EFFLORESCENCE

Thou art a mortal being
And thou art the Eternal One;
Know thyself, through light of wisdom,
Except Thee there exists none

Hazrat Inayat Khan
The Sufi Message

The Self

There exists in man an innate urge to study and know the ultimate reality that lies within every individual. This reality is the self which becomes apparent through an inward search. The real self of an individual is sought when one sheds off everything that is false and unreal. The consciousness in man, especially moral, is the motivating force that unravels the ultimate reality. The experiences he encounters serve as devices promoting the search for the self. The consciousness embedded in one’s personality guides him in knowing what he ought to do and ought not to do. An inward urge may urge him to undergo experiences that gradually unfold the true nature in man. The people around him like relatives, friends and opponents serve as instructors who shape his personality. The chapter analyses the personality of Henderson and
Herzog of Henderson The Rain King and Herzog. It concludes with the finding that the personalities of the protagonists are transformed by the influence of the people in their society.

**Story in Brief**

Henderson is rich and he is overflowing with money. But he is dissatisfied with life. He has an inner voice ever crying, “I want! I want” which can be represented as the urge in him to identify his self, the noble nature in order to know the higher truths regarding life. Hence he travels into the interior parts of Africa where he has encounters with different tribes like the Wariri and Arnewi. They make him know the real nature of humanity. King Dahfu of the Wariri tribe awakens his self from sleep and teaches him the truths regarding the meaning of life. His individual self gets enlightened by this experience. Ultimately he realizes the concept of the higher reality related to the self and he returns to his city.

**A Quest Novel**

Henderson the Rain King is Bellow’s most original and valuable work. In his work on Modern Tradition Bellow has commented that Henderson, “The absurd seeker of higher qualities is a character most like him, Although the scene is Africa, Henderson the Rain king is a personal idyll a Myth that serves the cause of personal transcendence, the primitive, the voice of civilization, the heart of darkness, the heart of
light” (14). It appears that the novel celebrates something important. The important message in the text can be identified by a deep and intrinsic study of it. The major theme of the novel is the quest for moral reality. It appears a philosophical romance in which the hero is involved in a series of incidents through which he seeks answers to questions within him. The hero is often interrupted by an inner voice “I want, I want”. The answer to this is that he wants to realize, know and seek a higher truth.

The novel is supposed to be one of the most re-written books of Bellow. In the first forty pages he had made numerous revisions. It appears that the author was discovering the novel as he wrote it, the novel’s dramatic parts express a meaning more than the common idea. Michael Opdahl observes in The Novels of Saul Bellow:

Early in 1959 an essay by Bellow appeared in the New York Times Book Review warning ‘deep readers’ against looking too eagerly in fictions for symbolic meanings that might lead them astray. Bellow may have written with tongue in cheek, for in that year he published Henderson the Rain king of all his novels this is the one that offers, the most temptation to deep readers. (47)

The reading of Historians had supplied Bellow with the sufficient knowledge to write this novel and critics have stated that it is built with
the framework of fertility myth, Biblical and Cultural allusions that give
the work extraordinary suggestiveness and resonance.

The journey that Henderson undertakes through Africa is fancied
out of Bellow’s imagination. Henderson disassociates himself from
American materialism and undertakes the trip with the help of an African
guide Romilayu whose Christian beliefs offer a spiritual message. It is an
“excursion into the exotic” a quest novel which has a world of fantasy
and myth as its locale. The plot is based on the idea of consciousness and
social reality in which the self is looked up for aesthetic purposes.
Through the work Bellow extends his implications of the self, society
syndrome and makes it transcend its mere contemporary reference to
acquire universal timeless validity. It is a record of the transformation of
the hero from a lower creature to that of higher type. He appears a seeker
of certain noble qualities and is in quest for harmony in the midst of
contemporary reality.

Henderson’s search for a higher Truth

Eugene Henderson is a millionaire, but eccentric, powerful and
physically big built, prone to apparently irrational violence. He finds
himself before his trip to Africa, to be living in a world of Masquerades
and attempts to learn the violin, perfectly, like his father, Whenever he is
with the violin he insists to maintain and follow discipline and he believes
that this would help him find angels and heaven, “I thought if I discipline myself, eventually the voice of angels may come” (29). The search of Henderson involves the search for a higher reality.

The search that he undergoes can be represented as the search for a meaning outside the ordinary material life. The search is made to know and experience transcendentalists’ thoughts of the high order. An individual who yearns for something nobler may not be satisfied with the idle life he leads. The life that Henderson lives appear ordinary. Hence he undertakes the search. The experiences in his life compel him to undertake the journey of quest through Africa.

His wife Lily never fulfills his expectations. She is found to be neglecting her duty as wife and mother. She often gets engaged in the task of drawing and creating portraits. This excessive involvement makes her neglect the duty to her daughter, Ricey. The result is Ricey gets dismissed from school. Henderson had to accept the dismissal. It is a great shock to him and soon he has another shock, the death of Miss Lenox who is his friend and neighbor. Lily has little emotional response to these happenings at home and she only involves in establishing her paintings. Henderson is an onlooker and a witness of these happenings which makes him reflect:
And I though, “oh, Shame, Shame!, Oh, crying shame! How can we? Why do we allow ourselves? What are we doing? The last little room of dirt is waiting, without windows, so for God’s sake make a move...you, too, will die of this pestilence. Death will annihilate you and nothing will remain while something still is...now! For the sake of all, get out. (37)

He realizes that many things are going out of his control and so he wants to seek something beyond his family life. The transitory, material bound life on this earth forces him to undertake a journey to know and experience something better and nobler. He hears of Charlie Albert who is going to make a trip to Africa with his wife and he decides to go with them to Africa. He informs Lily of the journey and begins to make preparations. He acknowledges that though he did not have any specific job at Africa, he wishes “a remedy for his situation” hence he undertakes the trip. He has a vision and he cannot rest.

The journey that Henderson undertakes suggests deeper significance and interpretations. The Arnewi tribe and others living in the interior parts of Africa only appear as agents to promote consciousness and awareness in Henderson. Romilayu leads him through the area and they reach the plateau of Hinchagara and finally arrive at the bed of the river Arnewi. The people who live here are known as Arnewi and are
named after the river. They are a gentle tribe consisting of people who worship cattle. He further moves into the area but suddenly he is disturbed by thoughts of his wife and children. Slowly these thoughts vanish from his memory and he continues his journey. He is introduced to Itelo, the prince who could speak in English. He had attended school and through him Henderson learns that the other person who speaks in English is Dahfu, the Wariri King. Henderson is introduced to the tribe, its queen and others. He learns that the people are very affectionate to their cattle but the cattle leave the place one by one. The cattle go in search of water because none of the cattle touch the available water source. Henderson takes up the charge of inspecting the water service so that he could make it convenient for use. He goes to the place with the prince and finds it full of frogs. They appear strange and infectious hence it remains un-used.

Henderson decides to solve the problem through western technology. Therefore he becomes eager to implement the task. During his initial attempt he has a chance meeting with the tribal queen, Willatale. The acquaintance with the queen creates an awakening in his mind and soul:

I don’t know whether it’s her general appearance or the lion skin or what I feel emanating from her...anyway, it puts my soul at
rest...Oh, really, I was beaming, this is simply great. This is a big moment for me. The skies are opening up. It’s a great privilege to be here. (71)

He tries various alternatives like dredging and poisoning but the idea does not materialize. Therefore, he decides to use the bomb technology hoping that one blast will kill all the frogs. The bomb that he makes gives adverse effect, instead of removing the frogs, the reservoir is blown up and Henderson leaves the place in shame. This experience by Henderson can be interpreted as tests that one has to undergo in order to attain perfection in the journey of consciousness and awareness of the self. This anecdote in the novel, of the frogs, signifies the evils that are to be eliminated in the process of purification.

The failure makes him uneasy. He leaves the Arnewi area with a great weight in his heart. He proceeds towards the place where the Wariri people live with their King Dahfu. Romilayu accompanies him and Henderson tells him not to reveal the details about the bomb and its outcome to anyone. They travel a long distance and reach the dwelling of Wariri people. Henderson has not become familiar with the atmosphere and people. In the course of his journey, he sees a lot of dead bodies. He spends the night in a hut with Romilayu and in it he finds a dead body. The presence of a dead body, uncared for, seems a puzzle to him, hence
he quits the area. He gets permission to meet Dahfu. He walks quiet a distance to meet Dahfu and he is escorted by the Wariri men. The journey he undertakes makes him realize the truth that the life he leads is an ordinary life the same as every other human being. Therefore he is eager to modify his personality. He wants to become a man with the knowledge of the higher truth. The tribal king Dahfu awakens him to the consciousness of Being, which is the existence of man and Becoming which envelops the existence of man existing with the knowledge of the higher reality. He seems to be Henderson’s real teacher. He throws various questions to Henderson:

...What kind of traveler are you? Oh...that depends, It remains to be seen...You have to be very rich to take trip like this...that some people find satisfaction in Being. Being others were taken up with becoming. Being people have all the breaks. Becoming people are very unlucky, always in a tizzy...having to make explanations...if I had really been capable of the alert consciousness which it required I would have confessed that Becoming to come out of my ears. Enough! Enough! Time to have Become. Time to Burst the sprit’s sleep wake up, America. (136)

Henderson spends more time with the Wariri tribe. He is introduced to the priest and the other ceremonies they perform. Later, he
has the opportunity to witness all the practices of the Wariri tribe. They are rituals for the rains. It involves the lifting of a wooden goddess, Mumma from one place to another. They also dance with the skulls.

He takes part in the rain-making ceremony of the Wariri tribe and is successful in bringing rain and for this act he is raised to the position of SUNGO or Rain King. Then he becomes a pupil of Dahfu and goes with him on a hunt for another lion, Gmilo which is believed by the Wariri to be the reincarnation of Dahfu’s father. The lion that has been trapped kills Dahfu. Henderson learns that he has to replace Dahfu, as king, so he flees to America with a lion cub in which is the spirit of Dahfu.

The story can be interpreted as a journey of the hero towards a spiritual quest. It narrates the attempts of the hero, who tries to escape from modern civilization in-order to find or seek the fundamental truths related to life. Henderson the protagonist perceives the American modern civilization and its contemporary western society as a spiritual desert like that expressed by T.S. Eliot in his poem the Wasteland. Eliot’s sterile Wasteland is portrayed as a desert, vainly awaiting the arrival of the hero who will revive it with healing waters. Likewise Henderson is a hero interested in making remarkable changes in the life of the people whom he meets. He is also extremely enthusiastic in his endeavors.
Henderson meets two different tribes in Africa that offer him varied responses to experience. The Arnewi tribe is portrayed as gentle and passive accepting everything with a lot of patience. The other Wariri are aggressive and violent. They dominate, struggle and impose their ideas on the world. The difference between the two tribes is explained in terms of luck. The Arnewi are victims of their own destiny. The gentleness of the tribe gets expressed in its highest form through Willatale their queen. Henderson arrives at the village and thinks it to be very old, later he comes to know that he has arrived at the source of life and truth. It appears to be paradise. The queen leads an absolute serene life and gives certain ideas about life, she says, “Gruntu-molani,” meaning “you want to live,” “man wants to live,” “you have the life force”. He observes her to be a woman who seems to be sustained effortlessly by the rhythm of life. Her idea about man makes Henderson realize that there exists an active force in man and the goal of his life is to experience and know this life force.

The discovery of the life force in Henderson is made possible through his meeting with Dahfu. Dahfu is pictured as one who is physically and spiritually noble and Henderson considers him to be a visionary and a savior. Dahfu expresses ideas related to mind and body. He says that the mind is more important than the body, “The spirit of the
person in a sense is the author of his body” (200). Dahfu carries out an experiment with the lion to which Henderson submits reluctantly. Dahfu asserts that he had gained power because of the lion and he asks Henderson to descend into the lion pit. Henderson thinks that by attempting to imitate the beast he could develop his spirit. Though skeptical Henderson fears losing Dahfu’s respect and he undertakes the action and roars like the lion.

Henderson’s hesitation is removed by Dahfu’s motivation. He encourages him to behave more like a lion. Henderson approves of Dahfu’s inspiring words:

At least I found my voice and asked him, “How long do you want me to hold this”. “I have been observing” he said “it is very important that you feel something of a lion on your maiden attempt, Let us start with the roaring”…”No, no, Now look, Mr.Henderson I wish you to picture that you are a lion. A literal lion.” I moaned. No Sir, Please oblige me, A real roar. We must hear your voice. It tends to be rather choked. I told you the tendency of your conscious is to isolate self. So fancy you one with your kill you are warning away an intruder. (224-225)
These words of Dahfu impart new energy and power within Henderson. He listens and observes Dahfu’s directions, “Henderson Sungo, Do not be afraid. Let go of yourself”. Dahfu further encourages him thus, “Open those magnificent mixed eyes. Oh, give more sound Better, better…strike, strike, strike, strike, Feel it…you will recover humanity later, but for the moment, be it utterly” (225). Henderson feels the beast. He gives a terrible roar that brings about a great transformation within, “And so I was the beast. I gave myself to it, and all my sorrow came out in the roaring. My lungs supplied the air but the note came from my soul” (225). The anecdote represents the idea that once when the animal nature in man is given outlet the inner force of the soul, the self can be felt.

Henderson is given instructions regarding the body and the brain, He observes:

It is all a matter of having a desirable model in the context. For the noble self-conception is everything. For as conception is, so the fellow is put differently, you are in the flesh as your soul is…Body and face are secretly painted by the spirit of man…the flow of vital energy all over. (226)
King Dahfu is amazed at Henderson’s response. He states that he could see something great in Henderson, in him is embedded fantastic elements embedded in him. He appears, “an exceptional amalgam of vehement forces” The King further adds:

So many factors are mediating, Fomenting, promulgating, Everyone is different. A billion small things unperceived by the object of their influence. True, pure intelligence does best it can but who can judge? Negative and Positive elements strive, and we can only look at them and wonder or weep, you may sometimes see a clear case of angel and vulture in collision. The eye is of heaven, the nose gives a certain flare. But face and body are the book of the soul. (228)

The experience undergone by Henderson reveals to him ideas beyond the ordinary. One has to know and experience a terrible change in-order to feel the presence of the soul and the distinction between good and bad in man. This awareness in Henderson is created in him through Dahfu, the king of Arnewi tribe. Henderson further adds, “I had a voice that said, I want! I want! It should have told me she wants, he wants, they want, and moreover it’s love that makes reality, reality. The opposite makes opposite” (241). These thoughts reflect his concern for mankind. The thoughts are not self-centered.
Henderson takes upon himself leonine qualities. Henderson has boldness and he faces the lion. He faces death which helps him to transcend the fear in him and remove his ego. Thus King Dahfu serves as the initiation to Henderson to know the mysteries of Nature. Dahfu counsels him, “Nature is a deep imitator. And as man is the prince of organism he is the master of adaptations... artist of suggestions... is his principal work of art, in the body, working in the flesh, what Miracle! What triumph; Also what disaster! What tears are to be shed” (221). Henderson learns multiple truths from King Dahfu. Later Henderson is taken to the lion hunt by Dahfu where Dahfu is killed. This incident reveals to Henderson the truth regarding death and its reality. Death is inevitable and man is to endure it. He is to accept all truths regarding life and is to accept the pleasantness existing in life.

There seems to be an euphoric image imparted in Henderson The Rain King: “Henderson’s plane has landed for fuel in Newfoundland we see him joyfully running around it in the snow, carrying the cub and an orphan child...traveling alone to America, leaping, leaping, pounding and tingling over the pure white lining of the grey Arctic silence” (54). The anecdote reveals to important facts to Henderson. It is that Henderson has realized and has undergone the experience of death. He has learnt the truth that death is the final end of life. Therefore he feels liberated and
attains an awakening that sends him running here and there, a picture typical of one who has attained spiritual enlightenment. The novel lends itself to innumerable interpretations. The idea concerning spirituality and moral consciousness seems to be apparent in the text. The journey that Henderson takes can be represented as a spiritual journey and this becomes possible only when one exists with moral consciousness.

Man is supposed to exist in this world not only with individual consciousness but he is also considered to be smothered by a multiplicity of other consciousness which he confronts in his day-to-day life. A closer inspection shows that the ultimate plane of operation for individual consciousness is not psychological or existential but cosmic. Therefore it is possible to proceed towards greater cosmic consciousness when the empirical distinctions between the psychological or existential are obliterated. The work explores new possibilities for the expression of human sensibilities transformed and charged with new potentialities.

Henderson the Rain King begins with interrogation. The protagonist asks himself as to what made him take the trip to Africa. Many explanations are given by Henderson as to why he undertook this trip and the major reason being that he wanted to shun his previous identity and past. Henderson lands in Africa and meets Dahfu and Romilayu. The conversations reveal an understanding or consciousness of
the ultimate reality. The tribe serves as an agent motivating Henderson to attain the consciousness of the self. The final scene of joyful dancing by Henderson in Newfoundland highlights the change in Henderson. The dance signifies the process of self awareness. In his search for a way out of the moral and spiritual chaos of his time, Henderson drinks deep at the spiritual springs of nature, myth, allusion and philosophy. He successfully attempts a rich synthesis of existence and non-existence, of individual being, developing a rich cosmic vision.

In this novel Bellow has depicted simultaneously picaresque construction and metaphysical concentration. Eugene Henderson is the first person narrator who is a seeker of grandeur in a mythic intensity through symbolic method. The novelist has attempted to color religious imagination by giving Henderson lessons of philosophic idealism. The earlier heroes, Joseph of Dangling Man and Leventhal of The Victim confront the fault within themselves, Augie of The Adventures of Augie March and Tommy Wilhelm of Seize the Day confront the existing inadequacies in their family and society. Henderson seeks for the identification of the self and other cosmic forces surrounding it. Henderson finds many inadequacies in his world, life and culture therefore he undertakes a trip to the primitive culture to discover
something about himself and the wider cosmic realities by which he can modify his social role.

Most activities of the novel are placed in a landscape of an imaginary Africa and it is a world beyond human footprints, “a place where all travel, is mental” (167). Bellow’s other novels deal with the love of realism and naturalism whereas this novel takes the shape of “romance”. In, Between Existentialism and Marxism Malcolm Bradbury had observed that “romance” had been a form used by American transcendentalists a mode of fiction neither preoccupied by the law of realism nor by the prevailing rules of the normal (144). Henderson resembles more the romances of the past. Herman Melville’s Ishmael in Moby Dick seems to have made a deep impact and influence on Bellow. In both the novels the heroes are depicted as those who are spiritually depressed and hence undertake an exotic journey in quest of cosmic realities. The hero’s symbolic adventures come under the influence of a priest teacher during the journey into the primitive culture. He encounters a magnificent beast of symbolic significance, has a close brush with death and achieves a condition of limited affirmation. The nineteenth century New Englander’s philosophical ideas and that of Emerson based on a search for reality through spiritual intention can be easily traced out in Henderson the Rain King. The final idea that results out of this quest is a
sort of realization that the self's nature is extreme pure consciousness which cannot be affected by the changes or accidents that occur to the body, the mind and the world which change and pass.

The Africa pictured by Bellow is congenial locale for Henderson’s cosmic quest and also a place where he can be guided towards truth and vision. E. Rodrigues observes in *Bellow’s Africa* that Henderson encounters Atti, the lioness in Africa. The lion is not only a sacred one, but it is like Blake’s tiger a form of wrath. And the lion is also an agent of Reichian therapy. The lion gives a new experience to Henderson. It is in this Africa that Henderson attains Humanness. And Bellow’s Africa is indeed an original creation.

The central part of Bellow’s mythic cosmos is based on Henderson’s spiritual hunger and it is in the first person narrative, whereas in the later part of the book Bellow shows Henderson’s inward psychic terrain. Henderson says that the world is the mind and the travel is mental travel. He also states that reality is nothing but pedantry. The Africa of Bellow is depicted as urbanized and Henderson goes out into the country first as a gentleman pig – farmer, next as an African explorer, but the spirit, the history, the heat of the humanity and the junk of the city are always at his back. He explains the purpose of his visit to Africa and also details the background of his despair. He finds drunken brawls,
domestic turmoil shooting at a cat, breaking bottles on a beach and raising pigs to annoy one’s wealthy neighbors. A close analysis of his character reveals the truth that psychologically self – hatred breeds world hatred. He exclaims that his main battle is internal, and he has to fight for the truth against falsehood. But most of the fighting is against himself. Thus Henderson involves himself in self-analyses to know and identify his authentic self.

During his voyage to Africa Romilayu takes him to the Arnewi. They are cattle raisers who live loving peace. They are seen to be passive but living, and dreadfully impractical. Here Henderson confronts metaphysical hunger. All those whom he meets here appear to be conspirators. In his soul searching even the animals and weather conspire with his psychic needs and ambitions. Henderson needs a world in which he can do good, think good and find good. He is gifted with wealth, education and other prosperities but is eager to reach a safe harbor. He seems to be worried about mankind. He who is eager for redemption ultimately joins his community. He finds his community after this experience to be filled with pious love and natural goodness.

Henderson has effectively interlinked the paradoxical nature of mortality, immortality, engagement and disengagement, cosmos and God in this work. Bellow’s philosophy is the philosophy of liberation from the
ordinary bondages of life. He attempts to liberate his protagonist from the
domination of external forces of society, of state and of cosmic powers.
His purpose is to set the hero’s authentic self free from the shackles of the
unauthentic self. Bellow believes that the capacity to contemplate can
lead an individual towards the capacity to know the idea of real freedom.
Hence the individual can achieve the true source of freedom. This
thinking would make obvious the existence of the absolute spirit. The
physical body is depicted as an agent of the spirit and its mirror. It
appears a means in which the spirit is embedded in the body as an
ingenious memorandum. Bellow’s vision in the novel is like that of an
incarnate who vouchsafes his character’s physical, mental and psychic
make-up, in individual, in cosmic and as well as teleological spheres.

The Self and the journey of Consciousness

The concept of the self involves a journey of consciousness. Many
are the ways that one can adapt to know the authentic self. The self or
inner light is a perennial presence in man. It enhances the personality of
the individual and motivates one to know what is right and wrong. It also
develops better understanding and promotes adjustment, acceptance of
life as it exists and enhances peace and harmony. Today’s world of
materialism only creates hurdles in the realization of the self that shapes
one’s personality. Yet any individual can exist with the consciousness of
the self even in a world of materialism. This consciousness can be related to the mind through which an individual may have a number of revelations related to the principle of morals showing great concern in the welfare of others and the society. The revelations can be made through various means and it could also be a series of experiences.

One of the psychic features of consciousness is revelation which is accessible to the human mind through its intrinsically sophisticated and mechanically advanced brain. This brain may undergo a “meditation of life” or have “retrospective emotion” and express the “anguish of spirit” or show concern in social welfare in order to improve the future generation. A man who is of psychic nature and who develops natural and divine justice surpassing all prejudices will be easily prone to revelations. The facts of nature may be revealed to him when he surrenders his ego. These facts may appear mysterious and puzzling to the conventional human mind. But the mind that seeks the higher truth learns and understands the great mystery of consciousness. Herzog’s ideas are greatly concerned with mental travel. He has innumerable revelations and he reveals and intimates these to his friends, relatives, colleagues and others known to him. His intense revelations are related to the idea of the self and moral consciousness.
Herzog’s Life

The story is related to the hero’s adventures of the mind which is in interaction with the social world at odds. He is a scholar, a student of romanticism, ever in quest of the self in a world of hyper-abundance. He is a professor of political philosophy. He divorces his first wife and marries Madeleine, a catholic, concert of extravagant tastes and intellectual ambitions. But his married life ends in disappointment and he lives separated from Madeleine. He feels dejected and distracted. He becomes contemplative and begins to write letters addressed to well-known personalities. These are expressions of his inner wishes and dreams. Eventually he learns that the world is filled with human love and he goes to live in his home at Ludeyville, accepting the world as it appears.

Herzog’s Consciousness

Herzog’s observations are that man is to develop a new attitude towards the reality of human life and it should be based on the law of the heart, realizing how life could be lived by renewing universal connections. His main concern is to attain human qualities. As a moral survivor he prefers joy to suffering, humility to pride, sand togetherness to alienation. Herzog’s quest is for higher things. The main question
before Herzog is the value of the self, to know whether the individual self is unique or it calls for universal connections.

**Herzog's Awareness**

Bellow saw Herzog as the end of a literary development but looking back it can be seen equally as the start of another one. The device that the author adapted in *Herzog*, Herzog’s letters, allowed him to impart into his novel a huge amount of intellectual material. Herzog’s mind ranges over the ideas that have produced the modern world emerging as a voice that is distinctively ‘Bellovian’. Here Bellow attempts to equate Herzog’s spiritual state of mind as it is seen to be induced by his personal and emotional experience. The novel is regarded as one in which Bellow has made peculiar use of academic setting and background. One of the earliest reviewers, Forest Reed has pointed out that Bellow has attempted and perfected the academic novel by making use of the academic hero. Forest Reed states that Bellow has not put Herzog in the settings and situations which are characteristic of his novels but the settings are in the center around which, whirs centrifugally the campus, the business world, the city of the mind, the sensual and emotional life, the family, personal values and politics and history. Herzog is characterized by an exuberant sense of life which is able to respond to experience with gusts. Herzog has the senses to respond, emotions to care, and a mind to probe into his
surroundings, his people and himself. He also has the conscience and the vision and the vitality to try to turn everything into a human reality. It is quiet interesting to note that the novel begins with a mute reference to the idea that Herzog has a streak of abnormality. This may be said to be because of his desperate attempt to communicate with the outside world by writing letters to everyone under the sun. The writing of letters can be taken to be the attempt to reveal one’s private psyche and it reflects Herzog’s insistent need in regaining a sense of belonging to community. It can also be considered to be a rumor because in Herzog one can detect an intense awareness of the external world:

One corner of his mind remained open to the external world. He heard the crows in the morning. Their harsh call was delicious. He heard the thrushes at dusk. At night there was a barn only...he saw roses winding about the rain spout...He looked keenly at everything but he felt half blind. (8)

Herzog goes through his contemplative mood and he considers his predicament in terms of both historical points of time and as a continuing spiritual anguish which transcends temporal time. The self examination that he undergoes can be said to be true and also intensely subjective. Herzog admits the faults and mistakes in him. He contemplates:
Resuming his self-examination, he admitted that he had been a bad husband...To his son and daughter, he was a 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 sisters, affectionate but remote, with his friends, an egoist. with love, lazy, with brightness, dull, with power, passive. (11)

In short he may be taken to be an egoist who is in search of the real self. He is also aware of the fact that he has the responsible role as a philosopher. Herzog is forced to cling desperately to the impulses of affirmation and this comes from his heart, it appears to be the insistent voice of intuition.

Herzog is depicted as a man living in the existential world and as one who is trying to relieve himself of a neoclassicist’s burden which can be said to be a task that cannot be easily done. He is able to solve his problem, finally, by moving from existentialism to transcendentalism. He also earns his solution honestly, enduring all sorts of admonitions from his ‘reality instructors’, his wife and others, and frantically attempting to write letters in-order to re-establish his identity. Herzog craves for a vision of a better life and this is interrupted by the reality instructors who are pragmatic everyday nay – Sayers. Their attempt is to try and reduce his aspirations to negative possibility, though Herzog is drawn towards
them, he does so in the Miltonic sense, to know evil in-order to choose good. His bitterest lessons are learned from his second wife, Madeline. His brother, Will asks Herzog the reason for his marriage with Madeline. He replies to Will that, God ties all kinds of loose ends together and he does not know the way of God. And that God did not care about his Welfare or ego. In his letter to Mermelstein, Herzog states the ideas embedded in his subconscious mind:

People of powerful imagination, given to dreaming deeply and to raising up marvelous and self-sufficient fictions, turn to suffering sometimes to cut into their bliss, as people pinch themselves to feel awake, 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. (317)

Herzog expresses his goal, being wakefulness which can only be gained through suffering. In his early married life Herzog makes a sarcastic suggestion to Madeleine, “Maybe I married you to improve my mind”. She appears in the novel a real, reality instructor who makes him move towards the purification of a perfect mind. There are others who serve as reality instructors to Herzog, like Gersbach, Simkin and Himmelstein. Their personal relationship with Herzog is different from Medeleine but their evaluation of his character and their advice to him is
essentially the same. They make him aware of the philosophy of death and it is that it negates all things. Herzog questions:

But what is the philosophy of this generation? Not God is dead, that point was passed long ago. Perhaps it should be stated Death is God. This generation thinks...and this is its thought of thoughts that nothing faithful, vulnerable, fragile can be durable or have any true power, death waits for these things as a cement floor waits for a dropping light bulb...We have experimented with every human capacity to see which is strong and admirable and have shown that none is. There is only practicality. If the old God exists he must be a murderer. But the one true god is Death. This is how it is...Without cowardly illusions. (200)

His letters appear to be an apology of his weakness and expressions of his innate intensions, and a means to attain mental stability. They can also be considered to be his philosophic monologues. His life had given him problems and he had faced the collapse of personal relationships which had persuaded him to feel the nothingness in life. This makes him respond to his feelings in the form of letters:

These letters are Herzog’s desperate attempts to exert some control in a world that suddenly seems hostile and to counter an intellectual trend and because of its persuasive claim to validity,
threatens to undermine the system of values upon which he has built his life...the letters are prompted by his heart, and they are produced in the anguish of a spirit...letters exhibit a wide reaching social concern, ranging from common courtesy to natural resources, from racial strife to presidential elections. (150-151)

Herzog continues to write letters and through these letters he expounds many vital facts related to the universe. He writes to Byzhkovshi and to Professor Boyle. In his next letter to Dr. Bhave he expresses his intention to join a movement. This idea reveals Herzog's inner reality, a soul longing for the knowledge of the higher reality:

Dear Dr. Bhave, he began again, I read of your work in the Observer and at the time thought I'd like to join your movement. I've always wanted very much to lead a moral, useful and active life. I never know where to begin. One can't become Utopain. It only makes it harder to discover where your duty really lies...In this vision Herzog saw...shining eyes, and the light of spirit within them. (63)

The analysis of Herzog's life and character reveal a divinity embedded in his personality due to which he reacts emotionally and philosophically to almost all persons and occasions that he comes
across in his life. Herzog who has the opportunity to witness the play, 
Pather Panchali is deeply touched and moved by it. The motherly affection expressed in the play stirs his emotions deeply and he feels that all injustices in the world should be exposed. In one of his letters he expresses his interest to eliminate the erroneous nature in man. He observes that religion and philosophy can motivate man to overcome the errors. He has an innate desire to rebuild the divinity in man. Through his letters he expresses the idea that man should examine his heart, and do the act without a great change of heart, and he hopes that all evil should be destroyed so that goodness will succeed in this world. Further Herzog is able to contact the psychologist Edwig with whom he makes a great analysis of Madeline’s Character and personality. They find her to be one who suffers from “paranoid delusions”. Herzog also discusses religion with Edwig, he states:

Some how I got into a religious competition. You and Madeline and Valentine Gersbach all talking religion to me...so I tried it out. To see how it would feel to act with humility...Valentine Gersbach...gave me advice and consolidation, religion. He brought me books. He commanded me to study them. I sat reading I and Thou, Between God and Man, The Prophetic Faith...By means of
spiritual dialogue, the I–It relationship becomes an I-Thou relationship. God comes and goes in man's Soul. (83)

His letters reveal a great social concern, common courtesy, natural resources and racial strife. His ideas assert that he is a great scholar who is working for the welfare of the future generation. It also reveals the fact that he is super-sensitive and that he feels himself to be a great sufferer, one who has been betrayed by the world and by those who loved him. His letters are the records of his wandering mind. These letters are not posted but written to relatives, friends, mistresses, philosophers, historians, politicians, living men and the dead, finally even to God. The concern that Herzog has for others is made apparent by the ideal thinker in him. It appears that his voice is the voice of a Philanthropist who longs for the welfare of humanity. These ideas revealed by Herzog assert the moral consciousness in him. In his letter to Shapiro he states:

Anyway, Shapiro, I was in no mood for Joachim da Floris and the hidden destiny of man...I think it must have started in that seminar on Proudhon and the long arguments we had, back and forth with old Larson, about the decay of the religious foundations of civilization. Are all the traditions used up, the beliefs done for, the consciousness of the masses not yet ready for the next
development? we are talking about the whole life of mankind.

(95-96)

The details of his life, his thoughts, pre-occupations, concerns, history, contemporary civilization get exposed through his letters, “The novel’s real action is Herzog’s frenzied re-examination of his total experience, his attempt to give order and meaning to his life” (63). The letters of Herzog also reveal a Powerful intelligence at work and the social questions that he puts forth expose his interest in society.

In the next letter to Sandor Himmelstein, Herzog expresses his thanks, gratefulness and gratitude that he owes her. She had provided a great comfort to Herzog when he was tortured by thoughts about Madeleine. She appeared to him a scholar who gave useful advice. Herzog visits Sandor Himmelstein and on his return he had to cross a ferry at Woods Hole. Therefore he waits for a ferry at Woods Hole. During the moment he is continuously assailed by innumerable thoughts:

He looked through the green darkness at the net of bright reflections on the bottom. He loved to think about the power of the sun, about light, about the ocean. The purity of the air moved him. There was no stain in the water...Herzog sighed and said to himself, ‘Praise God Praise God’...His heart was greatly stirred by
the open Horizon the white, fine, heavy sand...Green transparency...golden lines...If his soul could cast a reflection so brilliant, and so intensely sweet, he might beg God to make such use of him. (116)

These impressive ideas can be considered undoubtedly to lend great thrust and prestige to Herzog’s stature. They not only carry existential reference but are also part of a nomenclature that he perfects. They are expressions of the sanity in him. Such ideas, do not have an end, they flow continuously from Herzog. He realizes that one’s body, the physic, can be equated to a cross, “In this view the body itself, with its two arms and vertical length, was compared to the cross, on which you knew the agony of consciousness and separate being” (117). He continues to nurture philosophical ideas related to man, life and the soul. He questions himself as to whether he has a soul. He lands at pen station and walks through shops, counters and looks at his face in a mirror. At this moment many reflections cross his mind. He feels himself to be an “avatar” and a man “Keeing up a front” and one on whom the world depended for certain intellectual work, to change history, to influence the development of civilization (131). In the next letter to Monsignor he confesses that he nurtures within him great ideas and concepts but they appear to be insufficiently relevant to the present American condition. He
considers himself a philosopher who wants to give something different to this world and it is difficult for a philosopher to know the ordinary, for such a philosopher the main concern is to know the strength of man’s virtue. His spiritual capacity can be measured by his ordinary life.

The reminiscences of Herzog continue. He reflects on the days that he spent with his parents, their actions, reactions, occupations, failures, troubles, and turmoils. He had many occasions during which he met many women. They offered him pleasure, but it was not ordinary pleasure. His meeting with Romana was not an ordinary experience. He exclaims:

The cheerful voice of Romana calling him to a life of pleasure on the thrilling wires of New York. And not simple pleasure but metaphysical, transcendent pleasure – pleasure which answered the riddle of human existence. That was Romana no mere sensualist, but a theoretician, almost a priestess. (186)

Herzog differs from others in his thoughts and outlooks. He greatly acknowledges the view of Kierkegaard that men would become serious only through the knowledge of hell. He realizes this idea and states, “hedonism and frivolity will diffuse hell through all our days. Romana, however, does not believe in any sin but the sin against the body, for her
the true and only temple of the spirit” (187). He expresses sincerely the
idea that one’s private life can become an “illustrious monarchy” better
than any Kingdom in history on this earth. But men lead the most
common and ordinary life and none are perfect and beautiful because the
beauty of one’s community and individuals lie in that experience or
ecstasy which is known as divine illumination. Herzog observes:

But in Chicago in 1934, he was class orator at the McKinley High
School, his text taken from Emerson. He didn’t lose his voice then,
telling the Italian Mechanics, Bohemian barred makers, Jewish
tailors. The main enterprise of the world, for splendor...is the up
building of man. The private life of one man shall be a more
illustrious monarchy...than any kingdom in history. Let it be
granted that our life, as we lead it is common and mean...Beautiful
and perfect...The community in which we live will hardly bear to
be told that everyman should be open to ecstasy or a divine
illumination. (199)

Herzog acquires philosophical knowledge by reading books on
Tolstoy, Hegel and others. He finds the world influenced by politics. He
observes that one’s individuality is lost when one enters politics.
Therefore Herzog doubts whether man has time to think of inspiration,
transcendentalism, consciousness and mass civilization which are the
most general and natural powers in man that are not given importance. Hence he wishes a total re-consideration of human qualities, perhaps a discovery of the real human qualities in man. Herzog is of the opinion that spiritual honor or respect is reserved for justice, courage, temperance and mercy. Romanticism guarded the “inspired condition”, preserved poetics, philosophical and religious teachings, records of transcendence and the most generous ideas of mankind. Hence Herzog opines:

To live in an inspired condition, to know truth, to be free, to love another, to consummate existence, to abide with death in clarity of consciousness...The spirit holds its breath and hopes to be immortal because it does not live...is no longer a rarefied project...Good and evil are real. The inspired condition is therefore no visionary matter. It is not reserved for gods, kings, poets, priests, and shrines but belongs to mankind and to all of existence. (205)

Herzog’s concern for man and the world become obvious. He realizes the distempers in the very American Milieu. He hopes for the American Nation to develop some sort of a positive role in the contemporary world. He also realizes that the Americans put their trust more on pragmatic gain rather than intelligence, “instinct of the people was to reject mentality and its images, ideas, perhaps mistrusting them as
foreign, It preferred to put its trust in visible goods” (72). This love according to Herzog is low-grade “Universal Potato love”. Herzog’s private life too is ridden with these dissentions. Later, he realizes that the ultimate goal of humanity should be **Self-development, Self-realization, Happiness**. But these qualities cannot be easily achieved. So he hopes that importance should be given to moral realities. Herzog longs for a chaos free world and a world of harmony. He intimates these ideas to the living and to the dead, he observes:

Random association, when the intellect is passive, is a form of bondage or rather every form of bondage is possible then. It may interest you to know that in the twentieth century random association is believed to yield up the deepest secrets of the psyche. He realized he was writing to the dead. To bring the shades of great philosophers upto date. But then why shouldn’t he write to the dead? He lived with them as much as with the living...perhaps more; and besides, his letters to the living were increasingly mental...to the unconscious, 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. How! Wish it! How! Wish it were so! How Moses prayed for this! (225)
The humanism in Herzog alters his attitude towards Gersbach. Herzog’s thoughts expressed through his letters reveal his acute insight into the human condition. Hence when he observes Gersbach caring his child, he changes the wrong intention about Gersbach and accepts him as his brother. He feels that it is brotherhood which makes man human. The humanism in Herzog is highlighted through his fondness for his family and relations. The love for June his daughter illustrates his traditional parental love, “the promise of the world to come, in the eyes of benevolent Herzog, its future good and evil, hurried in and out. My sweet June, Papa Missed you” (qtd in Pradhan 11). The eyes, nose and face of June resembles Herzog. He admires this identity in June and is proud of it. His determination “to be same and to live and to look after the kids” expresses his love for his children and his growing sense of responsibility. After returning to the Berkshires he paints the piano for June. However Herzog is provoked to commit the murder of his “awfully good friend” Valentine Gersbach when he comes to learn that his most trusted friend is a pious fraud and he has been cuckolding him for years. He flies to Chicago with murder in his heart. But he changes his heart when he observes Gersbach taking care of his daughter. So he drops the idea. Herzog’s decision not to murder is a perfect portrayal of Bellow’s theme and this scene is the turning point in the novel. Herzog picks up
June the next morning and has an auto accident and is arrested for carrying his father’s gun. He had come close to violence in the conceived scene of murder and he now comes close to being a criminal but he is saved from a serious charge somehow or other. He comes to realize, “I really believe that brotherhood is what makes a man human.” He withdraws from the city to find peace at his country home. He has dedicated himself to social issues, but he enjoys also the peace of nature. At the end of the novel he seems to enjoy peace of mind.

Herzog’s adventure into the outer world is to seek identity and this attempt is mostly mental and moral. Herzog finds the environment de-humanized by dint of material abundance and spiritual sterility. What makes heroes like Herzog suffer in their consciousness is their intellectual conflict and moral anxiety, their importance to do something to redeem the situation. They discover madness all around in which the individual self is shrunk and shrouded. These heroes endowed with the consciousness of morality find the world in a disorderly state and despair and skepticism. They see humanity defeated. The individual in these survivor novels attempt to seek reality within the framework of moral enlightenment. Hence these novels are entitled after their heroes who are generally intellectuals, anxious about their self. These novels portray the mind of the hero which is the source of suffering. They are embedded
with the idea of the self and deal with questions of human existence in the world and as well as man's place in the universe. These novels can also be considered to be a study of consciousness in history, the consciousness which is preoccupied in the after effects of wars, revolutions and resultant alienation and apocalyptic. This consciousness is conditioned by the inevitable forces of the historical reality, and also contends to know its metaphysical possibilities. This endeavor on the part of the protagonist is a sort of contractual bond between the self and the outside world.

Herzog has to confront a world where there are illusions and decadences. The world in which he lives is marked by the endless proliferation of technologies, complex systems and abstract relationships. The self of the hero is ever alert and because of this alertness he muses on life and the character of the people around him and is unable to tolerate the way of the world, so Herzog admits:

His angry spirit had stolen forward again, and that he was about to write letters. Dear Smithers, he began...these bureaucratic lunches are an horror to me;...I try to look right...we were asked to suggest topics for new lecture courses...The people who come to evening classes are only ostensibly after cultures. Their great need, their hunger, is to be for good sense, clarity, truth...even an atom of it.
People are dying...it is no metaphor...for lack of something real to carry home when day is done. (39)

The novel exhibits Bellow’s moral and philosophical affinity with Emerson and American transcendentalism which is not exactly a new one. Bellow has stated in one of his interviews that Emerson is the liberal philosopher of the Americans. Therefore, he would naturally view Emerson’s works inquiringly. Though critics describe Herzog as a novel significantly having Christian, Jewish, Romantic and modern characteristics, the book can be said to be deeply rooted in the idea of moral consciousness. The novel dramatizes the moral vision of balance, proportion, and “double consciousness”. It can also be seen to have in it the essential quest of the self and moral aspiration.

The novel is also a study in autobiography. Despite the separate identity that the protagonist, Herzog, enjoys in the fictive world of the novel, he also shares temperamental affinities with his author and comes to represent the latter’s voice and sentiment in many ways, a fact that Bellow had acknowledged as Albert Moravia has quoted about the author, who once told him that, every novel is some kind of higher autobiography. Bellow’s moral sympathy with the transcendentalist is also Herzog’s and vice versa. It is because of his moral consciousness and the idea of the self, that Herzog reveals an awareness of the American
transcendentalists and this awareness goes back to his school days. As a class orator at McKinley High School in Chicago, he once quoted passages from Emerson’s ‘American Scholar’ which referred to the main enterprise of the world and the up building of men.

On close scrutiny it can be noted that in addition to quotations, several echoes from Emerson and Whitman resound in the novel. This asserts Herzog’s moral affinity and the awareness of the self. In his work on “civilization” Emerson demands the combination of basic forces, the body and soul, “Hitch your wagon to a star”. Likewise, Herzog scribbles, urging himself to transmute his suffering into art by yoking it with imagination, “Hitch your agony to a star” (22). In his essay on The American Scholar Emerson affirms, exorcising the pessimism and sinister spirit of his times, “It is a mischievous notion that we are come late into nature; that the world was finished a long time ago” (56). Herzog writes a letter to professor Mermelstein. In the letter he intimates Emerson’s outlook. He finds the world to be doomed. It is waiting for it’s ultimate end. The reality of the world is presented through junk material like fashionable magazines.

Herzog’s letter to his academic friend Shapiro explains his outlook on the life of modern man. He observes that in this modern world man often prefers canned and bottled goods, and have no taste for nature and
natural life. He is horrified by the python of pessimism that he sees gradually consuming the Western sensibility. He also strongly believes in the invaluable need of coordinating the opposite principles of self and society without sacrificing one at the expense of the other. Herzog is consistently aware of the inextricable relationship between the physical and spiritual, the body and soul, and therefore he finds the necessity of balancing them in his personal life and as well as in the life of others. He firmly proclaims the fact that human life is simply the raw material of technological transformation, and of fashion salesmanship, industry, policies, finance and automation. He is of the opinion that the soul is inherent in everyone and the presence of it can be felt by an inspired condition. The soul belongs to mankind and to all the beings that exist in this world. It is not reserved for gods, kings, poets, priests, shrines. In his letters, Herzog, intimates his wish to know and understand the divine will of God. His mind has struggled to make coherent sense. He has not been too good. But he has desired to do and know the Unknowable Will of God. Finally at the end of his moral journey, when his suffering is over, he is back to his own “ordinary” self, Herzog rejoices:

Anyway, can I pretend I have much choice? I look at myself and see chest, feet...a head. This strange organisation, I know it will die, and inside...something something happiness...'Thou movest
me’...something produces intensity a holy feeling...this reaction a sign, a proof of eternity? and he has it in his breast? But I have no arguments to make about it. “Thou movest me.” (347). He is absolutely ecstatic about the presence of the intangible and invisible in him. He observes that it is only in the coming together of these two, he can find extreme happiness, maintain unity, espouse both and find peace.

Herzog shuns extreme idealistic ideas and materialist’s ideas. He does not take up extremes, for he is interested in the existence of the whole. These expressions of Herzog are similar to that of great philosophers. They also assert the presence of the self and moral consciousness in him, he states:

How we all love extreme cases...mild or moderate truthfulness or accuracy seems to have no pull at all...we have apocalypses too much, and crisis, ethics and florid extremism with its thrilling language. Excuse me, no...We’ve reached an age in the history of mankind when we can ask about certain persons, What is This Thing? No more of that for me...no, no! (323-25)

The view of Herzog is that human fulfillment lies, “not in extremes but in avoiding extremes” or in acquiring a balanced and a moderate view of life. Herzog believes strongly in the greatness of the human heart
which is embedded with the power of an inner light. Therefore he disregards Hulme’s narrow repressive view of humankind, but he is sympathetic to Hulme’s quest for clarity. He expresses in his letter to Dr. Mossbach:

Dear Dr. Mossbach, I am sorry you are not satisfied with my treatment of T.E. Hulme and his definition of Romanticism. There is something to be said for his view. He wanted things to be clear, dry, spare, pure, cool and hard. With this I repelled by the “dampness” as he called it, and the swarming of Romantic feelings...I sympathize with Hulme’s attack on the introduction by the Romantics of perfection into human things, but do not like his narrow repressiveness. (160 + 161)

Herzog is portrayed as a protagonist who firmly believes in the spiritual freedom of all individuals. He observes that private Life is above everything, more universal than religion. These words of Herzog reveal his central quest to liberate his soul from the sickening modern environment. Throughout the novel Herzog strives for, “Selfhood and Self-development”. And he finds that it is not an easy task. He is also seen as an advocate of self-reliance. He believes in the spiritual unity or brotherhood of humankind. The observation of Herzog is that it is necessary for all people to be independent and self-reliant to fulfill the
soul's potential but at the same time it is indispensable for every one to maintain a sense of fellowship and love, without these there can be no true fulfillment. He is keen to maintain unity and universal alliance. He spurns the degenerate social unity that is formed not out of love and brotherhood but moral depravity. So he ruminates:

The more individuals are destroyed...the worse their yearning for collectivity. Worse because they return to the mass agitated, made fervent by their failure. Not as brethren but as degenerates. Experiencing a raging consumption of potato love. Thus occurs a second distortion of the divine image, already so blurred wavering, struggling. The real question?...The most real question. (183-184)

The ideas of Herzog appear to be the ideas of a philosopher yearning for the redemption of mankind from its degeneration. In analyzing the novel it can be concluded that the presence of moral consciousness and awareness of the self makes Herzog perceive human suffering. Therefore he shows great concern for the welfare of human beings. He wishes that man should be liberated from the present human condition and deteriorating materialism. He observes that there is an infinite variety of life which exists with all the best things and worst things. His task is to attain the higher form of realization. This realization
or awareness existing in him makes him no longer a prey to self-hatred or masochism. He longs for war free, righteous human existence. He advocates the cause of humanism and shows concern for the welfare of others who live around him. This care and concern that Herzog exhibits for others and the cosmos can be said to be the outcome of the noble nature or the inner light that exists in all human beings.