

Title	Narrating, Remembering, and Forgetting : Self-Actualization in The Bellarosa Connection
Author(s)	Iwahashi, Hiroyuki
Citation	待兼山論叢. 文学篇. 2007, 41, p. 19-34
Version Type	VoR
URL	https://hdl.handle.net/11094/12094
rights	
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Narrating, Remembering, and Forgetting: Self-Actualization in *The Bellarosa Connection*

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Introduction

According to Alan Berger, "Bellow's novellas have thus far been paid little critical attention" (316), and *The Bellarosa Connection* (1989) is not exceptional, considering how few articles there are on it. However, this novella is filled with not only Bellovian topics (narration, remembrance, self-actualization, and so on) but also the typical ones of Jewish American literature (how much Jewishness the protagonists have and how they can retain it in the United States). These topics are worth reconsidering, and they are organically intertwined in the first-person narrative in *The Bellarosa Connection*. The narrative gives rise to such questions as what remembering should be based upon and what it works for.

Ezra Cappell declares that the novella "is about Jewish memory in America: will Jewish memory, without which Jewish culture would have ceased centuries ago, survive in the *Goldena Medina*?" (102). It is true that *The Bellarosa Connection* deals with "Jewish memory," but the novella should be analyzed in terms of not only remembering but also forgetting. Berger argues that *The Bellarosa Connection* causes the reader to recall "Bellow's aphorism that memory is life, and forgetting is death" (321).

Does Bellow really think that forgetting is death? Is it impossible to self-actualize through forgetting? Section three of this article reconsiders the role of forgetting through Americanization. Section one treats narrating, and section two, remembering. Both of the topics have been referred to by early critics, but they have not quite well been discussed from the viewpoint of self-actualization, whose idea is systematized by Abraham H. Maslow. This is why, the article will consider self-actualization of the three main characters (the unnamed narrator, Harry Fonstein, and Billy Rose), and that of each man will be explained in each

section.

I : Self-Actualization through Narrating

The Bellarosa Connection is a first-person-narrative story, as the closing sentence of the book reveals: "I [the narrator] chose instead to record everything I could remember of the Bellarosa Connection" (102). What does "the Bellarosa Connection" mean? Marilyn R. Satlof suggests as follows: "In a master stroke Bellow moves from Mnemosyne and the many ramifications the Greek word holds to the narrator's return to his own ancient heritage" (185). To the narrator, "the Bellarosa Connection" is what connects him with his own past as "the child of Russian Jews from New Jersey" (2). Besides, the story concerning "the Bellarosa Connection" inevitably gives rise to a nostalgic recollection of the Fonsteins in the narrator's mind, so "the Bellarosa Connection" is what makes him discover "the roots of memory in feeling—about the themes that collect and hold the memory" (102).

At the opening of the novella, the narrator, "[a]s founder of the Mnemosyne Institute in Philadelphia" (1), strongly believes that "memory is life" (2) and that "there is no retirement except in death" (2). The fact that death would free him from the burden of memory suggests that what memory he as the founder deals with is unsettling to him and that it does not have any possibility that it leads him to self-actualization. According to Cappell, the narrator's "own memory misses all that is important: his memorization tricks cannot imbue what is being recalled with *meaning*—the prime element of a Jewish conception of memory" (103). To avoid the loss of meaning, he attaches importance to "feelings and longings" (3). As a result, he has "his gradual realization that he, like Billy, has engaged in shallow relationships" (Safer 303). Then, the way to his self-actualization is seemingly to narrate memoirs of the late Fonsteins rather affectively.

However, at the same time, the narrator is careful about some negative aspects of his own affection. Satlof points out that "[t]he narrator, in recalling the Fonsteins, must differentiate between 'literal and affective' memory" (179), and the narrator's following statement, upon which Satlof's opinion is based, is very suggestive:

What we have before us are the late Harry Fonstein and his late wife, Sorella. My pictures of them are probably too clear and pleasing to be true. Therefore they have to be represented pictorially first and then *wiped out and reconstituted*. But these are technical considerations, having to do with the difference between literal and affective recollection. (3)

This quotation shows that the narrator tries to reproduce the lives of Harry and Sorella as objectively as possible by their multiple representations. In fact, he does not “care much for nostalgia and its associated sentiments” (32), which can be regarded as products of subjectivity. Though he finally believes that subjectivity is important for him to impress the Fonsteins on the reader, he also admits that objectivity is indispensable because merely relying on subjectivity would not be a very much persuasive way to reproduce the lives of the Fonsteins. Then, it must be reasonable to indicate that in *The Bellarosa Connection* he gropes for the balance between the subjectivity and the objectivity of his narration.

Elaine Safer argues that, at the opening of the novella, “by focusing on the theory of memory, he [the narrator] has substituted theory for life, contemplation for emotional involvement” (301) because theory and contemplation are essential for his business of the Mnemosyne Institute. Safer continues to suggest that he nevertheless is so impressed and influenced by the lives of the Fonsteins that “[w]ith awakened feelings and a sense of the true importance of memory, he connects to his personal and his Jewish past” (303). While theory and contemplation are associated with objectivity, life and emotional involvement lead to subjectivity. Safer regards *The Bellarosa Connection* as the tracings of the narrator’s change of heart: In his mind, objectivity is gradually replaced by subjectivity.

However, after his conversation over the phone with Gilbert’s friend, a house sitter of the Fonsteins, the narrator despairingly concludes as follows: “You can never dismantle all these modern mental structures. There are so many of them that they face you like an interminable vast city” (102). They surpass the inspiring power of subjectivity based upon

"feelings and longings" (3) of each individual like the narrator. The house sitter belongs to "the next generation, a generation far removed from the narrator's generation, who possesses an overabundance of intelligence" (Cappell 104). The next generation like him could not sufficiently be persuaded to accept the importance of subjectivity only by the narrator orally presenting it. This kind of persuasion requires a form of the novella, which reveals the cooperative work between subjectivity and objectivity.

Therefore, I disagree with Safer's idea that subjectivity finally becomes superior to objectivity in the narrator's mind, and instead I would like to suggest that objectivity is still as important to the narrator as subjectivity. His persisting belief in objectivity can be found in the deliberate technique of narration. At the beginning of the novella, he first guarantees his overwhelming power of memory: "A walking memory file like me can't trash his beginnings or distort his early history" (2). Memory usually cannot avoid being encroached by the process of revision and gradually becomes separate from the true facts, as time passes. However, the narrator insists that he, like the God of Judaism, can transcend any oblivion by way of his own systematical theory about memorizing.

Nevertheless, as the following episode of his forgetfulness shows, he cannot remember all that he would like to: "I had had a failure of memory the other morning, and it had driven me almost mad" (69). Why does he, who insists on the correctness of his memory, admit his forgetfulness? This is because such honest confession of it paradoxically makes his description of the Fonsteins persuasive. By not only honestly presenting to the reader his realization that he is not "God", who "doesn't forget" (102), but also showing the reader his carefulness about the limits of his memory, he throws into relief a mixture of subjectivity and objectivity in the novella.

He is also careful about the limits of his knowledge on the Fonsteins. It is natural that not all the descriptions of them should derive from his direct experience. They are complemented by some indirect information presented by the Fonsteins themselves. For example, the scene of the confrontation in Jerusalem between Sorella and Billy is described by the narrator's conjecture derived from information supplied by her, as the

following quotation shows: "What follows is based on Sorella's report and supplemented by my observations. I don't have to say, 'If memory serves.' In my cases it serves, all right. Besides, I made tiny notes, while she was speaking, on the back pages of my appointment book" (50-51).

This citation suggests that he is confident of his memory and that he is careful about the limits of his direct experiences. He, in this way, gets hold of objectivity in *The Bellarosa Connection*, but at times he does not hesitate to describe subjectively the Fonsteins by rhetoric and imagination:

[A]n American observer like me could, and would, picture the entire woman unclothed, and depending on his experience of life and his acquaintance with art, he might attribute her type to an appropriate painter. In my mental picture of Sorella I chose Rembrndt's Saskia over the nudes of Rubens. (19)

The boldness of rhetoric and imagination drives the reader to remind himself that the Fonsteins are vividly represented only through the narrator's inevitably subjective descriptions. The mechanism of reminder might seem contradictory to the narrator's aim of achieving objectivity. However, it consequently enables the reader to avoid falling into the fatal mistake of believing the narrator's description to be totally objective, and paradoxically his narrative becomes more persuasive.

This intentional use of rhetoric and imagination shows that the narrator aims to balance his narration between subjectivity and objectivity in order to "make an impression on a kid like that [the house sitter]" (102). The narrator thinks that the great impression is not derived from a choice between subjectivity and objectivity but from the effectual combination of them both. His final goal is to make *The Bellarosa Connection* as persuasive as possible, as the closing sentence of the novella indicates. If to achieve this final goal means his self-actualization, its success depends upon how effectively he can make subjectivity and objectivity be dissolved and absorbed into a new organization.

Abraham H. Maslow, who advocates the theory about self-actualization, declares that "[a]t the higher level of human maturation, many dichotomies, polarities, and conflicts are fused, transcended or

resolved. Self-actualizing people are simultaneously selfish and unselfish, Dionysian and Apollonian, individual and social, rational and irrational" (91). As the narrator's concern about his own narrative indirectly shows, for example, he would like to combine his own life in New Jersey and that in Philadelphia. Such combination belongs to one between traditional values and new values of the American Jewish people, and it is the core of *The Bellarosa Connection*, as Satlof hints as follows: "The confrontation between the generic Jew, Sorella, and the American sometimes Jew, Billy Rose, serves as the crux of the book" (183).

The narrator tries to bridge the gap between old generation and new one by presenting *The Bellarosa Connection*, where the narrator aims to balance up its objectivity with its subjectivity. This balance is achieved by his careful division between objectivity and subjectivity as well as by his consciousness that he is not God of Judaism, so that he naturally has limits of memory even though he specializes in it. The achievement creates the persuasiveness of this novella and probably makes possible the narrator's self-actualization whose achievement depends upon whether or not the reader of the new generation, including Gilbert and his friend, is persuaded to reconsider their origin as the Jewish people.

II : Self-Actualization through Remembering

Berger argues that "Bellow, more than most, is keenly aware of this sharp break in the continuity of Jewish living and the ever-growing decay of Jewish group memory" (326). The narrator tries to self-actualize by functioning "as a historical link between the event recounted and our 'reading' of the event" (Bach 84). In the novella, the event, namely, the Holocaust, is recounted mainly by Harry Fonstein. "[S]urvivors and nonwitnesses; gratitude and indifference; and remembering and forgetting. All of these oppositions revolve around the *Shoah*" (Berger 316). Then, by even indirectly dealing with the topic of the Holocaust, the narrator tries to gain a foothold toward resolving a variety of antinomies. This kind of resolution could lead to his self-actualization because, as Maslow says, one of the conditions for becoming a self-actualizer is that "we can tolerate the simultaneous existence and perception of inconsistencies, of oppositions

and of flat contradictions" (92). Harry Fonstein, one of the two opposite characters, is discussed in this section of the article.

Harry, as the survivor of the Holocaust, is a kind of an incarnation of remembering in *The Bellarosa Connection*, and he, "with all the furies of Europe at his back" (5), remembers his personal history and origin very well. This remembrance influences the impression he gives to the listeners:

Fonstein had survived the greatest ordeal of Jewish history. He still looked as if the worst, even now, would not take him by surprise. The impression he gave was unusually firm. When he spoke to you he engaged your look and held it. This didn't encourage small talk. Still, there were hints of wit at the corners of his mouth and around the eyes. So you didn't want to play the fool with Fonstein. I sized him up as a Central European Jewish type. (7)

This impression causes the narrator, who respects Harry, to listen to him earnestly and to be easily impressed: "I had had a tame war myself-company clerk in the Aleutians, So I listened, stooped over him [. . .], for he was the one who had seen real action" (7). Harry's power of impression naturally stems from his stable memory, and the narrator thinks that whether man can retain his memory or not depends upon how well it is based upon his "feeling" and "the themes that collect and hold the memory" (102). "Fonstein and Billy never actually met" (22), so Harry's mind is full of mysteries of Billy. These mysteries constitute Harry's feeling and themes, as "he thought a great deal about the person who had had him smuggled out of Italy" (13). He cannot solve these questions, which consequently obsesses him: "[H]e's also a very smart man and has got to be conscious of the kind of person that saved him" (26). This obsession helps Harry retain his memory of the Holocaust, and if such a kind of memory is a boundary line between the second generation and the third generation of the Jewish people, it enables him not to be entirely absorbed into the third generation, namely the highly Americanized Jews.

Harry does not like to become totally Americanized at his mental level, though, thanks to Sorella, "he succeeded in business" (3) in a

typically American way. The reason why he feels hostile toward Americanization itself can be inferred from the following conversation between the narrator and Sorella about "the Americanization of the Jews":

"Rose, that special party, won't see Harry," said Sorella.

My comment was, "I break my head trying to understand why it's so important for Fonstein. He's been turned down? So he's been turned down."

"To express gratitude," said Sorella. "All he wants to say is 'Thanks.'"

"And this wild pygmy absolutely refuses."

"Behaves as if Harry Fonstein never existed."

"Why, do you suppose? Afraid of the emotions? Too Jewish a moment for him? Drags him down from his standing as a full-fledged American? What's your husband's opinion?"

"Harry thinks it's some kind of change in the descendants of immigrants in this country," said Sorella.

And I remember today what a pause this answer gave me. I myself had often wondered uncomfortably about the Americanization of the Jews. (22-23)

Harry thinks that Billy is now Americanized and that Americanization gives rise to a divergence of values among the Jews. Then, their humane communication based upon traditional values cannot be achieved. As to the breakdown of Jewish communication, Cappell points to the malfunction of the role of God as some one to talk to in Judaism and argues that Harry, who still clings to his Jewish identity, attaches great importance to communication with God: "Billy Rose assumes this Godlike role in the lives of those he rescues from the Holocaust. Consequently, Harry Fonstein needs to record the dialectical experience between himself and Billy Rose" (103).

Harry cannot meet or talk to Billy, his God, in the novella, and if this meeting is essential for his self-actualization, it follows that he cannot become a self-actualizer. However, "most people (perhaps all) tend toward self-actualization" and "in principle at least, most people are *capable* of self-

actualization" (Maslow 158). Then, "Fonstein gave up on him [Billy]" (57) and since then he has been groping for the different way to achieve his self-actualization. The evidence that he resigned his hope for meeting can be found in the fact that "Fonstein contented himself with observation" (47) when he stayed at the same hotel in Jerusalem as Billy did.

Harry instead chooses self-actualization by way of remembering his Jewish experience and trying to retain his Jewishness: "[H]e was thinking about his European origin and his American transformation" (31). It is true that "Harry Fonstein is a Holocaust survivor" (Berger 318), but he cannot avoid his American transformation. This kind of transformation is inevitable for everyone who lives in America, as Sorella suggests: "The Jews could survive everything that Europe threw at them. I mean the lucky remnant. But now comes the next test—America. Can they hold their ground, or will the U.S.A. be too much for them?" (65)

Strictly speaking, the answer of these questions, offered by *The Bellarosa Connection*, is quite ambiguous. However, in the novella, "there are no children to remember and transmit. Gilbert Fonstein and the house sitter choose not to remember" (Satlof 186), so it is safe to bet that Jewishness is at stake. Even Harry, who strongly desires to retain his Jewish identity, cannot stop his surrounding people and himself from being gradually Americanized. Though, by utilizing his memory of Jewish experience or speaking Yiddish to counteract his American transformation, he tries to remain Jewish. In fact, "he spoke Yiddish now and then; it was the right language for his European experiences" (7). As a result, he cannot easily be categorized into the Jewish or the American.

About such a kind of categorization, Maslow argues that "being rubricized is generally offensive to the person rubricized, since it denies his individuality or pays no attention to his personhood, to his differential, unique identity" (127). While Billy Rose belongs to the category of a highly Americanized Jew, Harry is not entirely absorbed into the present moment or the United States. For, "Fonstein was doing something with his past. This was the lively, the active element of his still look" (32).

In the present world, "Fonstein didn't have to be told to go American. Together this couple soon passed from decent prosperity to

real money" (29). However, he is simultaneously absorbed into his memory of the Holocaust. The following quotation makes it clear that he frequently narrates the "story of his adventures" (20): "He [the narrator's father] had heard the story many times" (11). The reason behind Fonstein's narration is that narrating, to some extent, ensures that he retains the memory of his Jewish experience. Remembering enables him to avoid giving top priority to economical success he has achieved in the present world. He tries to self-actualize not only by remembering his past experience but also by counteracting Americanization with his Jewish experience and origin.

III : Self-Actualization through Forgetting

According to Gerhard Bach, "[i]n refusing to acknowledge Fonstein as an individual Holocaust victim, Rose denies him an existence after what would have been certain death in the *Shoah*" (83). As I mentioned above, it is Billy that prevents Harry from communicating with God. Due to Rose's refusal, Fonstein cannot achieve self-actualization in the way he originally wanted to do. Though Sorella asks Billy to meet Fonstein, Billy's answer is merciless: "Remember, forget—what's the difference to me?" (53). "Billy's cavalier answer is symptomatic of his disconnectedness from Jewish communal memory, and thus Jewish history" (Satlof 184). Gilbert Fonstein, who belongs to the third generation, does not share such Jewish memory or history either. He was obsessed with "gambling" (97), and Harry and Sorella "were rushing to the aid of their American son when they were killed" (97).

A glance at *The Bellarosa Connection* easily leads the reader to regard the third generation including Billy, a highly Americanized second generation, as devastating and induces him to think that Bellow looks upon the remembrance of the Jewish origin and identity as much superior to the forgetfulness. Cappell argues that "Bellow has named the malady which not only afflicts Jewish Americans, but which has become a universal American epidemic: an amnesic memory" (105). As Cappell's explanation shows, most of the early critics insist that Bellow is afraid of Jewish memory, history, origin and identity being buried in oblivion and that *The Bellarosa Connection* is "a strategy against forgetting" (Bach 84).

However, it is reasonable to argue that Bellow's stance on 'forgetting'

is ambiguous. This is because in the first half of the novella he clearly describes not only some positive aspects of forgetting but also some negative ones of remembering. For example, Bellow indicates that thinking historically, which interacts with and belongs to remembering, is useless for making the past pleasant: "One can think of such things—and think and *think*—but nothing is resolved by these historical meditations. To think doesn't settle anything. No idea is more than an imaginary potency" (24). Remembering does not give rise to any benefit, and 'forgetting' is necessary for the Jews to become economically successful, as the narrator says: "Also my advice to Fonstein—given mentally—was: Forget it. Go American. Work at your business" (29). Nevertheless, totally forgetting, which means breaking away completely from the past, is itself difficult to achieve, and to rise above the shackles of remembering could be a kind of self-actualization. This section of the article deals with the imperishability of the Jewishness in a Jewish person by focusing on Billy Rose, who was born as a Jew but later "was American" (24) physically as well as mentally, and finally belonged to the third generation.

Billy, in contrast to the Fonsteins, has often been discussed from the following points of view: He is "a multimillionaire New York celebrity, a successful songwriter in show biz, owner of The Diamond Horseshoe" (Safer 301). It is true that Billy is a highly Americanized person and that he belongs rather to the third generation than the second generation. However, against his will, he is still influenced by Jewishness, and his underground activities were based upon "a spurt of feeling for his fellow Jews" (13). Then, I agree with Berger's suggestion that "Bellow shrewdly draws his portrait of Billy Rose. The entrepreneur is far from a one-dimensional character" (321).

Billy obviously does not "like things from the past being laid on" (58) him and wants to live in the present, but Sorella, as the wife of a refugee, who "had set herself to master the subject [the Holocaust]" (28), tries threateningly to make him remember and confront the past. Sorella's aggression, founded upon Deborah's memorandum, against Billy discloses some scandalous aspects of his past: "[A] kinky little kike finagler whose life history was one disgrace after another" (59). If the contents of Sorella's

malicious slander are true, there is a strong possibility that, not to mention the memory of the Holocaust, even that of his own past is not satisfactory to him. The reason why he would like to break away from the past might consist in such scandalous elements.

In spite of Sorella's aggression, Billy sticks to the original policy. According to Maslow, "the self-actualizing individual, by definition gratified in his basic needs, is far less dependent, far less beholden, far more autonomous and self-directed" (34). While Harry's original way of self-actualization depends upon Billy, Billy, from the first, does not need any dependence for his self-actualization through forgetting. He plans to obliterate Jewish history of the sufferings by replacing the memory of the Holocaust with a monument to the Jewish origin: "I want to contribute a memorial. Maybe it would be better not to leave any reminder of my life and I should be forgotten altogether" (61).

Despite such a modest statement as this, Billy clearly seeks fame or honor:

He had come up from the gutter. That was okay, though, in America the land of opportunity. If he had some gutter in him still, he didn't have to hide it much. In the U.S.A. you could come from nowhere and still stand tall, especially if you had the cash. If you pushed Billy he'd retaliate, and if you can retaliate you've got your self-respect. He could even be a cheapie, it wasn't worth the trouble of covering up. He didn't give a shit who thought what. On the other hand, if he wanted a memorial in Jerusalem, a cultural beauty spot, that noble gift was a Billy Rose concept, and don't you forget it. Such components made Billy worth looking at. (43)

Billy exemplifies the fact that in the United States the Jews are no longer prevented from succeeding economically by their Jewishness, and gives them their hope for economical success. He also expects "a memorial in Jerusalem" to help the Jews associate their Jewishness rather with Jerusalem, or their holy place, than with the Holocaust, or their nightmare. Berger argues that "Jewishness is not completely expunged by American culture. Traces may remain, no matter how transmuted" (320). Billy is

threatened by Sorella in the King David, and she condemns him for his refusal to meet Harry. If he had not rescued Harry from the Holocaust "on a spurt of feeling for his fellow Jews" (13), he would not be annoyed by Sorella. What Jewishness led him to do still influences his life at the present moment. As the incident demonstrates, the Jews cannot be completely dissociated from their Jewishness. If so, in terms of self-actualization, should be considered valuable Billy's efforts not to define Jewishness by the past, or the history of persecution, but by the present, or the possibility of economical success.

In the capitalistic society of America, wealth can be thought to ensure safety and security at various levels. Maslow argues that "curiosity and exploration are 'higher' needs than safety, which is to say that the need to feel safe, secure, unanxious, unafraid is prepotent, stronger over curiosity" (64). The achievement of self-actualization must follow from the satisfaction of the elementary need. Billy tries to forget the past and grope positively for the possibility of Jewishness at the present time in America, and this trial helps him achieve self-actualization.

Billy's self-actualization partly depends upon not only his ability to face up to the reality but also his concern with Jewishness. In the age of the Holocaust, he self-actualized by organizing "the Bellarosa Connection" and rescuing as many Jews as possible from Europe: "[I]t was Billy acting alone on a spurt of feeling for his fellow Jews. [. . .] There were, however, spots of deep feeling in flimsy Billy. [. . .] Billy was as spattered as a Jackson Pollock painting, and among the main trickles was his Jewishness" (13). However, after the Second World War, "being Jewish was no longer relevant, particularly when matched against his overwhelming Americanness" (Satlof 185). Then, confronting the crisis over Jewishness in America, Billy tries to self-actualize by dissociating Jewishness from the Holocaust, and he instead gives it the power of a crowd by utilizing the great influence of capitalistic spectacle and mass media:

When American Jews decided to make a statement about the War Against the Jews, they had to fill Madison Square Garden with

big-name celebs singing Hebrew and 'America the Beautiful.' Hollywood stars blowing the *shofar*. The man to produce this spectacular and arrange the press coverage was Billy. They turned to him, and he took total charge. (59)

Forgetting the past and accepting America enable the American Jews to newly and paradoxically strengthen their Jewish ties. If Billy's self-actualization is to strengthen the bond of Jewishness, he, at the heart of the Holocaust, achieved it by rescuing the European Jews, and he, in modern American society, tries to do so by forgetting the memory of the massacre and functioning as a centripetal force for the American Jews.

Nevertheless, if "the primal choice [. . .] is between other's and one's own self" (Maslow 52), he chooses his own self. For, his self-actualization is mainly associated with his desire "to enter Jewish history, attaining a level far beyond show biz" (60). Rescuing many European Jews, forgetting the Holocaust, or newly creating the bond between the American Jews is likely to be itself a kind of self-actualization, but for Billy, they are only a step to get honor and distinction. At the same time, he is deeply concerned with the present status of Jewishness as well as its conception. It is not proper to make a lighthearted interpretation that, while the Fonsteins are associated with Jewishness, Billy is separated from it. Rather, Billy tries to reproduce the new meaning of Jewishness through forgetting, and contributes to creating bonds of friendship among the American Jews of the third generation. It is not appropriate to regard the second generation as much more helpful and beneficent than the third generation to the development of the idea of Jewishness.

Conclusion

Alan Berger argues that *The Bellarosa Connection* is "an extended meditation on the appropriate role of post-Auschwitz memory" (315). Most of the early critics agree with him, and they mainly discuss what meaning memory and oblivion have for the Jews. However, *The Bellarosa Connection* can be also the means for the narrator's self-actualization, which is to persuade, through his narrating, the third generation to

reconsider their Jewishness.

To make the novella more persuasive, the narrator contrives to deal with Harry and Billy, who are incompatible self-actualizers. At a first reading, remembering appears to be superior to forgetting, but *The Bellarosa Connection*, at the same time, represents and examines various possibilities of forgetting in the United States. The narrator himself, whose occupation is the art of memory, admits not only the limit of remembering but also unpleasant effects annexed to the limit, so he does not decide which is superior, remembering or forgetting. At least in *The Bellarosa Connection*, as Billy's case suggests, forgetting is never death. The narrator gropes for the golden mean between remembering and forgetting. He "would like to forget about remembering" (2).

It is narrating, or writing the novella, that allows the narrator to forget the memory of the Fonsteins, because the novella always reminds him of them. However, he "a walking memory file" (2) must record the memory as objectively as possible. For, the objectivity ensures the remembrance. Thanks to the objectivity of the novella, in spite of the overwhelming power of forgetting, which he now would like to give himself up to, he can go back to the memory of the Fonsteins whenever he would like to do. Of course, his memoir is not totally objective, so he must keep the balance between objectivity and subjectivity of *The Bellarosa Connection*.

In fact, he is careful about the balance, and by looking for it, he, who thinks that writing the novella is the best way to achieve it, tries to make *The Bellarosa Connection* persuasive to the reader, including the third generation. Though the novella can be seen as a testing ground for transcending binary oppositions, such transcendence is, according to Maslow, essential for self-actualization, and it helps the novella avoid being categorized into a story only for the third generation. The novella, which analyzes and explores the hidden possibility of forgetting, must be helpful in changing the second generation's strong belief that remembering is much superior to forgetting. *The Bellarosa Connection* transcends the age range of the readers, so that it is the basis for an interaction between the second generation and the third one. Such interaction surely makes the

novella and the narrator's self-actualization promising.

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keywords : Saul Bellow, *The Bellarosa Connection*, Narrating, Remembering, Forgetting