

# BETWEEN “NO WAY OUT” AND “WAY OUT”

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## I

It may be agreed that the Jewish-American intellectuals and Negro writers are two main beams supporting the literary world of the present-day America, which often seems to be in danger of caving in. Of these two supports the one, i.e. Jewish-American writers or critics have been so conspicuous in their activities that their achievements are now enjoying a remarkable notice of the general public that have certain interests in American literary culture.

An arbitrary enumeration of those who share the nuclear position in American literary world shows that Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, Jerome David Salinger, Alfred Kazin, Leslie A. Fiedler, Norman Podohoretz are all Jewish-American intellectuals in some way or other. One will hardly recall the 20th century American writers without remembering Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, John Dos Passos, etc. Indeed they *are* embraced in one's memory; all of them have passed away. They were being succeeded by those who grew up with the lessons from these predecessors, and the recent tendency goes that these Jewish-American intellectuals have been increasingly rising in the estimation of literary critics and their popularity among reading public has been rapidly growing. What is the reason of their activities having been so highly esteemed ?

It is of course because their qualities as writers or critics are equal to the standards of critical evaluation, but also because they are Jewish, not in the sense that they have some Jewish origin in their blood. By “they are Jewish” is meant that they are very active in describing the situations of the present world; to put it otherwise, they are picturing clearly and acutely what is often called the “Jewish situation”. The present essay is an attempt to make a partial approach to this rather obscure idea by choosing a few works of some Jewish-American writers.

## II

It has been pointed out that the Jewish-American writers manifestly depict the present situation, but what is meant by the “present situation” is not always clear in their manifestations. It is probable that it is relative with the words seeming to be explanatory of the world we are living in, such as “anxiety”, “alienation”, “despair”, “discontinuity”, “No Way Out”, etc. But these terms are true to all human existence, not particularly to the present day. So there is nothing new in the world that these terms are applied to the contemporary world. In terms of the levels of usage, however, it is dubious that these words have shared

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the same meanings or implications throughout the ages. Take "alienation" for example. Originally "alienation" has somewhat a religious implication. When a man is conscious of his sin, being away from the presence of God, he is religiously alienated. Then his religious life begins so that he may be in the presence of God again. Next comes Marx's famous usage of "alienation" in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, where Marx discusses that laborers are "alienated" in that they cannot participate in the result of their production, being exploited by their employers. The present usage of this term is rather philosophical; "alienation" reflects the condition where there are perceptible some spiritual uncertainties. This brief historical survey tells us that "alienation" has had different levels of usage at different times. The same is more or less true of other terms, such as "anxiety", "despair", "discontinuity", etc.

At the stage of the present century where only less than 30 years are left before its close, we should bring it home to us that the use began to be made of these terms particularly after the last World War. World War I may be describable as the so-to-speak "man-to-man" battle (Indeed bloody battles were fought in many trenches), while World War II was the battle of science and technology which has been developed beyond comparison from what we had seen in the first World War. The destructive power of arms was amazing in the last War, which we witnessed in the holocaust brought about by the nuclear bombardment. What is the result of this shocking advancement of science and technology?

Firstly, the increase of the speed in the development of scientific technology and the rapid decrease of the range covered by humanity. The progress of computer is a good illustration of this. Once human beings were the master of machines. Mechanical advances have been equivalent to the improvement in the adept manipulation of machinery by men. But, computers began to take the place of what had been done by the hands of human beings. In other words, they began to have mastery over men. Human beings, prone to be a lazy creature, regarded this as an epoch-making event, and would expect the advent of an ideal society, i.e. computopia. But how did their expectations result in? It was their slavery to the machines and the rapid loss of humanity. Shocked at this effect, men appear to have been making desperate efforts to regain their humanity, and they began to curse computerization which they had once encouraged. This reversal of view over computers produced John Barth's *Giles Goatboy*, somewhat a satire of computerization. But, as in the "communication revolution" or "the age of communication", men appear to be supporting computerization or computopia. This paradoxical attitude toward mechanical advances is being mixed with the crisis of the so-called "environmental pollution". This pollution seems to be gradually putting human beings on the verge of grave. Besides, they are facing the danger of being involved at any moment in the "button war". In such an age as this full of paradoxes and uncertainties, the sense or feeling of "alienation," "anxiety", "No Way Out", etc. has been waxing its depth. Indeed Ramond Aron is right in what he warns in *Progress and Disillusion*.<sup>1</sup>

Another situation observable in the society after World War II is the augmentation of the scale of society and the according difficulty of the individual participation in the society. When David Riesman gave a lecture on the occasion of his visit to this country, he pointed out in effect that people had been feeling themselves more and more losing the opportunity

<sup>1</sup> See chapter 6 of *Progress and Disillusion; the Dialectics of Modern Society*.

to participate in the important social decisions. In Canada, Northrop Frye told a similar aspect of the present society in the series of lectures given commemorating the Centennial year of Confederation. These are only two examples out of many discussions of the social situations after the War, and we can hardly see these discussions but we find some references to the impossibility of individual sharing in the significant social decisions. As John Donne says, "no man is an island, entire of itself" and human existence is possible only within the bond with their society. If they find it impossible, they will not know where to turn, as the result of which they fall into the state of "No Way Out" or "dangling."

The "war novels" written after World War II have clarified how the increase of the scale in the mass-society and the minimization of individual existence affected the postwar generation. *The Naked and the Dead* by Norman Mailer, *Young Lions* by Irwin Shaw, *From Here to Eternity* by James Jones are some of such novels, and what they have in common is that all of them try to treat the Army as the "mass force". Here lies the difference from the war novels after World War I. Take Ernest Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms*, John Dos Passos' *Three Soldiers*, e.e. cummings' *The Enormous Room* and you will find that most of them have little awareness of the Army being "Mass" body, though you can observe it partially in, for example, *Three Soldiers*, or *The Enormous Room*, where the fate of individuals is described, who are being crushed under the weight of mass force.

Let us discuss for a moment *Farewell to Arms* on this matter. This novel is quite autobiographical, based on the author's own experience on the Italian front in World War I. It appeals to us how an individual is able or unable to survive one of the most extreme situations in the world, i.e. war. The author is most concerned with the possibility of individual existence, not in the relationship between an individual being and the Army. Of course the author tries to make us realize the existence of some unnamable power that seems to control individual fates. Frederic Henry, an American lieutenant, the hero of this novel, falls in love with Catherine Barkeley, a service nurse and makes her with child. In a piece of conversation with him, Catherine asks him if he feels they are "trapped." By "trapped" the author seems to suggest some invisible power trapping them. This power gives the hero the death of his beloved Catherine as the reward for his trial to make himself "separate peace", by plunging into the Tagliamento, when he is about to be shot on the charge of officer deserter. This novel ends with the scene in which the hero returns in the rain to his hotel after Catherine has died from excessive hemorrhage caused by her caesarian operation. This scene is usually understood as the proof of some unseen power being far beyond individual challenge. But, granting that this interpretation is somewhat effective for the analysis of *Farewell to Arms*, it should also be noticed that the nature of this power is not clearly shown, compared to the novels on World War II.

In the novels after the last War written about what is directly or indirectly related to it, there is observable an acute sense of the fate of individuals at the mercy of the force of the mass. There is little difference between common service men and their officers, which is distinct from what we read in *Three Soldiers*, or *The Enormous Room* where common soldiers are keenly aware that they are one kind and their officers are another. Contrary to this, we find in the war novels on the last War the feeling among the soldiers of common rank that they and their big men are fellows; they are all part of the mass. And the authors of these novels describe with a calm but sharp touch of pen these individual men's gradual isolation from the mass or the society to which they are belonging. Then what actions do

these isolated or "No Way Out" individuals plan or try to take? The next chapters are to make a partial analysis of it with the works of some Jewish-American writers, such as Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud and so forth.

### III

The burden of the Jewish experience borne upon the "Jewish writers" has a variety of levels. We can hardly think of Jews without remembering their Diaspora, or the life as exiles, as is symbolically expressed as "eternal wanderer". But what they have experienced in their exile differ to the extent that the lands of their escape range over various countries from East to West. The Jews have commonly the history of usurpation in which they are often on the brink of racial annihilation, and it may be true that they have been in the circumstances of "anxiety", "despair", "alienation", etc. This locates the Jewish writers in the fortunate position for picturing the present society. But, as Jewish experience differs, so their way of reflection of it in their literary works varies very widely. Let us look at this aspect in some of these writers. Here an apology should be given for the deliberate negligence in this essay of the "Yiddish writers", who are to be deeply considered because of their very hard and severe "Diaspora". However, the present writer prefers to choose Bellow, Malamud, etc., simply because of their popularity among reading public. Bellow's *Herzog* and some stories of Malamud's *The Magic Barrel* will be chosen as the material for the analytical study of what is called the "Jewish situation."

The common aspect observable in the characters of the works of Saul Bellow and Bernard Malamud is that they can neither adapt themselves to the social surroundings they are in nor swing repulsively to the opposite direction. In a word, they are in the state of dangling, shifting from side to side between these two extremes. But, the dangling they are doing is quite different from that of the "lost generation", which was said to be born after the first World War. Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* was welcomed to the post-war generation as their "Bible" and it describes vividly how younger generation after the War were leading purposeless or "lost" life. Not only Jake Barnes and Brett Ashley, hero and heroine of the novel, but also the other characters are all "dangling", but they do not try to find their "Way Out". Instead they are immersed in drinking, love-making, jazzing through life. These are their diversions from the reality they fail to cope with. The dangling of the people in *Herzog* or *The Magic Barrel* is purposeful; they make a desperate and often ridiculous-looking effort to get out of it. The process of their effort to get out produces Jewish humor of some peculiarity.

A comparative study of *Herzog* and *The Magic Barrel* shows that "No Way Out" in these works is rather different from each other. The "No Way Out" in *The Magic Barrel* seems somewhat individual. This collection of stories tells about the conscience of the Jews in the "Jewish situation", the situation of the present world. *Herzog* also treats an individual "No Way Out"; it describes the suffering of Moses Herzog, hero of the novel. But the author tries to convey to his readers the sufferings at more universal level through numerous letters which the hero writes to a lot of people. In other words, the troubles Moses Herzog is suffering are those which the present society is doing. Let us look at *The Magic Barrel*. This is a collection of thirteen stories, and each one is favorable for our

discussion, but the writer would like to choose "The Girl of My Dreams," which seems most typical of all.

The hero of this short story is Mitka, who wants to be a writer, and submits his manuscripts to more than twenty publishers. But, at the beginning of the story, he is in quite a despair after repeated refusals of his novel, confining himself in his room at Mrs. Lutz's lodging. He has burnt out his now hopeless manuscripts in Mrs. Lutz's trash can, stirring them so that every sheet gets afire, then

The sparks, as he stirred, flew to the apples, the withered fruit representing not only creation gone for nothing (three long years), but all his hopes, and the proud ideas he had given his book; and Mitka, although not a sentimentalist, felt as if he had burned (it took a thick two hours) an everlasting hollow in himself.<sup>2</sup>

If Mitka could be a writer, he would be able to attain participation in the society by beginning his career as a writer, but his participation is not realized because of the refusal given to his novel. Thus he is forced to be dangling. Then his effort to get himself out of this condition begins, or, more correctly, he is made to begin it by some person. The characters in *The Magic Barrel* who try to find their way out have almost without exception some agent who helps them with it. Mitka has an agent, too. It is Mrs. Lutz, landlady of his lodging. She is also a poor writer and is very much interested in Mitka, encouraging him who is a prisoner in his room by lending him copies of literary magazines or some of her library. One day, she put that morning's *Globe* at his door together with other things. This morning paper forced him to begin the effort to get out of his despair, although he preferred to be left to himself. Mitka reads that paper, he finds a story contributed to its literary column "The Open Globe." The spirit of this column is "come-one, come-all to the public, to every writer under a rock, inviting contributions in the form of stories at five bucks the thousand word throw".<sup>3</sup> When he reads it through, he finds what is written in the story quite similar to his own experience. The contributor to the column is a daytime-woman worker and writes at night. Her name is Madeline Thorn. She typewrites each page neatly and slips it into the carton under her bed. But one night she laid herself on the bed rereading to see if the book is any good. "Page after page she dropped on the floor, at last falling asleep, worries she hadn't got it right, wearied at how much rewriting (this sank in by degrees) she would have to do, when the light of the risen sun struck her eyes and she pounced up, realizing she had forgotten to set the alarm". She swept the typewritten sheets under the bed, but not in the carton (this is her undoing!), "washed, slipped on a fresh dress, and ran a comb through her hair. Down the stairs she ran and out of the house."<sup>4</sup> While she was out to her daily duty, her landlady cleaned her room for her genuinely out of kindness. Then what did become of her precious manuscripts? Answering her question where are the typewritten papers that were under her, her landlady says, "Oh, those that I found on the floor, honey? I thought you meant for me to sweep the mess out and so I did".<sup>5</sup> By "so I did" the landlady meant that she had burnt them, but the lodger took it for having thrown them in the garbage. When Mitka read this passage, he collapsed on

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Malamud: *The Magic Barrel* (A Vintage Book) pp. 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 32.

the bed with a groan, and

He was convinced it was every bit of it true. He saw the crazy dame dumping the manuscript into the barrel and stirring it until every blessed page was aflame. He groaned at the burning—years of precious work. The tale haunted him. He wanted to escape it—leave the room and abandon the dismal memory of misery, but where would he go and what do without a penny in his pocket? So he lay on the bed and whether awake or asleep dreamed the recurrent dream of the burning barrel (in it their books commingled), suffering her agony as well as his own.<sup>6</sup>

As we see in this passage, particularly in the very last line, Mitka identifies the burning of his manuscript with that of Madeline's nearly completed work, and feels deep sympathy with her. Then he goes so far as to gain access to this woman, through which he expects to get rid of his dangling, for

Mitka sensed that although he had vowed never to go back to it, he hoped the correspondence would return him to his abandoned book. (Sterile writer seeking end of sterility through satisfying epistolary intercourse with lady writer)<sup>7</sup>

Madeline is a straw for drowning Mitka to catch at, and if he could find her equal to his expectation and could regain his creative imagination, he would be happy, but the actual life is not so smiling. When he met Madeline, he found her a common oldish woman. She says, "You'd have liked me when I was young, Mitka. I had a sylphlike figure and glorious hair. I was much sought after by men. I was not what you would call sexy but they knew I had it".<sup>8</sup> But nothing of "sylphlike figure" or "glorious hair" is with her any longer, and a woman facing Mitka is a middle-aged female with her market bag. He feels depressed and what added to his despair is the fact that she was not real Madeline Thorn; it was her sister's name, which she borrowed for her story. He realizes the irony of life.

The irony of it—immured for months in a rat hole, to come for this. He'd come back now and entomb himself forever.<sup>9</sup>

Thus the desperate effort of the hero's to get out of "No Way Out" turns to be fruitless. Such barrenness of effort to get rid of dangling as we have seen in "The Girl of My Dreams" is also true of the other characters in *The Magic Barrel*, e.g. Leo Finkle in "The Magic Barrel" or Kessler in "The Mourners". *The Magic Barrel* seems to attempt at the generalization of the present situation modeling on individual cases, as we see in each of the collected stories, whereas Saul Bellow's *Herzog* is quite different; Moses Herzog himself assumes the general situation of the modern world. He is, as it were, an incarnation of ideological situation of the modern world.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 37.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 37.

## IV

From his first work (*The Dangling Man*) to the latest (*Mr. Sammler's Planet*), the peculiarity of Saul Bellow's novels seems to have been increasing its intensity. So far as peculiarity goes, *Herzog* may be said to come on top of all. And it is very much symbolic of Saul Bellow's literary career that the title of his maiden work is "the dangling man", for the nucleus of his themes from his first novel on has been how to cease to be a dangling man. In terms of it, *Herzog* may be regarded as a kind of his conclusion on his trial to find any way out of "dangling."

The hero of *Herzog* is Moses Herzog, a middle-aged intellectual, an ex-college professor. He has lost two marriages, which is a part of the causes of his abnormal-looking behavior. As if on impulse, he writes down at any time and at any place whatever comes up to his mind, though it is dubious if there is ever such a psychosis as his. The author shows what is written down by Moses as letters from him to someone, in which the past experiences of the protagonist are exposed just as they are. What is worthy of our notice is that the author does not "explain" what the hero has experienced in the past, but just "throws out" the bare facts of his life. It is for the readers to understand the meaning of these facts. The same can be said of the ideological situation in the novel. It may be identical with that of the author himself. What Moses Herzog writes in his epistles certainly conveys the thoughts of Saul Bellow himself, but they are not sugar-coated but what they really are. This letter-writing seems, in a sense, to be the author's challenge to the modern world.

Moses Herzog writes letters to those known and unknown, dead and alive. He has been isolated from social participation, after having failed in two marriage lives and he suffered betrayal by his friends. Writing letters is the only way for him to get back the communication with his world, and he writes letter after letter as his impulse urges him to. This is to be identified with Mitka seeking something in the acquaintance with Madeline Thorn, or Leo Finkle in "The Magic Barrel" on the marriage broker. But, as Mitka is not rewarded, so Moses' efforts for searching it ends in failure, for his communication is not to be achieved. Communication is possible only when there is some kind of correspondence, but in the case of our hero's letter-writing, there is no such thing. He writes and writes letters, but cannot expect any return post for them. He is, after all, left in the state of "dangling". The contents of his letters, however, are the exposure of the facts as bare as ever of the present world. Let us discuss this matter with two out of a lot of letters in *Herzog*.

- (A) It has been reported, he wrote, that several teams of Russian Cosmonauts have been lost; disintegrated, we must assume. One was heard calling 'SOS'—world SOS. Soviet confirmation has been withheld.
- (B) Dear Herr Nietzsche—My dear sir, May I ask a question from the floor? You speak of the power of the Dionysian spirit to endure the sight of the Terrible, the Questionable, to allow itself the luxury of Destruction, to witness Decomposition, hediousness, Evil. All this the Dionysian spirit can do because it has the

(A) Saul Bellow: *Herzog* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson) p. 11.

(B) *Ibid.* p.p 318-319.

same power of recovery as Nature itself. . . . Now we've seen enough destruction to test the power of the Dionysian spirit amply, and where are the heroes who have recovered from it . . . No, really Herr Nietzsche, I have great admiration for you. Sympathy. You want to make us able to live with the void. Not lie ourselves into good-naturedness, trust, ordinary middling human considerations, but to question as have never been questioned before, relentlessly, with iron determination, into evil, through evil, past evil, accepting on abject comfort. The most absolute, the most piercing questions. Rejecting mankind as it is, that ordinary, practical, thieving, striking, unilluminated, sodden rabble, not only the laboring rabble, but even worse the "educated" rabble with its books and concerts and lectures, its liberalism and its romantic theatrical 'loves' and 'passions'—it all deserves to die, it will die.

As "Russian Cosmonauts" suggests, the subject of (A) is quite contemporaneous with us, while (B) gives us not a particular but a general idea of the contemporary problems. What is noteworthy in (A) is that the author uses 'disintegrated' and 'SOS'. These two words may be directly related to the "Russian Cosmonauts", but, if we take it into account that this is a part of Moses Herzog's letter, the use of 'disintegrated' and 'SOS' is given of Moses himself. Remember that Moses, immured in the odd habit of letter-writing, is in the state of mental disintegration and we will be convinced that this 'disintegration' is a confirmation of his mental condition and 'SOS' may be his SOS. In other words, 'disintegrated' cosmonauts are symbolic of Moses' self-disintegration and 'SOS' will be an aid for him to return to his normal self, and the SOS for him is just writing letters to various people. But, if the discussion of these two words is to be extended from the protagonist of the novel to its author, their implications will get more complicated. As what is meant in this book is a kind of philosophy of Saul Bellow himself, 'disintegrated' in the quotation (A) may be considered to be that of the modern world where the possibilities of human existence are becoming less and less likely as social economy gets increasing enormosity and complexity. This SOS is the one for the survival of such suffering modern society, and it may imply the SOS for the world. Let us go on to the quotation (B).

As we see in the head of the partially quoted passage, the addressee of this letter is Friedrich Nietzsche, one of the greatest German philosophers. This letter of almost one page length is a declaration by the author, in which he manifests how he views the society after World War II. This letter is written in the last part of the novel, which contains some important letters that seem to be a consummation of the hero's various experiences. In terms of this, we may conclude that this letter addressed to Nietzsche is a part of the essentials of the hero's thoughts.

We must notice that this letter is addressed to Nietzsche, because he may be regarded as an ancestor of the most important contemporary thought, i.e. existentialism. And the eyes of the author directed to Nietzsche also try to see what contemporary ideological situation is like. As is well known, Nietzsche declared the "Death of God", by which he meant the sterility of Christian morality. He insisted on the necessity of "Will to Power", which, according to him, ought to be the momentum for both individuals and societies. When Saul Bellow writes to Nietzsche through the hands of Moses Herzog, he thinks of this "Nietzscheism". Then what significance does Nietzsche have or have not to the



contemporary world ? Or, how does the author think of Nietzsche ?

When we read this quoted passage, the first thing we can find is that the whole of this letter is written in rather ironical strain. The irony perceptible in the passage shows that the author is critical of Nietzsche. Let us take, for example, first sentence. It reads as in the following.

You speak of the power of the Dionysian spirit to endure the sight of the Terrible, the Questionable, to allow itself the luxury of Destruction, to witness Decomposition, Hideousness, Evil.

In this part we can feel some echo of *The Birth of Tragedy*. Here Nietzsche asserts that pessimism is the core of Greek tragedy, and this pessimism is not pallid but robust one with which to face whatever fate one has to take on. The spirit of such an enduring pessimism is Dionysian. But, “the sight of the Terrible, the Questionable, . . .” suggests that what the author means by the “Dionysian spirit” is somewhat identical with the “Dionysian” in Nietzsche’s *The Will to Power*.

But, the Dionysian is dangerous in that it is to be connected with some instinctive desire. The instinctive desire is apt to go to such an excess that the Dionysian spirit tends to wage power not to endure the sight of the Terrible, the Questionable, but to bring about such things. “Now we’ve seen enough destruction to test the power of the Dionysian spirit amply” somewhat explains this tendency. The ego gone too much is beyond one’s control and the ego out of control causes “enough destruction”. If it is taken into consideration that Moses Herzog is a Jew and Saul Bellow has a Russian Jewish blood, it is easy to find that “destruction” and “Dionysian spirit” in the quoted passage reflect that inhuman cruelty, i.e. the Jewish massacre by the Nazis, but “destruction” also implies that of individual spiritual life and, in this respect, it is to be related to “disintegration” which we have discussed in the quotation (A).

In the second World War we have witnessed the remarkable progress of warfare and the development of arms, and the postwar society has seen the increasing rate of advances in science and technology, which caused self-alienation, despair, or anxiety. What is Saul Bellow’s view of such circumstances ? We find the following passage in *Herzog*.

I venture to say Kierkegaard meant that truth has lost its force with us and horrible pain and evil must teach it to us again, the eternal punishment of Hell will have to regain their reality before mankind turns serious once more. I do not see this. Let us set aside the fact that such convictions in the mouths of safe comfortable people playing at crisis, alienation, apocalypse, and desperation make me sick. We must get it out of our heads that this is a doomed time, that we are waiting for the end, and the rest of it, mere junk from fashionable magazines. Things are grim enough without these shivery games.

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You see how gruesomely human beings are destroyed by pain, when they have the added torment of losing their humanity first, so that their death is a total defeat, and then you write about ‘modern forms of Orphism’ and about ‘people who are afraid of suffering’ and throw in other such cocktail-party expressions. Why not say rather that people of powerful imagination, given to dreaming, deeply and to

raising up marvelous and self-sufficient fictions, turn to suffering sometimes to cut it into their bliss, as people pinch themselves to feel awake. I know that my suffering, if I may speak of it, has often been like that, a more extended form of life, a striving for the wakefulness and an antidote to illusion, and therefore I can take no credit for it. I am willing without further exercise in pain to open my heart. And this needs no doctrine or theology of suffering.<sup>10</sup>

This passage is a part of the hero's letter to Professor Mermelstein written near the close of the novel, and here the author seems to be warning the modern philosophy that, unless it gets out of dependence upon such clichés as "alienation", "anxiety", "despair", or "No Way Out", it will become void of its *raison d'être*.

It goes without saying that Kierkegaard is an existential philosopher who advocates the "illness to death", i.e. despair, and the modern world filled with despair everywhere is accessible to his philosophy of despair. But, as we read in the quoted passage, the author does not agree with Kierkegaard, insisting that "we must get rid of it out of our heads that this is a doomed time, that we are waiting for the end, and the rest of it, mere junk from fashionable magazines". In the same letter, Moses writes, "You have to have power to employ pain, to repent, to be illuminated, you must have the opportunity and even the time".<sup>11</sup> This is the author's assertion of his attitude. Then what is our hero's attitude in the last of *Herzog*? Moses who has given out torrents of letters is no longer here but a serene figure thinking that "at the time he had no messages for anyone. Nothing. Not a single word".<sup>12</sup> As the action of the novel goes on to the end, the hero begins to be conscious that he is returning to his normal self. Then he feels that he has no message to give to anyone. This feeling may suggest that the hero at last fails in his attempt to be communicated with the world from which he feels he has been alienated, but the present writer would prefer to think that this state of having no message is an affirmation of his stance for his future rather than his feeling of resignation. Moses decides to stand on his own legs, not to ask his help for others. This attitude is to be regarded as the author's own positive stance for the future which seems to be full of no less anxieties and uncertainties than he has been suffering so far. But his latest achievement suggests to us that, despite his sturdy posture, he is getting into the narrower choice of direction of turning to. The same seems true of Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, Norman Mailer, and other Jewish-American writers, more particularly of the "Yiddish writers". The difficulties which these writers have to face are also those for us to cope with, and if we understand their travail better, we will be able to get more profound hold of what these authors mean to say in their works.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 316-317.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 317.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 341.