Herzog is a contemporary portrait of the alienated American Jewish intellectual in search of identity. From Herzog's perspective this novel describes modern intellectuals' suffering, their nihilistic, confused and corrupting moral status which is reflected in the commonly existed spiritual crisis in society. Bellow expresses his fear that the human species is losing its foothold on sanity and that the individual person is losing his capacity to comprehend ideas and to feel genuine emotions. Lacking necessary, justifiable ideologies, men are thrown back upon themselves only to discover their own emptiness. Without moral certainty or without clear, rational explanations of the meaning of life -- and without God -- modern man is deeply troubled. Herzog is Bellow's modern man, exploring the possibilities of the individual in contemporary society. Continually, he is assailed by neuroses and forces beyond his control, and he must struggle to maintain his identity and his humanity. It is this crisis of identity which is at the heart of the novel.

Moses E. Herzog, a teacher at a New York school, is recovering from his divorce from his second wife, Madeleine(Mady), who is having an affair with Valentine Gersbach, once Herzog's best friend. Little happens in the present of the book. Herzog goes to Vineyard Haven to try to relax, but finds he cannot stay there, so he returns to New York and spends a night with his mistress Ramona. Overhearing a court-case in which a man and woman are being tried for the murder of a child, Herzog, out of concern for his own daughter, June, is overwhelmed by an urge to go to Chicago to kill
Madeleine and Gersbach. This urge leaves him, however, when, looking through a window he sees Gersbach bathing June, and suddenly sees the comedy of the situation. The next day he takes June to a museum, and crashes his car. Picked up carrying a gun by the police, he has to spend some time in jail. These events have led him to peace and strength, however, and he is able to retire to his country-house in Ludeyville.

This is not, however, the important action of the book. Though *Herzog* has a narrative plot, most of its important action takes place in the mind of Herzog. In his spiritual turmoil, Herzog writes letters, which are never sent, to relatives, friends, philosophers, historians and politicians, dead and alive, finally even to God. All his thoughts and preoccupations about his past, and especially about his relationship with Madeleine, are exposed in these letters, and in flashbacks relating to the letters. So the important action is an internal one -- a frenzied quest into Herzog's total experience, in an attempt to give order and meaning to his life.

As with the other novels, the point of view is a closed one. Bellow switches back and forth from first to third person narrator throughout the book, thus blurring the distinction between himself and Herzog. *Herzog* repeats a pattern set up in Bellow's earlier novels. The protagonist, in his attempts to find a key to an alien world, finds or creates for himself an alter-ego upon whom to project his own guilt and fear, and who leads, directly or indirectly, to the protagonist's salvation. If Gersbach is a less central figure than Allbee or Tamkin or Dahfu, he nevertheless plays a similar role.
"Moses" is a significant name, for in the Bible, Moses is the Old Testament figure who leads the Jews to the promised land. Before Moses led others, however, he was lost to himself. The Pharaoh of Egypt had decreed that all Hebrew boy babies were to be killed, so Moses' mother placed Moses in a basket and set him adrift in the river, hoping that someone would find him. In the first chapter of Herzog, Moses Herzog resembles the biblical Moses, drifting across the United States as Moses drifted in the river.

Herzog begins and ends with a partially reborn hero, Moses Herzog, at peace with the world, living amid nature -- nature growing up raggedly about him, the stars overhead like spiritual fires, his food shared with rats. The rest of the novel tells the process of arriving at this state, of his initial need "to explain, to have it out, to justify, to put in perspective, to clarify, to make amends"(2) -- generally, to preserve his crumbling ego system. The novel tells of his divorce and confusion, of his thinking about Madeleine, his ex-wife, and Gersbach, the ex-friend who was secretly cuckolding him. He thinks about the various women in his life -- Daisy, his first wife, Romana, his present girlfriend, Wanda and Sano, encountered along the way; and he thinks especially about ideas, examining the wreck of American culture as he examines the wreck of himself, to see if both can be saved. The novel tells of his seemingly haphazard travels to find sanity -- from New York to Martha's Vineyard back to New York, then to Chicago, finally to a country
house in Massachusetts; of his real quest, into his own past, especially his childhood. The meaning of this past is revealed by a series of experiences - a visit to the courthouse where he confronts a degeneracy he fears in himself; a trip to Chicago during which he considers killing Madeleine and Gersbach, is unable to, and in the process is purged. At the end, he feels ready, like, Henderson, to return to community.

Herzog attempts to define the patterns in his life by removing himself from his physical life, whether it is in a jail cell in Chicago or holing up in the Berkshires. But he quickly understands the paradox that he will never understand his life if he is out of it. He attempts to leave behind women, his family, his children, and even himself, but with each step, he realizes that it is not in the separation of himself from things but in their presence that he can find understanding.

He somehow manages to arrive at the highest truth, that of comprehension. And yet it is in this arrival that he realizes he is unable to reach his goal of understanding. In his cell, he writes: “Neuroses might be graded by the inability to tolerate ambiguous situations. . . . Allow me modestly to claim that I am much better now at ambiguities” (267). While at his home in the country, he writes to God: “How my mind has struggled to make coherent sense. I have not been too good at it, and you, without symbols. Everything of intensest significance. Especially if divested in me” (286). The very fact of his existence, with all of his traits, quirks, and habits,
makes it impossible for him to comprehend his life, much less the idea of life in general. Life distracts Herzog from his life.

If we observe Herzog and his world, "... there is no pretense in this novel that we are being shown a world which exists self-sufficient, apart from the neurotic inflammations of the central figure." Reflecting on his own character, Herzog thinks, "He might once have had the makings of a clever character, but he had chosen to be dreamy instead, and the sharpies cleared him out"(3). And this is how he still sees the world. He is "dreamy," the representative of burning love in the form of "heart" -- his very name suggests the connection. So we see one of the images which comes most often to Herzog's mind is of the heart. An oriole's nest is "in the shape of a grey heart"(72); in New Jersey "red lights like small hearts beat or tingled" (178); he sees himself as a "throb-hearted character" (330); and the threatening message he sends to Gersbach reads, "Dirt Enters At The Heart"(216). Outside him are the "sharpies," the realists or "Reality Instructors," such as his lawyer-friend Sandor Himmelstein; they want to show him that reality is brutal, that "Facts are nasty"(86). Their substitute for "heart" is "potato love," a meaningless, sentimental pretence at emotion.

From the beginning of the novel, Bellow emphasizes the dichotomy between body and spirit, and between reason and emotion. Because of Herzog's sensitivity to his physical surroundings, he cannot concentrate absolutely on his problems. Even as he jots down new thoughts, one part of his mind is sensitively aware of an abandoned marriage bed, a rat gnawing
bread in the kitchen, insects, and an overgrown garden, all symbolic of his fragmented emotional state. There is comic irony in the descriptions of Herzog lounging sloppily in his seedy physical surroundings, struggling to make sense of his confused memories, yet being diverted by worrying about his hair falling out. He is tugged one way by serious contemplation, another way by vanity. However, out of all this confusion, Herzog does see a certain unity: internally and externally, wherever he looks, he sees decay.

Herzog's quest is a serious one, and he himself certainly takes it seriously. But there is always a comic check upon this seriousness. His letters are full of important thoughts and ideas, but we nevertheless see that Herzog is pompous and rather foolish. Richard Poirier makes a serious accusation against Bellow when he complains about

Bellow's failure to acknowledge the comic preposterousness of the kind of mental activity going on ... a pretension that might itself characterize the hero were he not ... montaged with the author.... What is missing is any indication that Bellow is aware of the essential irrelevance, the essential pretension and shabbiness of the self-aggrandizing mind at work in, and for, the hero.²

In other words, Bellow has failed to create a truly comic character, because he has failed to achieve sufficient distance from Herzog. Howe, on the other hand, thinks that "Bellow manages skilfully to avoid the kind of identification which might lead one to conclude that he 'favors' his central character or fails to see through his weakness and falsities."³ This view makes it clear
that Poirier seems to have grossly misread the novel. There are many indications that Bellow does see through the pretensions of his hero: Herzog’s self-mockery; his anger at the infidelity of his wife and friend while excusing his own affairs; and, most important, the introduction of Valentine Gersbach as a comic reflection of Herzog.

On this level, Bellow uses Gersbach as an ironic check on Herzog’s perceptions about himself. In a letter to his first wife, Daisy, Herzog tells her that he has been under the doctor’s care, and Bellow says, "He noted with distaste his own trick of appealing for sympathy. A personality had its own ways. A mind might observe without approval. Herzog did not care for his own personality, and at the moment there was apparently nothing he could do about its impulses"(12). Herzog criticizes himself, but dismisses the criticism. Later, however, he thinks about Gersbach, "He knows how to make the most of it, emotionally, with his lurid sob stuff"(190). Herzog, however, overlooks the same fault in himself, but Bellow does not. He points it out by duplicating the fault in Gersbach, and having Herzog criticize that. Similarly, when he learns from his friend Asphalter about Madeleine’s infidelity with Gersbach, Herzog recognizes, and indirectly mocks, his own emotionalism. Although "he could burst into tears easily enough," he does not, because "Gersbach was a frequent weeper of distinguished emotional power"(45). By having Herzog isolate one of his own weaknesses in this way, and showing the same weakness in Gersbach with comic
exaggeration, Bellow shows that he recognizes the weakness to be comic in Herzog too.

Bellow uses Gersbach to clarify his attitude towards Herzog’s suffering too. Herzog claims to have suffered greatly, but, as Poirier points out, "Nothing but nothing in Herzog's career ... suggests that his self-hood or self-development has been 'this great bone-breaking burden.'" However, Poirier seems to have overlooked the many suggestions that Herzog, like all of Bellow’s heroes to some extent, is a masochist, and that in his self-pity he tends to exaggerate. His suffering is given more perspective, by the idea of the suffering of his double, Gersbach: "Valentine spoke as a man who had risen from terrible defeat, the survivor of sufferings few could comprehend"(61). Everything about Gersbach is described in hyperbole; like everything else, his suffering is exaggerated to a degree where it becomes little more than a histrionic gesture, making absurd the apparent extent of Herzog’s suffering, too.

So with all this -- his self-pity and suffering, his vanity, his ideas -- the presence of Gersbach casts ironic light on Herzog, so that when Herzog says, "At moments I dislike having a face, a nose, lips, because he has them"(45), he is essentially passing judgement upon himself. However, as a double, Gersoach serves other purposes than simply acting as a parody-version of Herzog. He has also a symbolic role close to that of the doubles of the earlier novels. As with the doubles of Asa Leventhal, Tommy Wilhelm, and Eugene Henderson, Bellow suggests a special, hypnotic sort
of tie. Comic though he may be, Gersbach suggests special powers and depth to Herzog: "He had the eyes of a prophet, a Shofat, yes a judge in Israel, a king. A mysterious person, Valentine Gersbach"(59). He also fills a special need for Herzog. He appears as adviser, even as teacher to Herzog: "When he needed feeling reaction, Herzog had to get it from Valentine Gersbach" (58).

On another level, Gersbach reveals Herzog's own projected guilt. Herzog has failed as father and husband, while Gersbach has assumed Herzog's position as both. Herein lies Herzog's chief resentment: "... if he took away my wife, did he have to suffer my agony for me, too? Because he could do even that, better? ... does he have to be also the greatest 'of fathers and family men'?"(216). There is bitter irony in Herzog's words here, not directed at Gersbach's performance, but at his own failure. Because he has retired into a world of ideas, he has evaded reality: "Moses refused to know evil. But he could not refuse to experience it. And therefore others were appointed to do it to him, and then to be accused (by him) of wickedness"(245). But he has to acknowledge that he shares in the guilt.

The novel brings to surface alienation and displacement of the main character, Moses Herzog, who in a bid to analyze his past and determine his future, becomes obsessed with writing letters to 'everyone under the sun'; that at the end of the novel results in restoration of his faith in himself and in humanity. Herzog's letter-writing is eccentric, but it is also his
obvious but unknowing attempt to "get to" the outside world, to establish himself there.

Herzog's letter-writing may be interpreted in the sense that he is not interested in the letters alone, not even as an eccentric escape from his problems. What he is trying to do through his letters is to reach out to the world. By way of his letters, Herzog seeks the outer experience that he desperately needs in order to encounter himself. He cannot allow his emotions to remain locked inside himself, and through his intellectual approach to his problem, he reaches for the external world by attempting communication in the form of letters.

Since Herzog is a very sensitive and perceptive person, it is appropriate that Bellow delays Herzog's outward-directed quest by presenting him in the process of inwardly considering the situation that necessitates a complete change in his life and a search for his individuality in order to find a new place in the world. Herzog's intolerable situation exists because, even with his intelligence and awareness, he is extremely vulnerable to the hypocrisies and the inhumanities of human involvements. Herzog's life has had reality and meaning until he learns that he is the victim of multiple betrayals. His wife has betrayed him, as has his best friend and his psychiatrist, and these betrayals reveal an irrefutable truth to Herzog, a truth informing him that he must discard many of his old values and ideas and by some means formulate new ones.
Sigmund Freud observes in *Creative Writer’s Day Dreaming*, that writing is a kind of therapy for those with neurotic tendencies. This holds the key to the technique of epistolary form used in this novel. Set in post war America, neurosis has been used as a mode of resolving the crisis in which the protagonist finds himself entrapped. Neurosis involves obsessive behaviour, triggered by stress but not a radical loss of touch with reality. Here the protagonist like most of Saul Bellow's heroes, is no commoner and yet the failures are as excruciating for him as could be for any modern or post- world war II man who so willingly casts off disappointing ideologies with an ability to live with many kinds of madness, an immense desire for certain durable human goods: truth, freedom or wisdom.

Herzog, who in the beginning of the novel says it's okay if he is "out of mind," points to his high stressed condition and Bellow subjects him to the old literary practice of epistolary mode. He is made to write letters that in itself seems a neurotic act but the fact is as the reader reads on we realize this is used as potent methodology. These letters written in cursive type set are addressed to Rousseau, Freud, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Vinoba Bhave, Tolstoy, Marx, Nietzsche, Emerson, Spinoza, Friends, family members and scores of other people, both dead and alive. This act in itself brings out the importance of communicating with oneself in an honest manner as Herzog conducts his search for meaning entering into dialogue with people who have made an impact on his life or others, who have done much to shape the modern intellectual and aesthetic world. Most of these
people he has never met and the letters are unsent, promoting the weird nature of the very act of writing letters. But what is important here is the one thing that is in common in these letters: Herzog expressing disappointment either his own failings or of others or their words or apologizing for the way he has disappointed others. Herzog uninhibitedly questions the philosophical ideas of the dead philosophers stretching and testing his own comprehension and intellectual capabilities helping him overcome his loneliness, the curse of modern man. In almost all the chapters these letters appear arguing, contradicting and even accusing thinkers and reality instructors; helping Herzog release excess emotions and unburden haunting thoughts. He even talks about the sexual abuse he was subject to years back as a child on a street in Chicago, something that he otherwise could not have been able to reveal.

Bellow achieves the difficult task of revealing the mind of his complex character also by using the flash back technique which helps transport with convenience, to the earlier point before the narrative started. Through this technique other critical details of Herzog's life come to light, including the life of Herzog's father who was a failure at every job he tried -- all this is hitherto never spoken about. The release of such feelings of frustration becomes important for the Lazarus-act which is desirable outcome of all such confessions.

As the story progresses we find change taking place, where Herzog is described as a "person of irregular tendencies; he practiced the art of
circling among random facts to swoop down on the essentials"(10). His letter writing was involuntary and more chaotic in the beginning and he wrote these first letters to his dead mother, his friend, and his first wife Daisy -- that is his past. This allows him to analyze himself, his own behaviour as he writes to Ramona, "... why is it that I, a lecturer, can't bear to be lectured? I think your wisdom gets me because you have the complete wisdom. Perhaps to excess, I do not like to refuse correction. I have a lot to be corrected about"(11). This is an honest admission about himself. He is truthful because he wants to get to the truth of the wasteland of his being.

Herzog’s neurosis interferes in his academics as now in the classroom while delivering lectures there are long awkward pauses while his students wait and stare at him. This is no less painful for him. But even in this stressed condition he does not fail to take cognizance of and make a few observations about the social situation. Writing a letter to the commissioner Wilson about the parks not being properly policed, which is necessitated by the gangs of hoodlums there in the parks. Then he immediately writes a letter to himself: "Since when have you taken such an interest in social questions, in the external world? Until lately, you led a life of innocent sloth. But suddenly a Faustian spirit of discontent and universal reform descends on you"(47). He assesses his behaviour and unequivocally charges himself of selfishness and self confinement. As this technique of letter writing yields positive results, in one of the letters he clearly sees the reasons for his
irrational behaviour of past: "In anger people become dictatorial. Hard to take"(57). Herzog agrees, "A letter gives one a chance to consider, think matters over, and reach a more balanced view"(70).

In The Victim, Asa Leventhal's rebirth comes with the symbolic death of his double, Allbee. Eugene Henderson's rebirth is conditional upon the sacrificial death of Dahfu. In Herzog, a key scene, involving the partial rebirth of Herzog, brings Gersbach close to a sacrificial death. Herzog witnesses a court case concerning a child who has been murdered by its feeble-minded mother, while her lover looked on. It is here that he learns of an evil far greater than any that he has ever known; aptly, it causes a pain in his chest, "as if the valves of his heart were not closing"(239). He immediately decides to go to Chicago to confront Madeleine and Gersbach. On the way, he picks up a gun -- one with which his own father had once threatened to kill him. When he gets to the house, he sees June through the bathroom window, and feels overwhelming love because "Her face was the Herzog face"(265). When he sees the tenderness with which Gersbach bathes her, however, he is unable to act: "Firing this pistol was nothing but a thought"(257). He sees clearly the absurdity of his whole position: "As soon as Herzog saw the actual person giving an actual bath, the reality of it, the tenderness of such a buffoon to a little child, his intended violence turned into theater, into something ludicrous"(258). Seeing the absurdity of Gersbach, he sees also his own, and gains an insight which proves to be healing: "Only self-hatred could lead him to ruin himself because his heart
was 'broken'. How could it be broken by such a pair?"(258). At this moment, the burden he has carried, from the blow, of the infidelity of Madeleine and Gersbach, is lifted from him, and his new freedom leads him towards the silence at the end of the novel.

Thus the climatic section of the novel Moses Herzog analysis himself dispassionately. He realizes that he over reacted to the report of June’s babysitter that Valentine was behaving cruelly to June. Moses even confronts the horror of his murderous thoughts, even briefly telling himself he deserves what is happening to him. He chides his emotions and admits that he is a "sentimental sddo. b."(206). By the end of this section of the novel, Moses has begun to accept the fundamental ambiguities of the world, and to see it as a grand mixture of good and the evil, life and death, terrible and sublime. He mentions in his letter to Dr Edvig, the Chicago Psychiatrist who treated both Herzog and his second wife Madeleine, that he is "better now at ambiguities"(214). The struggles that have plagued Moses throughout the novel become less painful because of his new found capability to accept juxtaposition; paradox, and uncertainty. He writes to God, perhaps finding a kind of faith, that God is the "King of Death and Life" (214), ruler of the two opposite domains.

As the novel progresses the letters becomes fewer and fewer. This seems to mirror the healing of the protagonist's mind and his attention turns from his own inner struggle to the world about and around him. Herzog has come to understand himself and now is ready to interact with the world, not
just with himself. There is an idyllic quality in Bellow's descriptions of Herzog's home in Ludeyville. The peaceful environment reflects the restored sanity of Herzog's mind and spirit. In his absence, the property has become a "sanctuary" for many birds as it had once been a sanctuary for Herzog's foolish dreams. His mind continues to operate by the principle of "mental extension," for he views his house as a symbol of his efforts as a Jew to become a member of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant community. In those days, he was blind to the corruption and absurdity of his own character.

Appropriately, Moses has not returned to take up his old roles as intellectual, scholar, and victim. He is only pausing to complete the process of therapy which he began after the breakup with Madeleine. Contrary to earlier descriptions of his obsession to be a handyman, he is now self-controlled, orderly, and purposeful. His physical gestures are slow and methodical, symbolizing the inner stability which he has finally achieved. Standing on the property which reminds him of his failures, Herzog quotes from Shelley's "Ozymandias" because he is now intensely aware of its theme that all human greatness must perish. In other words, the protagonist's blind faith in the intellect and in the ideologies of history has perished because reason cannot adequately cope with emotional and personal problems. Thus the reference to Shelley's poem "Ozymandias" marks the comprehension of Moses's that everyone, even the mighty, eventually fall and die and there is a kind of peace in this type of realization.
and acceptance that comes after long suffering. The option offered by his current situation becomes clear and the clarification that is taking place on the content level is reflected stylistically in the movement from a predominantly epistolary mode towards a more linearly organized narrative. Herzog is at his old house at Ludevilla as a new changed man. The house like Moses's life has an ambiguous purpose. It is burdensome, isolated, and filled with memories in the form of objects that visitors and inhabitants have left behind. The house is also surrounded by the beauty of nature. Herzog himself is burdensome, isolated and plagued by memories but the beauty of world surrounds him. He begins making plans to fix up the house, which, like his life needs repair but is still structurally sound. In a symbolic gesture he opens the windows of the house and lets the sun in. His happiness will come with his ability to admit that "the bitter cup, would come round again, by and by" (229). Now he can accept that moments of joy and beauty will inevitably alternate.

At the end of the novel the reader finds Moses Herzog preparing for dinner with Ramona, a dinner that differs in character from the one he shared with her in the beginning of the novel because now he is able to relate to women in a new way. He stops thinking of marriage as an easy solution to his problems and of sex as a cure for what ails him. Herzog lying down, stretched out on his "Recamier couch" is symbolic of the new-found peace of conquering the disorder and chaos outside. His regaining mental health prepares him to write actual letters that he will send out into the
world, instead of the unsent and unfinished letters of the past. The signs of transformation come to surface in his effort to define himself in positive terms: "Myself is thus and so, and will continue thus and so. And why fight it? My balance comes from instability" (233).

Saul Bellow believes that modern man can find communion and beauty in the midst of bleakness and isolation of the modern world. Although Herzog feels alienated and although the bulk of the novel is about his solitary thoughts in the end, he rejects alienation and solitude. He comes to embrace society and finds the importance of sharing his life with others. Bellow realized that the simple Utopian fantasies will not bail the modern man out of the chaotic puzzle of the mechanized world. But individuals had to find the delicate balance between self and the world around through whatever fragmentary and disconcerted experience it could be done. Herzog believes both modern life and modernist literature have been working to undercut the glorification of the self. Saul Bellow suggests that man must meet his fate by rediscovering the self which involves the process of endless mental strife. His adventures in the novel are essentially related to mind -- the mind that is constrained to confront the existing social setup -- and the most important luxury that he indulges in, namely letter writing, is in fact, the most effective method he employs to understand the world around and cure himself of his ailment, an ailment modern man suffers from due to the curse of loneliness, disordered fractured life, and a faithful reflection of the wasteland of existence.
Most major concepts are ambiguously defined in *Herzog*: morality, philosophy, psychology, self, religion, faith, death, and marriage, among others. These concepts, like Moses Herzog himself, are all internally torn between contradictory principles and forces. Nothing seems certain; everything has the potential for paradox. Herzog discovers the necessity of society, but he only discovers this through solitary meditation. Only after being totally alone can he turn toward the world. Caressed by nature, Herzog continues to improve gradually, detaching himself from his past eccentric life and discovering more and more peace. His girl friend, Ramona, suddenly arrives in the Berkshires to be united with him, but Herzog is no longer "mad" to be reunited with her and rejects the idea of mere physical reunion. He refuses to be lured by Ramona's physical charms, although not denying his love for her. Therefore, maintaining his composure, Herzog invites her to dinner, and the novel ends with Herzog collecting a few flowers from the garden of Ramona and then falling into a moment of silence:

Coming back from the woods, he picked some flowers for the table. He wondered if there was a corkscrew in the drawer. Had Madeleine taken it to Chicago? Well, maybe Ramona had a corkscrew in her Mercedes. An unreasonable thought. A nail could be used, if it came to that. Or you could break the neck of the bottle as they did in old movies. Meanwhile, he filled his hat from the rambler vine, the one that clutched the rainpipe. The
spines were still too green to hurt much. By the cistern were the yellow day lilies. He took some of these, too, but they wilted instantly. And, back in the darker garden, he looked for peonies; perhaps some had survived. But then it struck him that he might be making a mistake, and he stopped, listening to Mrs. Tuttle's sweeping, the rhythm of the bristles. Picking flowers? He was being thoughtful, being lovable. How would it be interpreted? (He smiled slightly.) Still he need only know his mind, and the flowers couldn't be used; no, they couldn't be turned against him. So he did not throw them away. He turned his dark face toward the house again. He went around and entered from the front, wondering what further evidence of his sanity, besides refusing to go to the hospital, he could show. Perhaps he'd stop writing letters. Yes, that was coming, in fact. The knowledge that he was done with these letters. Whatever had come over him during these last months, the spell, really seemed to be passing, really going. He set down his hat, with the roses and day lilies, on the half-painted piano, and went into his study, carrying the wine bottles in one hand like a pair of Indian clubs. Walking over notes and papers, he lay down on his Recamier couch. As he stretched out, he took a long breath, and then he lay, looking at the mesh of the screen, pulled loose by vines, and listening to the steady scratching of Mrs. Tuttle's broom. He wanted to tell her to sprinkle
the floor. She was raising too much dust. In a few minutes he would call down to her, "Damp it down, Mrs. Tuttle. There's water in the sink." But not just yet. At this time he had no messages for anyone. Nothing. Not a single word. (340-341)

Herzog has come to the end of his pilgrimage; his past "spell" has disappeared and he has regained his "sanity." His attainment of silence is tantamount to his attainment of equilibrium and peace. He is no longer a prisoner of excesses of modern American culture or a restless person vacillating between the one-sided and the extreme outlooks of the Reality instructors and the Romantic enthusiasts. In Herzog's movement from confusion toward self-knowledge, Bellow depicts human life as an experience of moral growth. This movement typifies the protagonists who appear in Bellow's fiction. They are figures who reveal their creator's belief in a self-perfecting, self-knowing character.
REFERENCES


3. Irving Howe, "Odysseus, Flat on his Back" 22.