

Humanities

Laughter From the Styx

We have art in order not to die of life.—*Albert Camus.*

January-thin sunlight. Wind-chill 20 below; for Chicago this winter, almost a letup. A few skaters, students, on the Midway Plaisance, blurred in feathering snow. Beyond them austere English-Gothic buildings—the University of Chicago, Rockefeller Center in suburban scale. A proper university but not without carnal knowledge of the world: *alma mater* to 40 Nobel laureates (38 scientists, two humanists) and the atomic bomb.

Here, in a rookery that might be a wing of the old British Foreign Office, Saul Bellow is perched up against the eaves. It's a hideaway; no name on the office door, as no number in the telephone directory. Inside the professor is losing another day's battle for privacy, cursed by fame. Two years ago on winning the Pulitzer Prize for *Humboldt's Gift*, his eighth novel, he had taped a message to the door: "I am delighted with the award"; but reporters are not so easily fended off. Mercilessly, the Swedish Academy last October conferred on him the Nobel Prize for literature—fame's last straw, he hoped.

How to cope with all this mail? This mail that began with congratulations from Cheever, Warren, Morris, Roth, Mailer, Vonnegut; from Gerald Ford and (the late) Richard J. Daley; and that continues to pile in and pile up—a granary of nutrients for the ego, with (a bit of chaff) the inevitable few ungenerous letters? One thinks of Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*: "The facts begin to crowd me and soon I get a pressure in the chest." The pressure is released now in a slight seething sound at mention of yet another public honor and duty, another straw, the Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities, presented annually by The National Endowment for the Humanities.

A visitor asks what small joys relieve the burden of these greater ones. Precisely the snow: "The poetic interruption, to see the city this morning in a white robe, the look of these arches lighted by snow." The idea, that is, of serenity. Bellow's novels are full of characters seeking time, space, quiet to think, to discover the meanings of self and soul in a world of clatter.

Here for example is Joseph, the young diarist of *Dangling Man*, the first novel: "His is a long, straight-nosed, firm face. . . . His eyes are dark and full, rather too full, a little prominent, in fact. His hair is black.

He does not have what people call an 'open' look, but is restrained—at times, despite his amiability, forbidding. He is a person greatly concerned with keeping intact and free from encumbrance a sense of his own being. . . . He keeps a tight hold because, as he himself explains, he is keenly intent on knowing what is happening to him. He wants to miss nothing. . . ."

Whiten the hair, loosen the lines of the face a trifle (adding a sardonic smile), and the physical portrait is as true for the slender figure of Saul Bellow at 61 as it was in 1944 when the book was published. The sense of intention, too—the artist declaring himself—holds good today. What was Henry James's advice to young writers? "Try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost."

A fearful discipline had to be learned. He has recalled "sitting there obstinately with a broken-down typewriter in a \$3 room, grinding away. . . . If I had

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Saul Bellow, who has been selected by the National Council on the Humanities to deliver the Sixth Annual Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities on March 30 in Washington, D. C. and on April 1 in Chicago, Ill.

been a dog I would have howled." In *Dangling Man* Joseph, waiting out his draft call, struggles with feelings of alienation, vanity, arrogance, fears of falling short; it sickens and alarms him. Essentially this is Bellow under the pressures of growing up in the depression and war years, stuffed with neighborhood lore and book learning—and childhood memories, like Joseph's description of a street in Montreal:

"I have never found another street that resembled St. Dominique. It was in a slum between a market and a hospital. I was generally intensely preoccupied with what went on in it and watched from the stairs and the windows. Little since then has worked upon me with such force as, say, the sight of a driver trying to raise his fallen horse, of a funeral passing through the snow, or of a cripple who taunted his brother. And the pungency and staleness of its stores and cellars, the dogs, the boys, the French and immigrant women, the beggars with sores and deformities whose like I was not to meet again until I was old enough to read of Villon's Paris, the very breezes in the narrow course of that street, have remained so clear to me that I sometimes think it is the only place where I was ever allowed to encounter reality. My father blamed himself bitterly for the poverty that forced him to bring us up in a slum and worried lest I see too much. And I did see . . ."

Saul Bellow was born in exactly this section of Montreal in 1915 and lived there until he was nine, when the family moved to Chicago. His fiction is pinioned in childhood experiences. As the larky protagonist puts it in *The Adventures of Augie March*, "All the influences were lined up waiting for me. I was born, and there they were to form me." The last of four children of Russian immigrants from St. Petersburg, Bellow grew up speaking French, English, and Yiddish. The family was close and even then he "missed nothing"; at 15 he watched, helpless, when his mother died. In *Herzog*, the central figure laments that "depressives cannot surrender childhood—not even the pains of childhood." Bellow's father did not approve of his literary ambitions; too moony, he thought.

From Tuley High School to the University of Chicago—"a terrifying place"—from which he transferred to Northwestern for a degree in anthropology. Marriage then, bottom-rung jobs teaching English and writing, and a wartime hitch in the Merchant Marine. The fifteen years beginning in 1946 were spent away from Chicago, teaching at NYU, Princeton, and elsewhere, with a long stay in Paris on a Guggenheim Fellowship. Four new novels appeared in this time—*The Victim*, *The Adventures of Augie March*, *Seize the Day*, and *Henderson the Rain King*. Then in 1962 it was back to "the tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities" (one of Sandburg's images for Chicago), where Bellow has since lived quietly, lecturing at the university on Joyce, Proust, and other novelists. And, of course, writing: short stories, plays, essays, and three more novels—*Herzog*, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, and *Humboldt's Gift*. To which add his first book of nonfiction, *To Jerusalem and Back: A Personal Account*, published late last year.



Getting the Nobel Prize is like having the roof fall in. Suddenly the sun of recognition is visible, a consolation and source of gratitude—and of cash. And there one stands exposed as cameras click. The announcement from Stockholm routed Saul Bellow into a press conference. Faithful to his own fictional characters he parried congratulations: "The child in me is delighted; the adult is skeptical." And more ruefully, "I wish I could believe that the Nobel Prize brings immortality."

He remembers now being cheered by a letter from a friend citing the stoic reaction of Albert Camus on receiving the Prize: that it is necessary to endure good fortune as well as bad. Bellow says he felt "elated, elevated, and vindicated," but also uneasy. So it had been with T. S. Eliot, who told his Stockholm audience he experienced "enjoyment for the flattery, and exasperation at the inconvenience, of being turned overnight into a public figure." And there was the case of his friend John Steinbeck, who had sent him a copy of his 1962 Nobel lecture, inscribed simply: "Saul Bellow: you're next." Although in the lecture he had let out a "roar like a lion out of pride in my profession," Steinbeck soon was feeling burdened by the responsibility of the award.

The Stockholm occasion last December went by in a blur of festivities involving six other Nobel laureates—all Americans—and a Bellow entourage of 16, from his wife's family and his own. A further retinue of agents, editors, and publishers also came to the party. Late one night at the end of a gala ball Bellow's 12-year-old son Daniel—in tails, like everyone else—handed his father a single carnation and a little girl's purse and went on for one more dance. Immured among the notables, Bellow could only shrug. Trying one day to sneak a working lunch with his agent, Harriet Wasserman, he staked out a table behind sheltering pillars in a Grand Hotel salon. As they unfolded their napkins, an unseen orchestra broke into "Chicago." "Well, that I like," he admitted.

Bellow's Nobel citation reads, "For the human understanding and subtle analysis of contemporary culture that are combined in his work." Responding to it, his lecture invoked as timeless the example of Conrad—also "the child of immigrants"—for literary artists: the need to work from "that part of our being which is a gift, not an acquisition," as Conrad put it. Bellow urged today's writers to jettison "organized platitudes" and worn-out visions of ruin which obscure what is fundamental and enduring within the turbulence of modern existence. There, at the center, courageous writers will discover a public that longs for a fuller account "of what we human beings are, who we are, what this life is for."

And now? "Well, once in Rome I had my son Gregory along on a tour of the churches. When we got to St. Peter's he'd begun to droop. I told him we

were in the largest church in the world and he shot back, 'Fine; now we don't have to see any more.' Maybe now I'm in the clear, too. Unless," he quips, "they find an academy of arts on Mars." The danger is in eminence. "I may just become an object in an *étagère*, an antique piece to be taken out occasionally for display in one cause or another. I need to regain the feeling of connection with common life. Being back in Chicago helps."

Of his fourth wife Alexandra, an attractive Rumanian-born mathematician, Bellow has remarked to a friend that "Since I've never understood women anyway, I finally married one who is really a mystery." Last fall they moved across town to be near Northwestern, where she teaches. He sees his three sons (from earlier marriages) as often as possible; all were with him in Stockholm. Relatives and old friends like Dave Peltz, a Gary contractor and racquet-ball partner, help keep him in touch with "common life." He reads a few of the intellectual journals and "as often as I can bear it" the Chicago and New York papers—including the *Wall Street Journal*, "hoping to divine what the capitalists are up to."

Edmond Wilson's review of *Dangling Man* launched Bellow's work on 30 years of mounting critical acclaim—three National Book Awards, the Prix International de Littérature, the Pulitzer, now the Nobel. Financial security came only with—that is, after—publication of *Herzog* in 1964. Surprising its author, *Herzog* took off as a best-seller; he had thought it might sell 8,000 copies or so. The book is heavily intellectual, presenting an endlessly ruminating college professor, Moses Herzog, as an Everyman fighting for sanity in a dehumanized world. His peculiarities include the writing of unmailed letters to friends and strangers, to Nietzsche, Eisenhower, and the Lord, even to himself. A variation on Dostoyevsky's *Letters from the Underground*, the device enabled Bellow to send up his ideas and learning like so many kites.

The book went through some 15 revisions. "I was determined," he says now, "to remove every trace of subjectivity. Around about the tenth version, the publisher said let's go to press, but I stalled. I had gotten carried away by the letters. It couldn't go on indefinitely. I enjoyed corresponding with Nietzsche but saw at last that I couldn't win the argument."

In public life Bellow is Melville's Bartleby ("I prefer not to"), but in his heart and fiction he is Huck Finn, Tom Jones, Falstaff, Bloom, Micawber, Alice (and so on), keen to the genius of their creators. And though his muse is comic, he is an Ishmael, the voyager with tales of madness that must be told. By now, as his friend Richard Stern says, Bellow "has spelled out versions of himself on several thousand public pages."

Writing in a recent *New York Times Magazine*, Stern marvels that "for years I have seen this old friend

Saul Bellow has been elected by the National Council on the Humanities to deliver the Sixth Annual Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities. Mr. Bellow, winner of both the Nobel Prize for Literature and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1976, has chosen as his title, *The Writer and His Country Look Each Other Over*. Part I of the Lecture will be delivered on March 30 in Washington, D. C.; Part II will be delivered in Chicago, Ill. on April 1.

Sponsored annually since 1972 by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the first Lecture, *Mind in the Modern World*, was given by the late Lionel Trilling; in 1973 Erik Erikson spoke on the subject, *Dimensions of a New Identity*; Robert Penn Warren's Lecture in 1974 was *Poetry and Democracy*; in 1975 Paul Freund lectured on *Liberty—The Great Disorder of Speech*. John Hope Franklin gave his 1976 Lecture, *Racial Equality in America*, in three parts: the first, *The Dream Deferred*, in Washington; the second, *The Old Order Changeth Not*, in Chicago; and the third, *Equality Indivisible*, in San Francisco. The Jefferson Lectures have all been broadcast nationwide by National Public Radio.

convert depression, fury, whatever, into marvelous literary comedy. . . . His books are slow in coming because each contains a clearing of a mental and emotional forest." At such times there is a build-up of *angst* and reclusiveness. Stern observes that if Bellow is sensitive to criticism, "his books at least are full of what amounts to self-accusation, some of it put into the slanging mouths of enemies, friends, wives." (If existence is comedy, one's own follies are first and last proofs.) The reclusive manner also shields traits of eagerness and tenderness upon which the writer draws, helped by what Stern calls "an extraordinarily sensuous memory."

Memory of course. What of imagination and observation—does he owe more to one than the other? "More to observation, I think," he says. "The writer today is more nearly a chronicler of his times than, in the classic sense, an originator of harmonious designs. A different sort of imagination is called for; not the kind where everything depends on story invention, but the kind that takes hold of the dense complexity of modern life." He has spoken, too, of "a primitive prompter or commentator within. . . . I don't mean he's crude; God knows, he's often fastidious." This commentator must be coaxed and listened to with infinite care.

Bellow's audacity is like P. T. Barnum's reputed exhibition of two skulls of Cleopatra, one from her childhood, the other from when she died. Certainly his show of novels is marked by the introduction of risky new forms, new styles and inspirations—trapeze, high-wire, human cannonball—to go with the Tattooed Lady and the clowns. As readers have come to recog-

nize themselves (death-defying, laughing) in all this, sales of the books in the U.S. have mounted to a cumulative total of some five million and foreign editions have appeared in 22 languages.

Bellow “arrived” as a master of comic ingenuity with *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953). Augie, a roguish vagabond, announces himself thus: “I am an American, Chicago-born—Chicago, that somber city—and go at things as I have taught myself, free-style, and will make the record in my own way: first to knock, first admitted; sometimes an innocent knock, sometimes a not so innocent.” The advent of this vivid, fluent style with its mixture of poetic and idiomatic speech was a literary event. Lionel Trilling saw in the book “a force and charm of actuality” and a conscious commitment to the comic tradition, which “affirms the importance, the real existence, of people who do not conform to the heroic tradition.” This preference for the anti-hero (or heroism inverted) is very much the Bellowian forte.

Seize the Day, a novella many consider Bellow’s masterpiece, appeared in 1956. Tommy Wilhelm, divorced and loveless in New York—“howling like a wolf from the city window”—is kept at arm’s length by his aging father. Seeking help he falls in with one of the greatest charlatans in fiction, Dr. Tamkin. “If you were to believe Tamkin . . . everyone was like the faces on a playing card, upside down either way.” This metaphor for ambiguity—the world in a sentence—suggests something of its author’s way of looking at society.

New peaks of comic fantasy were scaled in *Henderson the Rain King* (1959), the saga of a wealthy American pig farmer who invites his soul by going into the African bush, hoping to “perform a benefit.” Typically, he is a character with ideas that get out of hand: “That’s how it is with my ideas; they seem to get strong while I weaken.” Bellow continues to be fond of Henderson, to whom he feels kin as an “absurd seeker of higher qualities” (spurred, he adds, “by anxieties over death”). The book is a feat of transcendence.

After *Herzog* came *Mr. Sammler’s Planet* (1970) in which the “imitative anarchy” of New York City in the 1960s, seen by the one good eye of an aging survivor of Nazi genocide, is held up to ridicule. The latest novel, *Humboldt’s Gift*, is a fast-moving comedy about literary and intellectual life—and death—in America, based in part on Bellow’s youthful friendship with the poet Delmore Schwartz, who died a burnt-out case.

A sampler of Bellow’s gifts would include those once listed by Benjamin De Mott in the *Saturday Review*: “High spirits, humor, strong narrative rhythms, responsiveness to place as well as person, a swift idiomatic speaking voice, the power to nudge open a door upon common life without instantly ban-

ishing delight and wonder”—and his “relish of talk and thought about the ‘conduct of life’.” He is “a writer not only ambitious to speak general truth,” said DeMott, “but exceptionally well qualified to do so.”

The books themselves are highly original but at the same time a refraction of Bellow’s extraordinary knowledge of literature and the history of ideas. (His son Adam, now at Princeton, has said “You get the feeling that every word he utters has been weighed with the sum of Western art.”) From an early interest in Dreiser and Anderson he has gone on to explore huge tracts of the republic of letters, spending a lifetime in the company of characters created by Dickens, Melville, Dostoyevsky, Proust, Joyce—the list goes on and on. He cracks jokes with these worthies, calls them to task, commiserates, picks their brains, compares notes on art and philosophy, borrows the odd cup of sugar. And helps carry out the trash (“all genius is full of trash,” said Melville).

Fragments of these occasions, often whole scenes, enter his fiction so to speak from life. Bellow protagonists are of the here-and-now, vivid in their own right, but are thus also connected imaginatively with a universe of literary/historical precedent. The intellectual reach is indeed ambitious and sometimes demanding of the reader (not to mention the writer). But it gets at the great moral issues of the day, and renews the claims of art to speak them.

Critics—often fellow-novelists—have been variably kind. This one or that will say that the novels end in impermissible ambiguity; they want “resolution.” Or that the prose is too hectic; they resist being carried away. Or simply that modern anxieties—their stock in trade—are no laughing matter. Most of the flak (as more of the praise) has come from the New York litterateurs, whose milieu Bellow sees as overheated, clique-ridden, inimical to creative work. By comparison, Chicago is bracingly philistine. That he is Jewish, as are many of his characters, he speaks of as an “accidental exoticism” and he refuses recruitment as a “Jewish writer.” It is perhaps true that being brought up with fluent Yiddish has energized his English prose; but “like the exile writers in Paris 50 years ago I do not think of myself as representing any national culture. I am simply a modern writer.”

As his own critic, Bellow is dissatisfied with a lot that he has written. He finds fault especially with the early novels; the plays have been neglected; he has lost too many bouts with inertia. He sees himself in Charlie Citrine of *Humboldt’s Gift*: “As I was lying stretched out in America, determined to resist its material interests and hoping for redemption by art, I fell into a deep snooze that lasted for years and decades. . . . Luckily I’m still alive and perhaps there’s even some time left still.” Asked to speak of work in progress or projected, he is Bartleby again, except to say that immortality (“generally, not my own”) is much in mind: “I think a lot about Whitman’s ‘great poems of death’. . . .”

The wonderful variety of Saul Bellow’s characters—dangling, displaced, whistling in the dark—is a com-

edy of innocence ill-matched to the world's corruptions. But as his introducer in Stockholm said, for each of these anti-heroes "the value of life depends on its dignity, not its success." And on the answer to Mr. Sammler's great riddle. When it is put to him that everyone is born human, he demurs: "It's not a natural gift at all. Only the capacity is human."

Among the seven American Nobel laureates in literature Saul Bellow is the only immigrant American. He has recalled how in his early aspirations to become a writer he felt like an interloper, thanks to the doubts that others expressed about his ability to handle Eng-

lish prose. How funny, now! His personal story accommodates a host of intuitions: from the Old World, Wyndham Lewis's view that America is "the place where a Cosmopolis is being tried out"; from the New, Van Wyck Brooks's feeling that this country would lead all others in developing a "planetary mind." Millennial thoughts; but the accent of hope in Bellow's writing corresponds in some part with the hopes still yearning toward the American cosmopolis, where a planetary mind is alive and well in Chicago thinking what to say in the Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities.

—Patrick O'Sheel



From Seize the Day:

What a creature Tamkin was when he took off his hat! The indirect light showed the many complexities of his bald skull, his gull's nose, his rather handsome eyebrows, his vain mustache, his deceiver's brown eyes. His figure was stocky, rigid, short in the neck, so that the large ball of the occiput touched his collar. His bones were peculiarly formed, as though twisted twice where the ordinary human bone was turned only once, and his shoulders rose in two pagodalike points. At mid-body he was thick. He stood pigeon-toed, a sign perhaps that he was devious or had much to hide. The skin of his hands was aging, and his nails were moonless, concave, clawlike, and they appeared loose. His eyes were as brown as beaver fur and full of strange lines. The two large brown naked balls looked thoughtful—but were they? And honest—but was Dr. Tamkin honest? There was a hypnotic power in his eyes, but this was not always of the same strength, nor was Wilhelm convinced that it was completely natural. . . .

From Henderson the Rain King:

I got clean away from everything, and we came into a region like a floor surrounded by mountains. It was hot, clear, and arid and after several days we saw no human footprints. Nor were there many plants; for that matter there was not much of anything here; it was all simplified and splendid, and I felt I was entering the past—the real past, no history or junk like that. The prehuman past. And I believe that there was something between the stones and me. The mountains

were naked, and often snakelike in their forms, without trees, and you could see the clouds being born on the slopes. From this rock came vapor, but it was not like ordinary vapor, it cast a brilliant shadow. Anyway I was in tremendous shape those first long days, hot as they were. At night, after Romilayu had prayed, and we lay on the ground, the face of the air breathed back on us, breath for breath. And then there were the calm stars, turning around and singing, and the birds of the night with heavy bodies, fanning by. I couldn't have asked for anything better. When I laid my ear to the ground I thought I could hear hoofs. It was like lying on the skin of a drum. Those were wild asses maybe, or zebras flying around in herds. And this was how Romilayu traveled, and I lost count of the days. As, probably, the world was glad to lose track of me too for a while.

From Herzog:

"You're still a little afraid of me, aren't you."

"I wouldn't say that. . . . Confused. Trying to be careful."

"You're used to difficult women. To struggle. Perhaps you like it when they give you a bad time."

"Every treasure is guarded by dragons. That's how you can tell it's valuable. . . . Do you mind if I unbutton my collar? . . ."

Ramona had Moses' complete sympathy—a woman in her thirties, successful in business, independent, but still giving such suppers to gentlemen friends. But in times like these, how should a woman steer her

heart to fulfillment? In emancipated New York, man and woman, gaudily disguised, like two savages belonging to hostile tribes, confront each other. The man wants to deceive, and then to disengage himself; the woman's strategy is to disarm and detain him. And this is Ramona, a woman who knows how to look after herself. Think how it is with some young thing, raising mascara-ringed eyes to heaven, praying, "Oh, Lord, let no bad man come unto my chubbiness."

Besides which, Herzog realized that to eat Ramona's shrimp and drink her wine, and then sit in her parlor listening to the straggling lustfulness of Mohammad al Bakkar and his Port Said specialists, thinking such thoughts, was not exactly commendable. *And Monsignor Hilton, what is priestly celibacy? A more terrible discipline is to go about and visit women, to see what the modern world has made of carnality. How little relevance certain ancient ideas have. . . .*

From *Mr. Sammler's Planet*:

Through Fifteenth Street ran a warm spring current. Lilacs and sewage. There were as yet no lilacs, but an element of the savage gas was velvety and sweet, reminiscent of blooming lilac. All about was a softness of perhaps dissolved soot, or of air passed through many human breasts, or metabolized in multitudinous brains, or released from as many intestines, and it got to one—oh, deeply, too! Now and then there came an appreciative or fanciful pleasure, apparently inconsequent, suggested by the ruddy dun of sandstone, by cool corners of the warmth. Bliss from his surroundings! For a certain period Mr. Sammler had resisted such physical impressions—being wooed almost comically by momentary and fortuitous sweetness. For quite a long time he had felt that he was not necessarily human. Had no great use, during that time, for most creatures. Very little interest in himself. Cold even to the thought of recovery. What was there to recover? Little regard for earlier forms of himself. Disaffected. His judgment almost blank. But then, ten

or twelve years after the war, he became aware that this too was changing. In the human setting, along with everyone else, among particulars of ordinary life he was human—and, in short, creatureliness crept in again. Its low tricks, its doggish hindsniffing charm. So that now, really, Sammler didn't know how to take himself. He wanted, with God, to be free from the bondage of the ordinary and the finite. . . . Eckhardt said in so many words that God loved disinterested purity and unity. God Himself was drawn toward the disinterested soul. . . . However, . . . these flecks within one's substance would always stipple with their reflections all that a man turns toward, all that flows about him. The shadow of his nerves would always cast stripes, like trees on grass, like water over sand, the light-made network.

From *Humboldt's Gift*:

"There are a few things I have to get off my chest about Humboldt. Why should Humboldt have bothered himself so much? A poet is what he is in himself. Gertrude Stein used to distinguish between a person who is an 'entity' and one who has an 'identity.' A significant man is an entity. Identity is what they give you socially. Your little dog recognizes you and therefore you have an identity. An entity, by contrast, an impersonal power, can be a frightening thing. It's as T. S. Eliot said of William Blake. A man like Tennyson was merged into his environment or encrusted with parasitic opinion, but Blake was naked and saw man naked, and from the center of his own crystal. There was nothing of the 'superior person' about him, and this made him terrifying. That is an entity. An identity is easier on itself. An identity pours a drink, lights a cigarette, seeks its human pleasure, and shuns rigorous conditions. The temptation to lie down is very great. Humboldt was a weakening entity. Poets have to dream, and dreaming in America is no cinch."

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1977 NEH APPLICATION DEADLINES

March 15	Education Programs—Consultants Grants, beginning after June 1977
April 1	Education Programs—Projects Grants, beginning after October 1977
April 15	Education Programs—Pilot Grants, beginning after September 1977 Youthgrants—Projects beginning after October 1, 1977
May 2	Research Grants—Research Materials Grants, beginning after April 1, 1978
June 1	Research Grants—General Research Grants, beginning after April 1, 1978 Fellowships—Fellowships for Independent Study and Research, 1978-79
June 3	Public Programs—Projects beginning after October 1, 1977
June 15	Education Programs—Consultants Grants, beginning after September 1977
July 1	Fellowships—Summer Seminars for College Teachers (Directors), 1978 Education Programs—Program Grants, beginning after November 1977
August 1	Education Programs—Development Grants, beginning after April 1978
August 26	Public Programs—Projects beginning after January 1, 1978
September 1	Research Grants—Centers of Research Grants, beginning after July 1, 1978
September 15	Education Programs—Consultants Grants, beginning after December 1977

Selected Bibliography of Saul Bellow

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Bellow and his son, Daniel, at Nobel Festivities in Stockholm

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NEH Note



"Sacred Circles"

With assistance from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the largest exhibition of North American Indian art ever assembled will open on April 16, 1977 at the Nelson Gallery of Art-Atkins Museum of Fine Arts in Kansas City, Missouri. Entitled "Sacred Circles—Two Thousand Years of North American Indian Art," the exhibition will be coming to this country from Great Britain for its only showing in this hemisphere before being dispersed to the more than 90 museums and individuals that have loaned the objects.

Ralph T. Coe, assistant director of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, has spent the past four years bringing together this exhibition for the Arts Council of Great Britain, opening as an American Bicentennial exhibit at the Hayward Gallery in London on October 7, 1976. Coe searched out known and obscure collections of Indian art dating back to 1500 B. C. or earlier held by museums and individual owners throughout

North America and Europe. The title, "Sacred Circles," derives from the use of cosmic shapes—spider web charms, the four cardinal directions, circles of the sun, and the like—found in much Indian art.

Describing "Sacred Circles" in the exhibition catalogue, Coe writes: "While no exhibition can be definitive, this one is at least encyclopedic, affording broad bases for cross-cultural artistic comparisons, just at that moment when North American Indian art joins the mainstream of art history."

Having closed in London on January 16, the exhibition is being moved to the Nelson Gallery for a two-month stay, from April 16 to June 19, after which time the 850 exhibits will be returned to their separate lenders. American Indian groups and representatives will play an active and meaningful role in the exhibition of "Sacred Circles" at the Nelson.

Corporate, foundation and individual contributions to the project total more than \$350,000, with Federal and state agency funds adding another \$257,000.



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