic space of Africa, Henderson is not only seeking to identify himself, but also to identify the ontology of the world around him. Knowing the other is part of the game of knowing the self. To overcome the consciousness of the masses, or what he calls the unhappy consciousness, Henderson keeps narrating mythical stories about the Arnewi and the Wariri tribes he visited in Africa. He tells the story of the king Dahfu and his destroyed Kingdom. The reader gathers the cultural specificities of other tribes, people and communities since they represent the missing part of the hero's consciousness, knowledge and identity. Henderson strives to know himself through imaginary and mythical journeys. He establishes and consolidates a certain identity is through blurring space and crossing boundaries to borrow the term from Habib Ajroud. (Ajroud, 1995, pp. 13-31).

This transition (from self-consciousness to the consciousness of the world) is fundamental to be understood in Hegelian terms. In this, Henderson's and Herzog that there are truths, worlds, and identities and that only a multiperspectivist strategy can give them a sense beyond their individual self-consciousness. When he goes back to New York, to the first moment of the storytelling, as the journey remains imaginary, Henderson suggests that self-consciousness can not be certain of itself by simply identifying itself with this world of living things. To Henderson's mind, in that world there appears to be too little room for any notion of individuality. "Self-consciousness, therefore, conceives of itself as more than a merely animal consciousness" (Hegel, 1977, p. 73).

Bellow (1977) firmly believes that "each individual is a child of his time and; thus, philosophy, too, is its own time comprehended in thoughts" (p. 21). Henderson fictionalizes this philosophy stating that the whole matter is a mental journey "I put my list to my face and looked at the sky, giving a short laugh and thinking, Christ! What a person to meet at this distance from

home. Yes travel is advisable. Travel is mental travel" (Bellow, 1959, p. 142). Accordingly, the mind has a right to its reasonable doubts to epitomize a certain identity and bring some change to the world. Henderson undermines and rejects the past, projecting his eyes onto the future "I must not live in the past, it will ruin me [...] I was telling the world that it was a pig. I must begin to think how to live" (1959, p. 242), echoing Herzog, "Let the enemies of life step down [...] Let each man now examine his heart [...] Let us lie down, men, women, and children, and cry. Let life continue- we may not deserve it, but let it continue" (1959, p. 67). Being moved and haunted by the secrecies of these lines, the reader brings to mind Marrouchi's definition to the fictional hero as a human figure, a prophet who should have the power to make decision, choose life and have a duty to discharge (Marrouchi, 1995, pp. 163-183).

One way of taking the idea further is keeping in mind Bellow's strategies of parody. This is not only carried out through the storyteller's attempts to undermine the alienation and the madness of the world, not only through mocking the historical facts of life, but also through marginalizing the ordinary sense of identity and the consciousness on the one hand and stressing the philosophical sense of identity and the consciousness of the world on the other hand. Henderson consciously satirizes his life in New York "My parents, my wives, my girls, my children, my farm, my animals, my teeth, my face, my soul" (1959, p. 7), believing that only a philosophical consciousness/knowledge of the world would purify and provide him with a sense of identity. Herzog's doubts about the classical trajectory of the western philosophy remind us of his philosophical letters to everyone under the sun, hoping that they might bring the world to home and make us happy in it.

#### 1.4 Imaginary Homelands: the Wisdom of the Intellectual

At this level, can one still think of alienation, madness, no-identity and self- consciousness? Is it logical to claim that *Henderson the Rain King* in specific and Bellow's fictional world in general are a fine piece of imagination or a moment of scepticism that enigmatically satirizes the ordinary sense of existence? Henderson, Herzog, Tommy Wilhelm, Augie March, Humboldt, Mr Sammler, Asa Leventhal, Harry Fonstein [...], can they be regarded as philosophers each in his own way, philosophers who dream to unmask the blind spots of identity? Is this all that we can understand from the alienation of Henderson in his own homeland? Does *Henderson the Rain King*, as a farm of writing, substitute Saul Bellow's "imaginary homelands?" Again, reading the narrative philosophically might possibly quench our thirst for an answer.

Questioning the very nature of human being, Herzog identifies the wisdom of the intellect, and thereby aggravates the sense of consciousness of the world. Pondering over the nature of human beings, he thinks aloud, saying:

Those who have confidently described human nature, Hobbes, Freud, etc..., by telling what we are 'intrinsically', are not our great benefactors. This is true for Rousseau. I sympathize with Hume's attack on the introduction by the Romantics of perfection human things [...] Modern science achieves its most profound results through anonymity, recognizing only the brilliant functioning of intellect. (Bellow, 1967, p. 161)

Following this claim, could we still think about Herzog and behind him Bellow's heroes mad figures that are incapable of identifying themselves in the world? In what way can we explain Herzog's criticism of great philosophers like Hobbes, Freud and Rousseau? Herzog imaginatively and romantically reconciliates himself with Gold, suggesting implicitly reconciliation with the world "Thou movest me." Once more, he Platonically speaks to Ramona, his girl friend, about "the flight of truths" as an alternative to "ineffectuality, banishment to personal life [and] confusion" (1967, 314) which does not only mean the light and the truth of the self but also of the world in general a point that is reinforced in his final letters to God "[God] how my mind has struggled to make a coherent sense. I have not been good at every thing of intensest significance" (p. 161). Henderson, stressing Herzog, reminds us that he is a man of dreams, of life, of identity; a man for humanism, for life, for writing; a man of a poetic type. In cultural terms, this means that Henderson as a Jewish figure is a man "in whom all cultures, philosophies, identities and truths melt down and therefore he is unable to envision an individual consciousness which marginalizes the other and rejects him." What remains is not alienation, not even madness, but, in Derrida's words, writing, the text, the world, identities, unity, 'M'an, humanism, "*Alkitaab*"-*Henderson the Rain king* and dreams:

We are the first generation to see the clouds from both sides. What a privilege! First people dreamed upward. Now they dream both upward and downward. This is bound to change something, somewhere. For me the entire experience has been similar to a dream. (Bellow, 1959, p. 236)

#### ***1.4.1 Spiritual Quest or Political Crisis***

In political terms, this means that Bellow keeps questioning the ideas of alienation identity, exile, truth, the function of the political leader on the one hand and "author, authority, authorship, authorization" (Marrouchi, 1995, p. 69), on the other hand. The assumption behind this, I need to believe, is that his fictional heroes are not only to be seen as philosophers in search of their identities, but also as political leaders *par excellence*. One way of proving this argument is Herzog's, and Henderson's never-ending theorization about the ideal political leader/action. Another way to reinforce this proof is Saul Bellow's personal views over politics in general. In this sense, Saul Bellow, being aware of his Jewish assumption, asserts that the political leader must combine passion and responsibility in order to pursue politics as a vocation, and this very often may involve a compromise. Accordingly, the politician is the person who should have a particular personality, probably a Herzogian or even a Hendersonian personality that assimilates both personal and humanistic concerns with utilitarian purposes. Someone who is able to bring opposite things together, to recon ciliate identities in one unity keeping the inherent differences as a ground to that very unity. Max Weber clarifies the image in saying "The honour of the political leader, of the leading statesman [...] lies precisely in an exclusive personal responsibility for what he does, a responsibility he can not and must not reject or transfer" (Weber, 1970, p. 95). Owen (1994) depicts the spirit of the political leader and the kind of this responsibility as follows:

The distinctive features of the charismatic politician is his capacity to ground certain ultimate "values" and "meanings" of life in his person. In contrast to bureaucratic politics

in which decision making is predicated on a utilitarian weighing of material interests, the politician with a calling bases a decision- making on a *responsible* commitment to ultimate values. (p. 131)

In light of these views, the politician, in the Bellovian sense, "must integrate an ethic of conviction and an ethic of responsibility" which must result in a personal responsibility for the pursuit of "ultimate values." Sammler in *Mr. Sammler's Planet* reminds us that the actions of politicians should have "a moral worth," to borrow the term from I. Kant. Augie March in *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953) and Tommy Wilhelm in *Seize the Day* (1956) urgently reminds us that we should not give or lose faith in the face of our daily struggles let alone in our political responsibilities. Belly Rose in *Bellarosa Connection* (1989) translates these theoretical speculations into real actions through his secret rescue operations of Jews in Europe. Bellow insists, as it seems, that one should not retreat or lose faith, rather one should actively engage in the problems of the world. His assumption, following Weber, is that "The successful political action is always the art of the possible [...] the possible is often reached only by striving to attain the impossible that lies beyond it" (Weber, 1970, pp. 87-79).

Bellow, like his heroes, implicitly acknowledges that he is facing a political problem in addition to the philosophical one. He does not choose it, he just encounters it; being a Jewish man. The implication of this, as commonly known, is the necessity of an identity, a homeland where one can live and dream. Bellow, on the account of this, bitterly and pathetically asserts that there is no home to which we can bring the world; there is no world for which we should prepare a home. Therefore, Hegel's views of reconciliation between the world and home remain nonsense theoretical speculations. Saul Bellow is aware of the fact that this political problem closes the road in front of him. Following Weber, Bellow believes that either we move the obstacle or else we end up our engagement, cease philosophizing. The difficulty must be resolved, and the world should be brought back to home again. Self-consciousness and consciousness of the world should allow us to bypass the dissonance of the age. Being humanist philosopher in Ricoeur's way can only purify us, re-establish and consolidate a sense of identity. Sartre's (1965) account on the humanist philosopher is a good case in the point that is worth quoting at length:

The humanist philosopher who bends over his brothers like a wise elder brother who has a sense of responsibilities, the humanist who loves men as they are, the humanist who loves men as they ought to be, the one who wants to save them with their consent and the one who will save them inspite of themselves, [...] the one who loves death in man, the one who loves life in man the happy humanist who always has the right word to make people laugh, the sober humanist whom you meet especially at funerals or wakes. (p. 154)

Bellow, the novelist, the poet, the humanist, the politician, the philosopher, strikingly reflects the Kantian version of hope. In attempting to answer the following question "What may I hope?" Immanuel Kant nicely says that we need to hope for a moral action that is, we need to act with a reference to a moral law "the maxim" which we might wish it to be a general law of nature through our will (Kant, 1996, pp.1-5). Bellow's unconscious aim behind this might be that he wants to

give morality, identity and consciousness about the world a firmer foundation and power and therefore radically negates the nonsense of the world. Humanity, for him should continue to exist through our active engagements in the problems of the World. Building upon the Kantian thought, Bellow unconsciously suggests “a moral world [Which should be] in accordance with all moral laws” (Davis, 2004, p. 105), a gesture that might possibly bring the world to us and then be happy with it.

What is more striking at this level is that Bellow, while writing, is not aware of philosophy nor is he aware of political theories and criticism. He just writes his texts and lets them in the hands of his readers. He just writes stories of intellects, of madness, of reason, of alienation, and may well have developed a fondness of doing so without giving a lot of consideration to their theoretical implications. The immediate implication of this is that these stories are not only about “the dream of bringing the world to our home,” but also about purporting to theorize for us the way a contemporary fiction should be put in the light of other disciplines like philosophy, history, poetry, politics, theory, art[...]

### 1.5 Conclusion

The affinity that I have been attempting to argue for/ demonstrate between the Bellovian fictional world and the Hegelian thought can only be another moving journey added to Henderson’s spiritual quest. The dire strive to be “at home” and to feel “satisfaction in the world” might generate other unexpected affinities between Saul Bellow and other figures. The reader, at this moment is no longer to be a Bellovian or Hegelian as he might be “wandering far from view” in new world and new “imaginary” lands. At the story level, Henderson’s spiritual quest leads him to imaginary homelands, loss, exile and chaos. Identity turns out to be identities. Over consciousness, or what I would call madness, ends up the wisdom of the intellectual. The Bellovian hero, through Henderson, informs us that the modern American character is not able to identify himself/herself within a society which is characterised by difference, multiplicity and democracy. Its attempt to come out with a certain identity ends up with illusion and fictional journeys to imaginary homelands.

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