CHAPTER I

THE PSYCHIC UNSELFING SYSTEM

YET PRESUMING ON HIS SENSES
ON HE GOES MOST WONDROUS WISE:
DOUBTS OF TRUTH, BELIEVES PRETENCES;
LOST IN ERROR, LIVES AND DIES.

ROBERT DODSLEY, "MAN'S A BUBBLE"

The basic concern in the novels of Iris Murdoch and Saul Bellow is with Man. To be more specific, their concern lies with the Self of Man, the various "threats....(posed) to (his) personal integrity by modern society" (Galloway, "The Hero in Current American Fiction" 47). Although the two novelists are nationally, socially, and culturally different, they deal with certain common aspects of human predicament, and, the unselfing process is chosen here for discussion.

Self is a binding force in existence, without which, existence itself would seem empty and meaningless. John Macquarrie says, "Self is an agent of existence. It is an inevitable part of existential progression" (Existentialism 16). In this regard, it should be noted that there is no dichotomy between the two, that is, Self and existence. However, this study is in pursuit of the existence of Self.

The various factors that govern and alter existence directly or indirectly, govern and alter the Self too.
Sometimes Self provides a balance to existence but more often seems fickle, owing to the conflicts and controversies of existence. Self accommodates these conditions by offering fleeting momentary presentation of selves, in relation with the variegated problems, questions and crises, that differ from moment to moment, from individual to individual.

In the modernist sense of the term, Self is a process of unselfing a continuous insight into existence where the seeker concerned becomes 'aware' of the bare facts of his predicament. Iris Murdoch and Saul Bellow are often concerned with their protagonists' "awareness of absurdity or incongruity, in saintly or demonic forms, or in comic or tragic guises, in the picaresque or grotesque modes" (Hasan, "The Way Down and Out" 91) - an awareness which is reached through a constant process of unselfing. Unselfing enables the protagonist to reach his freedom from the binding shackles of existence.

In Murdoch's Bruno's Dream and Saul Bellow's Herzog, the novelists are concerned with the insecure existence of Bruno in the former and Herzog in the latter. The two novelists portray their protagonists in the midst of controversies of existence. Both Bruno and Herzog are caught in a condition of existential "encounter with nothingness,
dread, Freedom, Choice, Commitment and Community" (Gill, Existentialism 14). These circumstances compel the protagonists to unself and help them to positively embrace or pessimistically reject existence. Bruno and Herzog suffer a kind of common imbalance, unrest, anguish, and ambivalence (Hasan, American Literature 36), the origin of which lies in their human predicament, their minds, and in their interaction with the other characters present in their respective novels.

While answering the self-seeking questions "Who am I? What do I believe in? What is my relationship to that which is not me?" - the answers lie in the Self's analysis of existence in order to arrive at a Self. Bruno and Herzog arrive at such reconciliation to the void. The analysis is to lead to the answer or result, whether the characters taken here for study are spiritually whole men at the end of their unselfing or perceive a 'Satanic self' with innumerable insinuations into the ears of the contemplator or continue in the disintegrated state or reach a moderate reconciliation between alienation and recovered comprehensiveness of life or become powerful authorities of their own Self and the selves of others.

"Man is the weather-maker of his existence," says Patka (Thinkers and Thought 37), and Bruno and Herzog suffer
almost a psycho-somatic trauma. Murdoch's ailing Bruno has rejected existence. Throughout the novel, until his death, Bruno is portrayed as a guilt-ridden invalid whose unselfing bears his paranoia, obsessions, and ambivalences. Bruno lives in the past assessing his personal flaws and fallibilities that had altered a smooth relationship with his wife Janie, daughter-Gwen, son-Miles, son-in-law-Danby, Diana, Lisa and Parvathi - his daughter-in-law, Nigel-caretaker, and Adelaide - the maid. Bruno's unselfing lies more in the consciousness of the other characters, especially Nigel, Danby, Diana and Lisa, than in his own. Each character remarks on the person of Bruno.

In Bruno's Dream we see tragic manifestations of the Self. Bruno is split into a series of trauma and each fragment speaks for the various realities that Bruno experiences. The novelist has so designed the character of Bruno that each fragment of Bruno's Self becomes a spokesman of the sense of rejection. His world as he claims is ruined by Janie. The intricate secret of truth, however, is that Bruno loves Janie, the drawback being "Love in an inferno" a terrible withholding of forgiveness (BD 13).

The question is 'Can self be a symbol of goodness?' The earlier views (of the ancient past) do not seem to fit the
characters of Herzog and Bruno though one cannot rule out the faint existence of such a view completely. However, the two men do seem to prevent a conglomeration of their selves in their respective novels, each fragment contributing to a more profound understanding of their own Self and the selves of the others revealed during their personal interaction with them. It is this personal interaction that sets the two characters Bruno and Herzog distinct. In this process the selves either overcome or are overcome by the conflicts within or by the numerous compulsions of social obligations. The Self then explores these various, sensitive selves thus indulging in a to and fro marathon of unselfing.

The unselfing process in the case of the two protagonists, is an exposure of the tyranny of their past, bound by various emotions, passions and desires, revealing the individuality, "the uniqueness and mysteriousness of human personality and the play of forces in human nature" (Kennedy Jr, "Psychoanalyst Heal Thyself" 379).

Murdoch effects darkness into Bruno that infiltrates through him, a thickening fog around Bruno whose solitary confinement establishes and reinforces the darkness within and without. Perhaps, when all others manifest multiple selves Murdoch moulds Bruno with merely two predominant selves within
that room where he lives - namely obscure self and an unselfing self.

The most obvious and common forces that benight the two individuals, are love, sex, death, affection, friendship, solitude, rejection, marriage, God and life, as John Orr puts it (Novel 3). The major protagonist of the English novel often experiences the contradiction between a false spirit of optimism in the world at large and a localised reality that is forbidding and brutal. This is what perhaps is suffered by both Herzog and Bruno. "To exist is to have a place (and time) in the real world" (Macquarrie, Existentialism 62).

The bed-ridden Bruno in the process of his unselfing, views himself in the reflection of his own unhappiness. Bruno's consciousness ranges far between from the prime of his youthhood, the early days of his marriage, upto the days of his innumerable broken relationships. His mind brims with a contradicting mixture of feelings of suspicion, fear, hatred on one side and eagerness to make amends, self pity, longingness to be loved by someone new, on the other.

Man indulges in various thoughts that are both fragmentary and continuous at the same time. Fragmentary because the mind can leap from one thought to another in a disconnected fashion; continuous because it is the self of the
individual that becomes the matrix from which rises unselfing. The mind is never vacant for it is always instructed, confronted and is at the service of Self. This is another reason why the almost invalid Bruno analyses every minute aspect of his life - though everything is Bruno-oriented.

Yet another of Bruno's odd relationships or obsessions is with Nigel whom he regards as "The all-seer", a God. His emotional dependence and independent thinking self is trafficked by Nigel. It is Nigel's consciousness that moves the connections of Bruno whose alienated Self is rendered to power or guided dextrously by the contemplative philosopher Nigel. Nigel defines the philosophic aspect of Self while Bruno emotionally indulges in those definitions.

The inexplicability of existence thus leads man to the experience of some unimaginable and mysterious feeling motivated by another individual. Nigel empowers Bruno, the latter believing that he is being prepared "for that time - A time he loathed and feared" (BD 5) and his existence - beaten self is thus restored to its relaxed acceptance of life and death. Nigel - a spirit (as he calls himself) who fits the strange role model for a mere caretaker is deified here.

Bruno is perplexed by the varying attitudes of Danby and Miles but his Self is gradually motivated to gather his
fragmentary selves together, to listen to those other voices within, that help him locate his own existential placement in the world. The questions that Bruno puts to Nigel do not merely voice the despair of an ailment-weakened mind, but are the queries of a curious Self-searching mind, wandering into the vistas of the selves. Bruno belongs to the moderate category of Self. He realises that his room is his prison and if they wanted to keep him from Miles they could do so. They could fail to give messages. They could fail to post letters. There was the telephone but they could cut the wire. Of course these thoughts were insane (BD 29). Bruno's suspicion is the depressed state of unselfing, though in his void self sufficiency he knows that his fears are meaningless and exaggerated.

We see a regretful Bruno embarrassed by the betrayal of Danby. Bruno's Self is frustrated by his existence with many a thankless relationship. He realises that his kin know that his life is ebbing and awaits the moment. In such an unfortunate situation Bruno recalls to Nigel how he thought God was love, how much he loved God and that the world was full of the power of love. There was a lot of God at that time. Afterwards God became less, drier and pettier, lost and pathetic. Bruno felt sorry for God. Had he been able to take him by the hand it would have been like leading a little child
The implication in Bruno's words is first and foremost, a synonymous reference to a world of love, of God, where the expectation is some kind of compromise with Self or existence - but the tone merely reveals a frustrated sense of loss.

The most remarkable aspect in Bruno's unselfing is his effort to reconcile his life with his rationalisations of the past. Bruno suffers his own fears and inhibitions but realises that he is the master of his "fate", when it concerns relationships with Danby, Parvathi and Miles. As Walter Kauffmann observes,

> every man is in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders and when we say that man is responsible for himself we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individual, but that he is responsible for all men. (Dostoevsky to Sartre 291)

In the beginning, Bruno indulges in a pitiful assessment of himself when he looks back at his eighty-year old life full of fatigue, restlessness, sex, nervous excitement, dreams, illusory love, confused interaction. The question now asked is whether the Murdochian trend of thought conforms to annihilation of self or does she express inclination to an affirmation of self, pitifully and spitefully. However, it is
confirmed that Murdoch does speak about "devoid of consciousness or self" (BD 24) and at the same time seems to rule out possibility of self-annihilation when she writes: "Out of the dreamless womb time creeps in the moment which is no beginning at the end which is no end" (BD 24).

Bruno's narrative is quite singular though he figures merely on and off in the novel - in the sense, that the old man is left most of the time to revolve in his own mind. The conversations that Bruno holds with Miles, Danby, Lisa, Diana and Nigel are used to assess the proximity of his own Self, as well as those of others. These conversations act as a milieu for Bruno, from which spring forth Bruno's various selves embodying a whole unselfing (consciousness) of Self. The Self wriggles strenuously out of a cramming effect of solitude and pain of ageing when Bruno resorts to purge this agonized burden with tears as he ponders that, he alone was ageing solitarily while those around him remained young, specially the women (BD 35).

In this context, it is essential to analyse if all these accessories are important to realize the Self. The mind has access to every walk of thought and the trend of consciousness is like a vagabond that enters through one opening at one instance and makes its exit through yet another
thoroughly detached from its entry point, but still has some queer relatedness to self-realization. Therefore, whether the relative accessory is an obsession as spiders or Nigel or Danby, in such an analysis one cannot overlook even the most minute dialogue for though each may be impregnated with contradictions, each holds its own relevance to make Self significant. As John Macquarrie puts it

> Human life is placed in a wider context such as the context of being. Man does not create being but rather being is the response received from existence, and man becomes responsible for this being and owes much to this being. Therefore, before man gives vent to his thoughts he should let himself be lectured or addressed by this being. \(\textit{Existentialism 29}\)

This explanation perhaps highlights the unselfing process both in Bruno and Herzog. It is this reception of existence that is placed in view in the entire novel in terms of interaction with Self, with the selves of other characters and with the other entities that govern or limit the protagonist's existence. Therefore, it becomes necessary to learn the nature of each of the 'Self' of Bruno and Herzog before a conclusion is reached.

Imprisoned in his own house, Bruno suffers the pangs of alienation and solitude and desires to see Miles his son in an effort to make amends for his past errors exposed to him through unselfing. Bruno consults Danby, who points out to
him, the possibility of Miles ignoring his call. For the first time, such a probability shakes Bruno thoroughly. He had never anticipated a possible refusal and this thought throws him further into the abyss of solitude.

The Self of Bruno tries to grow out of the turmoil caused by loneliness and existential experience. He then perceives his past years trying to segregate the harshness that had dwelled in the experiences that governed his Self and his own personality. In an attempt to change, he calls his son Miles to break the age-long ice between them but Miles refuses to yield. In anger Bruno accuses him of a certain breech of trust and treason bluntly and Miles flees in the rain. In this flight, Murdoch shows that it is not Miles who flees but his Self that flees from raw, outspoken truth, that props itself for the first time from within Bruno's Self. It is a flight from the very absurdity and voidness of life, in an attempt to seek solace in existence, not realising that this would land the individual merely in further jeopardy. It is evident in the novel that Miles too, at times longed for such a reconciliation with his father and he yielded to the tempting letter of Danby Odell to meet his father. But when the moment arrived finally, there is a struggle of disparity between the questioning Self of Bruno and the ordinariness in Miles. When Bruno talks to Miles, Bruno's Self tries to single out Miles'
Self from its calamitous predicament, holding up the mirror of reality to him, in order to help him perceive the lull of existential routine that ties down his Self to the make believe world of peace and so called reality.

In this context, it is worth noticing, that in contrast to Bruno's Self, the feelings, emotions and behaviour of Danby, Miles, Lisa, Adelaide and Diana are fleeting and inconsistent, reinstating the multiplicity of their selves or evasiveness of Self. If Self is not consistent then existence is forced to linger in emptiness. A good deal of a mechanism of defence is involved in the multiplicity and fragmentation of Self. However, even in such manifestations the psyche waits if not for "eternity and the day of judgement" at least for "some great calm and imminent negation which would preclude surprises, demarches and the unpredictable" (BD 66-67).

Both Bruno and Herzog are victimized by sex and fortunately see it as yet another instance for understanding Self. As observed earlier, the mind's unselfing is not regularised by any stipulated codes or paths. 'Desire', then is often a predominant factor in man's mind either recalled from the 'past' or indulged within the 'present'. The physical aspect, thus, plays a vital role in the lives of both Bruno and Herzog either pointing out again to the emptiness of all its
insufficiency or leaving the individual aching for consummation.

Bruno, in this context, believes that sex is a kind of a narcissistic obsession or deception or failure. Whatever it may be, the effect of this awareness is quite negative and embarrassing upon Bruno and his Self ponders upon sex almost pathologically. Bruno recalls:

How had he become corrupted and lost the innocence which belonged to his mother's only child and how could the child of such a mother ever have become bad? Most men deceive their wives all the time, statistics say. He had only Maureen ... And his later excesses amounted to little more than holding hands. (BD 27)

The plight of Bruno's Self gradually dawns upon him as Bruno unconsciously entangles himself in the myriad emotional nuances of the other characters. As Macquarrie states,

it's a kind of awareness similar to that of telling how God formed man of the earth and then breathed life or spirit into him. Bruno too in a similar fashion brings himself to terms with expression (of) man's most primordial self-understanding, his existential awareness of the tensions and paradoxes that are constitutive of his being as one who knows in himself freedom, finituda, guilt and the possibility of death. (Existentialim 36)
Besides the responses that Bruno earns himself from fundamental self-questioning, are answers and assessments made of him by the other characters that define the nature of his Self. Adelaide and Will discuss Bruno:

...What does Bruno do all day? He plays with his stamps. He reads those books about spiders over and over. He rings up wrong numbers on the telephone. He reads the newspapers. It must be awful to be so old... He's got awfully hideous too. He looks like one of your monsters. (BD 46)

The physical existence of Bruno has literally withered and in all obnoxiousness survives as a mere remnant awaiting death. But it is Bruno's Self alone that keeps leading him - the questioning, multidimensional fragments of Bruno's various selves. Bruno's sparse or meagre physical Self, however, is aware that it has not a peaceful existence, for either practically or intuitively Bruno becomes aware that there are threats to his mortal security in life and becomes acutely sensitive to the ambiguities of the world and his own flippant status in it.

Inspite of the marathon reality gaping into Bruno's Self throughout the novel, in the final chapters when Bruno is about to be slipped into the arms of death, he accepts death gracefully as though he realizes that death is an all pervasive awakening into another world while life had all that while been a mere dream (Ille, Unamuno 22-23).
Bruno is a paranoid and pessimist whose obsessions are vested with various species of spiders. He connects every incident in his life to that of the spider and its web. Bruno himself is like a defensive spider in the entanglement of a web. His depression, guilt, despair are divulusive to him. His doubts and fears relapse and Bruno never seems to be rid of his past. But fortunately, he is able to identify at least the bogus realities of his present and lost relationships and of his own diminishing mortality. On the verge of death, Bruno mutters:

I am at the centre of the great orb of my life, ... until some blind hand snaps the thread. I have lived for ninety years and I know nothing ... I have watched the terrible rituals of nature and now at the end I am empty of wisdom... The spider spins its web... I spin out of my consciousness, this compulsive chattering, this idle rambling voice that will so soon be mute. But its all a dream. Reality is too hard. I have lived my life in a dream now and row it is too late to wake up. (BD 286)

These conjectures point to Bruno who like a spider himself had woven myriad relationships, broken and woven once again from its own spittle, caught in the responsibility of doing or undoing relationships. The sticky, spidery existence perturbs his Self for this feeling makes a normal existence phobic and suspicious for Bruno. Bruno's mortal decaying existence is the spider, his confinement to his dingy room becomes the web to which his physical existence is confined to.
Human predicament bares man to the ruthlessness of contingencies and such a structure inevitably draws into its folds one paranoia or the other. Kaufmann in his Existentialism says that, "Man is condemned to be free" (295) and in such condemnation chooses to behave in one or the other manner, as it pleases his freedom (of choice). This sometimes plunges him into some obscure misery or fear of the mind, a paranoid impulse that he seldom manages to overwhelm.

Death is one such paranoia in man. Bruno and Herzog strive to comprehend death which they believe would dab their minds off despair and alienation. This horrifying fact affects Bruno more than Herzog. He dreads death to such an extent that he begs Danby not to leave him alone. Ironically, though he does not reach much of a compromise with death, in comparison with Herzog, he reveals profound command over the subject of death or rather theorises the experiential aspect of death when he observes to Nigel,

You are young, Nigel. You can't see death. Death isn't like that .... You don't understand about death. Do you know what I think ... I think God is death. That's it, God is death. (BD 97)

hopefully implying that death could be an awakening into some new life more promising and balanced than the present state of existence.
Murdoch's protagonist here fears God from the point of view of Self besides the common fear of death felt by the mortal body. Bruno has a dream in which he pictures himself as a murderer. The murder, however, is the expression of his physical confinement to the room, while the original murderer is no other than God himself. Bruno excavates the sadistic pleasure God derives in perforating the existence of man, with vile contingencies.

In an emotional moment, and truly in an expression of unselfing, Bruno spills forth tears of repentance, pursued by the fear of death on one side and on the other side, impelled by craving for love and tenderness, as the novelist herself observes in the novel. This emotional outburst, however, is not merely impulsive. But it occurs to Bruno as the long awaited opportunity to purge the false selves. Here, the Self is involved in exacting and explicating the existential context in which Bruno committed adultery. The confession made is not the voice of fatalistic despair but a cautiously culled out assessment of his Self which Bruno had gone through over years of confinement to his room. Murdoch portrays Bruno as a paradoxical protagonist with a clear aptitude for Self but vague and lacking confidence in the assumption of it, caught in the primitive contradiction of physical decay.
On the threshold of death and decay, Bruno's Self shows inclination towards a value judgement of himself both subjectively and objectively. This confrontation of the selves within him reveals the narrow-mindedness of his past to him and his own Self puts him on a trial'. The private unselfing, unmasks itself in Nigel's presence and anxiously wonders "Do you think forgiveness is something Nigel? Does something happen? Or is it just a word?" (BD74-75).

Unlike Herzog's, Bruno's Self constantly seeks solace/assurance or at times even defines its destiny through either the aggravating, sarcastic pungency of Nigel's remarks or through the "defensive tenderness" of Danby's reassurance. In Bruno, a myriad of emotional experiences cater to his unselfing that stipulates his Self besides all paradoxes within him. Each emotion discussed so far is either a contribution to Self or the test of a questioning mind (Ilie, Unamuno 73).

In the context of emotional dependence of Bruno upon the others, Nigel does a great deal to promote his unselfing. Nigel relates to Bruno in a queer manner. Nigel is simultaneously, a friend and foe to Bruno, an administrator and sooth-sayer to Bruno's confidence, solace or fate himself, to Bruno's desperate fluctuations at times, in direct contrast to Herzog who takes complete control of himself and the selves of
others. Even when Nigel makes an effort to comfort Bruno, the reader receives a hint of a grinning, sadistic reality gaping bare into the face of Bruno. However, Nigel's pungent criticism of life and other matters guide Bruno's unselfing more positively than the defensive comfort offered to him by Danby. This attitude suits Bruno's temperament more than Danby's sentimental soft-corner for Bruno. The latter's word often provokes suspicion in Bruno's mind of any truth that he tries to convey. Bruno anticipates a tougher reality and Nigel provides him amply with that sterner stuff. Murdoch's description of Bruno seems to indirectly hint at his selves within, she refers to him as "a God, a slave, stands erect a sufferer in his body for the sins of the sick city" (BD 82). The sick city seems to symbolically imply the reality of worldly existence and Bruno a representative sufferer of the entire human race, that is lost to Self. At the same time, Nigel makes clear to the reader that Bruno is neither his entity nor vice versa.

Throughout the novel, the protagonist is merely a sufferer, tormented, confounded and debased. Nigel is a power-figure among all the other characters in the novel, who stirs the individuality in Bruno and enhances his endeavours to unself in an emphatic manner. As a result of this, Bruno casts off the pretentious, false masks of his Self, to continue to
watch and doubt the validity of his Self. Bruno's private and social falsities are exposed by Nigel. A persistent debate between the manifested selves, that earlier pull him apart, is slowly withdrawn and a calm of the psyche occurs finally (Illie, Unamuno 106-10).

Existence itself is in the face of death and the unselfing process reveals to the protagonist that his decayed waiting is for the arrival of death after all, wherein even "his...dressing gown would be a spectator awaiting its hour" (BD 93). John Macquarrie notes that in any story "...death is not simply the termination of life... that occurs at the end of the story, but is part of the story" (Existentialism 194). Death is everywhere for Bruno, and he senses a foreboding tingling of death even in the (symbolic) arrival of his son Miles after several long years. In utter despair of being overcome by such a mysterious sensation he calls out for Nigel who reconciles with him with an inward awareness that his being is a being towards death.

In the process of unselfing Bruno has been eagerly looking forward to some comfort beyond the mortal communications of Nigel and Danby. He fails to arrive at a concrete awareness of God which would have helped him feel God in plain reality as that of the very being or existence or
Therefore Bruno's Self substitutes itself in place of God, in an endeavour to play the role of the omnipotent to offer himself the comfort he anticipated. He shares this experience with Nigel in all the perfection of germination of unselfing or Self itself:

When I was very young...I thought...God [was] like the sky...all friendliness and protectiveness and fondness for children ... I thought that God was love, a big sloppy love that drenched the world with big wet kisses and made everything alright. ... I loved God ... and the world was full of the power of love. Afterwards he became less... He was something lost and pathetic... I felt sorry for Him. (BD 97)

Death which is the finiteness of human existence is almost annihilated by the deep vein of moral strength reflected in this conversation. Bruno manages to relax in the strength offered by the thought that Death is after all God. This, perhaps, is the only major optimistic affirmation of the protagonist's negative obsessions that run all through the novel. With this, Bruno manages to leap over his major psychological drawback with at least a certain grace and dignity.

Despite all the violent, turbulent display of manifestations, Bruno silently drops himself into the arms of death, while the garrulous beings of existence look on. Bruno the yolk in the novel pins down everybody by his age and
sickness and brings them all around to confront a sensation of
death.

In Murdoch's and Bellow's themes a faint animosity becomes explicit, for which the protagonists seek some 'panacea', that is, a realistic understanding of existence and Self in the case of the former and as an 'anodyne' in the latter's case. The animosity is so closely woven that it is hardly discernible unless the differences are analysed. The disagreements lie in the aspects of mind vs deeds, existence vs contingencies or predicament, seeking vs Self. Finally, the Self that dawns upon each of the protagonists is singular and highly individualistic or even poles apart. In Murdoch's novel, the final chapters are conclusive, death looming upon the other character and invading her protagonist, while in Bellow's case there is no such finality in his protagonist but only a finer development.

In Murdoch's Bruno's Dream, there is a certain specificity about what she writes, a clear structuralization; a system of themes even if it concerns Bruno's amoeba-like existence. As a result of this, when the reader goes through the novel she goes through a pattern of existence itself, step by step, gradually, logically, concerning each aspect of existence that the protagonist's Self perceives - the pattern
that ranges from emotions, death, obsessions, sex, eccentricities, personal and social relationships (very often broken). All these seem quite predestined in her novels. These in turn make the protagonist's voice feeble even though his unselfing voice speaks to the reader quite often.

In Bellow's Herzog, the novel offers a wider scope of unpredictability which seems closer to the unpredictability of real life contingencies. Herzog speaks though not with complete purity, there's a great deal of reliability in his words for they are not the mere outcome of a Self-pitying, perplexed mind. There is no prescribed form of self, so Herzog, from the various experiences, his seeking mind picks and chooses, important existential happenings. James M. Mellard, refers to Herzog as a novel with "the themes of identity and History... treated through a college of meditations in the mind of Herzog" ("Consciousness" 78-91). This enables Herzog to develop a delicate sense of balance. He arrives at this sense of balance by making an attempt to fill the voidity of existence by recording his thoughts through letters that are either mailed or unmailed. Though many of the letters are a reflection of private unselfing, unlike Bruno whose unselfing is borrowed from Nigel, Herzog himself comments that one major problem is the literal conquest of one's personal state of
existence for this comes under the intense influence of external public forces.

Herzog's achievement, in contrast to that of Bruno, is his Self that implicitly accepts and understands that an individual could remain or be only what he is and nothing more. It is, when the Self struggles to get beyond this simple truth that it suffers disillusionment quite often followed by alienation. Yet another easy reconciliation Herzog's Self makes is the identification of the emptiness of life/existence with death. While Herzog convinces himself of the hard core reality of life gaping into death, he makes an attempt to convince the entire humanity, his social contacts and personal relationships of this fact through self-questioning without being lured by any "object comforts" (Mellard, "Consciousness" 81). All these characters are dismissed by Herzog easily, for, he realises them to be no more than mere voidness themselves who hold on to the make believe reality of existence instead of inclining towards truth or Self.

Had Herzog depended totally on these apparent substitutes of Self (as Bruno upon Nigel), his splitting experiences with emotions, sex, death, fears, obsessions, would have got him nowhere. Herzog, on the other hand, is an intellectual who unselfs deeply sifting the naked realities and
truth about himself, of the other characters - especially his second wife Madeliene, his friend and betrayer Valentine Gersbach, his friend Asphalter, Dr. Edvig, concubine Ramona and brother Will, and above all about existence itself. Herzog's unselfing emancipates him, finding his final resort in his Ludeyville house after momentarily joining the objective world in looking down on himself (H 67).

As Bellow's novel Herzog opens one would notice that the protagonist is already an observer, a guide and a critic of himself. Bellow observes:

Some people thought he was cracked and for a time he himself had doubted that he was all there. But now, though he still behaved oddly, he felt confident, cheerful, clairvoyant and strong. (H 1)

Herzog is an individual who has achieved an error-free sense of the significance of his existence, unselfing the earlier manifestations of himself. Herzog has reached such a compromise evidently after traversing through the hardships and suffering caused by adversaries within himself and the adversaries found in the other characters, especially his second wife Madeliene and his cuckolding friend Valentine Gersbach, as Paul Illie points out in his introduction to Unamuno (Unamuno 7-8). The individual adopts a more analytic view of himself once he is inspired "with a desire to know
himself. The contemplating Self then gathers itself from the fragments of Self available, each performing different roles. The contemplating Self, gradually unravels the various bindings of existence that had all the while determined its various manifestations from its history, background and existential commitments. It is this total submission to the ridiculing voice of his Self that renders Herzog at least slightly complete after the devastating trials of his life.

/Herzog's obsession runs through a marathon letter writing to the President, writers, doctors, psychiatrists and friends. These letters could be mistaken as the expressions of a sick mind. This possibility is ruled out when it is realised that his letter writing is to

... go after reality with language (He adds), Perhaps I had like to change it into all in language, to force Madeliene and Gersbach to have a conscience .... If they don't suffer, they have gotten away from me and I have filled the world with letters to prevent their escape. (H 272)

Besides this, Herzog's letters seem to for unsel the "immediacy and concreteness" (Gill, Existentialism 16) of his resourceful Self. The emphatic manifestation that Herzog resorts to initially and obviously, is his neurotic letter writing, racking, sifting, sieving and criticizing the minute details of personalities, of his Self and the selves of his
deceptive wives, friends, psychiatrist and lady-love. This letter writing is similar to the obsession with spiders in Murdoch's Bruno. Bruno's attitude and behaviour, above all his fears, are reflected in the irritable, aggravating appearance of each species of spider and they match the sequence or context in which Bruno mentions them. Similarly Herzog's emotions are reflected in his letters to different personalities such as Masiggins to Gen. Eisenhower, Mr Udall, Shapiro Zinka Commissioner Wilson, Governor Stevenson, Dr. Edrig to Moses Herzog himself and Dr. Waldemas. The one Herzog writes to Dr. Schrodinger, shows Herzog's consciousness to be, in fact, more powerful and stronger than any other normal individual. In this letter, Herzog's judgement on the human attitude runs as follows: "You say that in all of nature only man hesitates to cause pain" (H 160). And there is a smiling Herzog behind the line who either disapproves or sarcastically dismisses the verisimilitude of the statement. Herzog further adds

As destruction is the master-method by which evolution produces new-types, the reluctance to cause pain may express a human will to obstruct natural law ... Being an unstable organisation ... the body ... [pretends to show] reluctance to cause pain .... a peculiar and denying evils at the same time. [H 162]

Considering the other letters presented in the novel with observation ranging from narcotics conference, books, politics
and natural laws, Herzog's profundity of unselfing and analytic experiences are made vivid. Herzog's unselfing is far more deep rooted within himself than that of Bruno and each of his insights is a clear rise above those that deprive him of being a normal being. Herzog's part had been to play a vital role in the drama of self-awareness and each of his letters is the fruit of truth in its most refined form often peculiar to the conscious of a genius alone.

Through Herzog's obsessions, Bellow carefully draws his protagonist into other area of existence. The letter reveals Herzog's commitment to urban life and at times even to his own psyche for each letter is analytical or critical of some social practice of a psychiatrist or a sociologist or a commissioner and so on. Herzog himself declares as to why he is letter obsessed. The drama of existence is not lost to Herzog as otherwise his (so-called) eccentricity should have limited him to move back and foster merely into the other experiences such as with his first wife Daisy, his second wife Madeline, Ramona, Valentine Gersbacch, Aunt Taube and his own brother and children.

Herzog is not a depressed invalid as Bruno, but in terms of love and marriage, the dominant passion becomes the cause of at least his partial ruin. While unselfing Herzog,
Resuming his self-examination, ... admitted that he had been a bad husband-twice. Daisy, his first wife, he had treated miserably Madeleine, his second, had tried to do him in. To his son and his daughter he was loving but bad father. To his own parents he had been an ungrateful child. To his country an indifferent citizen. To his brothers and his sister, affectionate but remote with his friend, an egotist. (H 5)

That is Herzog in a nutshell. And from this assessment springs forth all that his Self thinks of him. Herzog does not try to mend broken relationships as Bruno does, but if at all there is such humanness in him, he attempts that with his children. He prefers to remain the satanic, eccentric self that he had shown himself to be to Daisy and Madeleine and only when matters of his children are involved he makes an attempt to stir himself up to be a loving and caring father, instead of being a bad example.

The second divorce hurts the sensitive Herzog but he realises that such slavery and death and the wishes of his wife have to be respected and so gives into divorce. What becomes unbearable to him is to leave his little daughter (H 6). In this context Herzog's self takes on a great deal of dignity and honour as he himself observes: "Doing all the things a wildman does ... while remaining all the while an earnest person. In frightful earnest" [H 14].
In contrast to adoring Ramona's capacity for wisdom, Herzog exposes the obnoxiousness of Madeleine's and Valentine's religious hypocrisy, in his letter to Dr. Edvig his psychiatrist. He throws open the blatant truth unto Dr. Edvig's face that he himself had fallen in love with Madeleine. These observations are Herzog's reflections when his unselfing process begins to soothe down his agonized mind. These feelings become visible to Herzog only after his dormant Self materializes itself before him. Illie observes that in such contexts of Self,

The concrete Self vibrates with an energy that stirs the individual ... [and] the image of this vitality is simply the reflection of ourselves which the world gives back to us, surrounding us with its thousand mirror. (Unamuno 106)

Herzog does not cringe from any confrontation, be it an encounter with his own Self, his own flaws, the errors in others, the bare facts that crucify his Self and the selves of others. Characters like Madeleine, Valentine are like mirrors, who, apart from revealing their own inner darkness and morbidity, expose the darkness in Herzog too. The most remarkable and marked difference between Herzog and others is that Herzog accepts unrefutingly the obscurity within himself, while others do not (Clayton, Bellow 42).
The entire suffering of Herzog arises from his realization of being made a scape-goat by Valentine Gersbach. It is from then on that Herzog wakes up to the "ambiguities of the world" and allows his unselfing to flourish upon tracing the other ambiguities of existence itself. At each instance Herzog analyses some existential problem or the other and returns to the moral question of Madeleine and Gersbach's act of adultery. His homicidal tendencies, instinct for revenge, warmth for his daughter, are reflexes of being cuckolded by Gersbach. Even his admiration for Ramona rises from his recollection of Madeleine who would not allow Herzog to stroke her cheeks downward for fear of losing her facial beauty.

Herzog makes a poignant remark on Valentine's hypocrisy, when he writes to Dr. Edvig, with all frankness of uttering some apocalyptic truth. He recalls:

...[My] kid was brought to me, and taken home by Valentine Gersbach, who also gave me advice and consolation, religion. He brought me books ... He commanded me to study them. (H 64)

The tone that Herzog assumes is ironical when he refers to Valentine in the above lines. For the very same man who apparently moralizes to him is immoral himself and also imposes or thrusts his fancies upon the unassuming Herzog. Herzog criticises the erroneous diagnosis of Dr. Edvig himself who suspected that Herzog was a paranoid.
Michael L. Glenday refers to Madeleine and Gersbach as "arch-persecutors ... as defacers of the real". Though they are apparently strong-willed in the presence of Herzog they are in fact void and hollow in comparison with the guileless Herzog. Madeleine, especially, lacks "self-understanding" and weilds power again merely for the enjoyment of some fleeting momentary triumph, while the actual champion (of Self) is Herzog alone/("Hearts without Guile" 95).

Herzog's tolerance extends in the form of understanding rendered to his bigamous spouse's mother - Tennie. Tennie appeals to him to save her neurotic daughter by his own head strong steadiness. Herzog comprehends that

Tennie was setting him up, and that he was a sucker for just the sort of appeal but her appeal ... stirred his impure sympathies. (H 109-10)

In yet another instance, Herzog reveals the deep, humane warmth within him, in contrast to the reckless behaviour of Madeleine and Valentine who had 'stolen' his child as deciphered by the angry Self in Herzog, that seeks revenge. He takes his daughter Junie with him . Herzog indulges in raking the fits of rage within his mind and suddenly the automobile in which he takes Junie meets with an accident. Herzog's benign, tender heart warms to his daughter.
Her docility, her feeling for him, what seemed to him the wise tender sense of the child, her sympathy, moved him, pressed his guts. He put a protective, wide, eager hand on her back. (H 283)

At such instances Herzog seems to stand as a representative of humaneness. His attitude seems to take command over humanity itself specially in contrast to Madeleine's and Valentine Gerbach's notoriety. In another instance Herzog sets out to shoot his daughter's step-father Valentine but returns magnanimously without executing his homicidal act, for he witnesses Valentine's enactment of the role of a step-father and is softened by it. Jonathan Wilson in his introduction in On Bellow's Planet considers Herzog's magnanimity as a commendable demeanour for the refinity in this personality lies in the fact that Herzog accepts his base, homicidal instinct. Herzog is aware that such violence and murder are far from being civilized and that it it a feeling that draws mere abhorrence once the act is accomplished. This unselfing reins his revengeful rage and he refrains from yielding to the homicidal temptation (21).

Just as Murdoch's Bruno takes to Nigel, Herzog takes to his paramour Ramona. A close reading shows that Ramona is not a mere sex symbol, but a figure who lectures him all the while leading him on to 'reality' where exactly he wants to be. The once paralyzed Self that was being lulled by the fatiguing hum
of obscure existence is intrigued by Ramona's lectures. Herzog manages to recognise a major part of his Self, while the remaining seems to be fed in by Ramona, to help him achieve a "fullness of Self." Ramona told Herzog:

...that he was a better man than he knew. A deep man, beautiful, ... but sad, unable to take what his heart really desired, a man tempted by God, longing for grace, but escaping headlong from his salvation, often close at hand. [Herzog had to pay for his gifts such as] ... his intelligence, his charm, his education and free himself to pursue the meaning of life, not by disintegration, ... but humbly and yet proudly continuing his learned studies. She, Ramona, wanted to add riches to his life by the art of love... to renew the spirit through the flesh. (H 184-85)

Ramona acts as a priestess here, rendering Herzog an almost extended version of his own ruminations, fixing him exactly to the crux of his Self. It dawns upon Herzog that the forces of existence is worse than trials and ordeals and that either a singular, or a life of total solitude severed from the rest gives excruciating agony to the individual. He realises the necessity of companionship and observes,

I really believe that brotherhood is what makes a man human. If I owe God a human life, this is where I fall down. 'Man liveth not' by self alone but in his brother's face...And consciousness when it doesn't clearly understand what to live for, what to die for, can only abuse and ridicule itself. (H 272-73)

'The mind of man is a complex, complicated one. When a man acquires the capacity to analyse his Self he then reaches a
stage where his Self gets to stand on a pulpit. This Self then looks down on the multiple manifestations of his own Self and then automatically his curiosity extends to getting to know the selves of others. As far as Herzog is concerned once he shares his Self within, then the chief concern or attempt is a general awareness of man himself.

The unselfing, the "changing" (H 165) Herzog speaks of here is the pernicious clasp existence has laid on the soul of man. And if man would fail to release himself from this odious, malevolent trap or "maya" (H 320) of existence then it is almost equated to the second fall of man. Herzog accuses man of failing to reach out for reality. Instead man is contented in veiling himself beneath the cosy, smug comfort of imagination. Herzog claims in one of his memoranda to himself that

[he is]... much better now at ambiguities. I have been spared the chief ambiguity that afflicts intellectuals ...[who] hate and resent the civilization that makes their lives possible. What they love is an imaginary human situation invented by their own genius and which they believe is the only true and human reality. [H 304]

Herzog's Self accepts despair, wallows in it, exalts in it as though it were the very elixir of life and transforms the entire negativity of the experience into a cheerful, positive attitude of faith and bliss. This could be one reason why
Herzog drops comments, hints or remarks on God, in a more commanding and optimistic tone than Murdoch's Bruno who equates God with death. Herzog observes that good and evil are real. He recognizes a certain reality or versimilitude in the existence of God, for he commends the following (Christian) divine or moralistic act thus: "Isn't it good to give bread to the hungry, to clothe the naked? Don't we obey Jesus in shipping machinery to Peru or Sumatra?" (H 164). But his unselfing reveals naked reality to him and he is dubious even about divine existence in the face of individuals...[who] return to the mass agitated, made fervent by their future. Not as brethren but as degenerates... Thus occurs a second distortion of the divine image, already so blurred, wavering struggling. (H 176)

While almost evaluating God thus, Herzog, discussing the German existentialist conforms to their view that death outlives even God and expresses that as follows: "God is no more but death is" (H 271).

Herzog comprehends the fact that there is no single, sure way that would lead him to Self. Absolute belief in God may offer comfort to a sick mind or a desperately striving consciousness. The unselfing process gives the protagonist
his 'changing' consciousness and blurs the voidity of what he had been all the while. It is the 'static' sense of Self in Bruno and 'kinetic' sense of Self in Herzog that renders a difference in the selves of Bruno and Herzog (Weinburg, "The Kafkan Hero of The Castle" 28).

Man's life is wasted in human want and misery and deceived by the joys of life that man never positively and eternally became conscious of himself, as spirit, as Self, or never became aware in the deepest sense, never received an impression of the fact that there is a God, and that he himself, his Self, exists before this God, which gain of infinity it never attained except through despair, which perhaps is exactly what Herzog has in mind when he says that when suffering overwhelms man, one has to remain subdued to experience the power of God.

Death fear is yet another common consciousness in the psychology of human beings. And Herzog's death consciousness is not a psychological stress as in the decaying Bruno. The fear of death is first installed in his mind by Sandor, the lawyer, who threatens him in favour of Madeleine. He says:

Tie your guts in knots... They'll put a meter on your nose and charge you for breathing. You'll be locked up back and front. Then you'll think about death. You'll pray for it. (H 88)
Although Herzog is not guilty of deceiving his wife, he is instigated to feel that death would be a kind of welcome option than suffering the punishments of law for committing offences against (the motherhood of) Madeleine (who claims to keep their child). He, in another instance, senses death as a kind of sadistic invader who stalks behind man waiting to destroy anything that is happy and cheerful.

The actual sphere is not clear like this, but turbulent, angry. A vast human action is going on. Death watches. So if you have some happiness, conceal it. And when your heart is full, keep your mouth shut also. (H 92)

The invasion of death upon the human psyche runs to such a vast extent that Herzog wonders why he often wrote incessantly to the dead. And then he tells himself:

Why shouldn't he write to the dead? He lived with them as much as with the living - perhaps more; ... what was death? Dreams did not recognize it. Believing that reason can make steady progress from disorder to harmony and that the conquest of Chaos need not be begun anew everyday. (H 81-82)

The profundity of thought Herzog expresses here is more a value of the Self and rational reasoning than a mere value of a philosophizing heart. Herzog seems to imply here that, "A man ought not to wish to die, but the death to be renounced is the death of...[the self]" (Gill, Existentialism 392).
Herzog makes an earnest note of death in one of his ponderings affecting a dignity even to death,

He hoped things would change. When we have come to better terms with death, we'll wear a different expression, we human beings. Our looks will change. When we come to terms. (H 232)

The "looks" that Herzog implies here are perhaps not the physical looks but the inner changes or compromises that unselfing mediates to the individual's Self. Death and its very fear is excruciatingly painful to the existence of man. And a man who has managed to arrest or conquer his fear has in other words succeeded in annihilating the very voidity of existence.

Herzog's Self gains momentum as each existential instance occurs in his life and that enables him to look upon death in a ridiculing manner or rather he makes an attempt to humour death. He perceives the truth or reality behind existence that man's life is after all transitory and that the various aspects of life whether positive or negative are merely annihilated on the face of death. These existential aspects therefore ought to be ridiculed by man, who instead clings on to them as if they were all eternal. Herzog notes that one can have true wit or intelligence only when one can consider death in very plain and simple terms and then one realises that man's
life is after all fleeting, while Self alone holds promises to life than the momentary contingencies in life (H 238).

The protagonist recollects his father's death in a remote sense and his unselfing emphatically gets him to come to terms with the voidity and hollowness of life.

...And then he died, and the vivid blood of his turned to soil, ... And then the body, too-ah God! - wastes away; and leaves its bones, and even the bones at last wear away and crumble to dust in that shallow place of deposit. And thus humanized, this planet in its galaxy of stars and worlds goes from void to void, infinitesimal, aching with its unrelated significance. (H 242-43)

Herzog is aware that initially death had terrorised him quite childishly, but he gloats over the fact that he "was a man,... who knew what it was to rise from the dead ... [And Ramona]... with him she... knew what Resurrection was" (H 185).

Despite all paradoxes that Herzog utters in terms of death he casts an assurance for himself that cleanses the paranoia that might otherwise have grounded him as of any other individual. In the analytic death - discussion of Herzog there is something worth viewing from the point of view of Paul Tillich's "The courage to be". When a concept or phenomenon is made clear, it is accepted consciously. It is not sheer acceptance of something but it takes courage to accept something unknown or obscure and this courage has all the
revealing power to make its presence evident to its believer. The following words of Herzog falls in support of the aforementioned theory:

...Not God is Dead... [But]...Death is God. This generation thinks that nothing... (can) have any true power. Death waits for these things as a cement floor waits for a drooping bulb... The victory of death, not of rationality, not of rational faith... our human imagination starts by accusing God of murder. At the bottom of the whole disaster lies the human being's sense of a grievance, ... It's easier not to exist altogether than accuse God. Far more simple, cleaner. (H 290)

There is no way of exorcising death from life. There are certain sensitive aspects which both the Bellow and Murdoch protagonists seem to share and one such thought concerns death. It is not sheer coincidence that the two writers share a similar vein of thought on death. But, both the protagonists are relieved from similar spells of disaster and their almost similar strides into disillusionments and unselfing perhaps inspire a common range of thought.

Herzog's unselfing exposes singular voices at various instances. And each voice excels the other in their classical observations to survive the onslaught of existence. These voices complement Self while violence, paranoia, obsessions, neurosis are reverted from his psyche. Then, Herzog's existence alone remains the demon against which he wrestles in
defiance, dissolving all contemptible, illusory aspects of life, slowly beginning to believe in himself, rather than in those that existence has to offer. Existence, according to Herzog, therefore becomes absurd except the existence of his Self.

Herzog experienced nothing but his own human feelings, in which he found, nothing of any use. ... And what did he feel! ... he felt himself [being] wrung again, and wrung again, and again. (H 240)

The individual in a crowd is devoured by the influence of the multiple forces outside himself and when alone he is graved by his own solitude, says Nietzsche (Paul Illie, Unamuno 131).

When a man acknowledges the contradictions within himself and accepts his follies without much ado then this shows that he has overcome the initial, sensitive embarassement of the unselfing voice and has begun to conquer his Self. Herzog's self-display connotes such standards made evident when he accepts that "in a new reign of multitudes self-awareness tends to reveal us to ourselves as monsters" (H 164). The voice of the other Self in Herzog intervenes on behalf of his personality to tell him that he has abundant goodness in his heart, which is not phony or comical (H 207).

Herzog categorizes the selves rationally without much of the desperate struggle as evident in Bruno. The unselfing
process turns inward. Herzog, in his letter to Professor Mermelstein expresses the following view:

I know that my suffering..., has often been like that, a more extended form of life, a striving for true wakefulness and an antidote to illusion, ... [and] I am willing without further exercise in pain to open my heart. And this needs no doctrine or theology of suffering. ... I am simply a human being. (H 317)

Bellow's intention is to create his protagonist as an investigator of the modern times, who could fit himself meaningfully to the modern condition. It is not just balance of the mind that is needed but also a certain crucial tuning of the mind, left open to comprehend the modern malaise. For such a medication the 'forged' inner selves would not help, but self-consciousness in the affirmative becomes necessary. Herzog achieves this by allowing a "marriage of mind and nature" as Chavkin puts it ("Bellow's Alternative" 378). He even renounces certain predominant bindings that man secures to life so dearly, in order to achieve his ends. Herzog's predicament can be "explained simply by implicit assumption that existence, quite apart from any of our judgements, has value" (Chavkin, "Bellow's Alternative" 329). This value of existence is revealed in Herzog's words when he perceives that-

The dream of man's heart, however much we may distrust and resent it, is that life may complete itself in a significant pattern. Some
incomprehensible way. Before death, not irrationally but incomprehensibly fulfilled. Spared by these police guardians you get one last chance to know justice, truth. (H 303)

This dream, as Herzog puts it is a fulfilment of some inner-desire, a dream unguided by mere contingencies of life, an existence discerned through a powerful inner essence, a state of perfection inexplicable in plain terms, but intuitively felt and understood, the implication being that of self-awareness made implicit by the unselfing consciousness.

In the two novels analysed so far, the protagonists seem to share common contingencies, that define their common attitudes, obsessions, death fear, paranoias, alienation and Self. The protagonists do not have much of direct dialogues with the other characters. But both Bruno and Herzog have a good sense of perception especially in character analysis of the 'selves' of the other characters. At the personal level, it is noticed that the unselfing process gyrates within the minds of the protagonists. They sift through the pros and cons of existence and the contingencies that dominate the existence of the two individuals. However, there is a marked distinction between the psyche of Bruno and Herzog. Bruno has his own limitations and wallows in deep self-pity for a long time though his efforts are frantic enough to convince the reader of his personal attempts to hold down his evasive self. Bruno
seems to fall in line with the "classical" view that man is an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal, for, in comparison with Bellow's Herzog, Bruno falls short of powerful self-development.

With the progression of unselfing, Bruno's Self is quite bleak and yet to emerge from the cold, ruthless stillness of existential suffering, while Herzog rejects power and authorizes not only his own Self, but renders his Self the authority to probe the selves of numerous categories of people. The individuals differ in both cases. The Murdochian protagonist is highly melodramatic, fatalistic or philosophical. The Bellovian, on the other hand, trails through personal "suspicion and solitude [both] emotional and intellectual" [Bellow 19]. The Self in the Murdochian protagonist experiences a very near death in life itself, a fatigue that exhausts his seeking spirits, such that he chooses between several alternatives, that is, either philosophize or succumb to the predicament or inspite of the blurring self-development vaguely compromise with the realities of existence at least while on the verge of death. Though Bellow's protagonist has an equally denigrating crisis, he still rejuvenates the sinking spirit of life, to go on as far as destiny would have him go, while continuing to maintain the momentum and vivacity of existence.

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