Chapter IV

Reading Against the Text

"As readers, teachers, and scholars, women are taught to think as men, to identify with a male point of view, and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values, one of whose central principals is misogyny."

Judith Fetterley

Reading Saul Bellow’s Herzog the readers strongly feel the presence of a predominant male point of view. The male gaze in the novel posit such a source of power and domination that the readers have no choice except identifying with a male point of view and accept male assumptions as normal. In this chapter, drawing on the theoretical basis, developed in the first chapter, I will try to show how prevailing images of women in this novel are all coming directly out of a male consciousness to be internalized by women as well as men readers. I will also read the text to analyze the ideological, psychological and cultural background of male consciousness, as narrative centre in Herzog, to locate the sources of prevailing misogyny in these texts.

Literature reflects and creates images of femininity and masculinity. On the other hand, readers project their own assumptions about gender onto the text, but a reader can learn to know that reading a text from a feminist perspective changes her or his understanding of its meaning. In other words, the way we read a text is as important as what we read. Gradually a reader learns to analyze the ways in which social constructions of gender shape the experiences of both men and
women. Such a reader also knows how to trace the influence of literature on the notion of gender, on one hand, and how to resist these influences on the other.

The basic assumption in feminist reading is that a literary text manipulates its readers through overt and covert strategies. In other words, when reading, we are being manipulated by what we receive from a text. Our notion of femininity and masculinity are socially and culturally constructed by what we read in books and what we see on TV, films, advertisements, and what we hear as we grow up. Indeed, literature is one of the sources of female construct. One good example for this is canon of Romantic literature, which revolves around the notion of woman as an object of love. The image of woman as such has survived for ages up to our own time.

Literature, then, has its own way of manipulation. Given this manipulative aspect of literature, Judith Fetterley’s The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction and Jonathan Culler’s chapter, “Reading as a Women” both place resistance and critical thinking at the centre of their argument. They argue that readers, especially female readers, learn to read literature from a male point of view, and accept male values as universal. As a result, women readers learn to dis-identify with themselves through being exposed to male experiences. Put simply, reading literature in this way alienates women from their own experiences.

Saul Bellow’s fiction is very vulnerable to the type of reading suggested By Judith Fetterly. Replete with broken marriages, unhappy love affairs, his novels reflects uniquely masculinist anxiety of modern heterosexual relations through male protagonists who obsessively seek comfort in women but that rarely they find. Indeed, in Saul Bellow’s narratives, male protagonists usually tell the story of their ill fated experiences with women. In their stories, they perceive women to have failed their masculine romantic expectations and sympathetically exonerate men like themselves. Thus, the whole space of his text is usually filled up with men telling their sad stories and communicating their masculine experiences. In
fact, narrative canter of his novels are exclusively assigned to male protagonists, and female characters are not allowed to have their own voice to tell their side of the story.

However, the question of who tells the story plays a vital role in determining what kind of meaning is communicated to the reader. Indeed, in a literary text, readers are not usually addressed in a direct way with overt messages. On the contrary, they are manipulated in a very delicate way to take in subtle massages and hidden assumptions. Once the readers realize the importance of the storyteller in fiction, they will understand the degree to which the story is shaped by the narrator’s gender, race, psychology and culture. Apart from the question of storyteller, questions like, who is active, who is outside, who is inside, who is demanding, who is mobile, who desires, and finally who benefits can be very illuminating in a resisting reading. In fact, in a resisting reading, a reader does not blindly follow the story of the book told by one of its male characters; rather she brings her own real story from outside-the sexiest society- into the realm of fiction. In other word, a resisting reader must measure what she hears from a fictional male storyteller against her own real experiences. Only in this way, can a reader be confident that he or she will not be taken in by the text.

In reading Herzog, if we get absorbed into the logic of the male protagonist who controls the flow of insight about every character in the novel, his biased perception will consequently manipulate us on heterosexual issues. The gender anxieties and observations expressed by Herzog in this text, comparable to that of late Victorian anxious and sometimes violent literary reaction to women writers and feminist activists, leave no space to women readers to keep their female selfhood. Therefore, women readers, cunningly manipulated into the story of unfortunate Herzog, have no option but to identify with him and believe that his life has been ruined by a cruel woman, or by a series of women, and never himself. In this way, Herzog is sympathized and exonerated by women readers while Madeline is blamed and hated for all the troubles. In fact, passive female readers
are led by the text to see Herzog as a good, decent, modest, loving, intellectual that a woman brutally castrates.

Another way of reading Herzog is to read the text while being suspicious of its narrative center that happens to be the male protagonist of the novel as well. Indeed, one should be wary of dominant masculine voice prevailing all over the text. One should ask why Madeline has no voice of her own throughout the novel. Isn't it a sign of women's powerlessness in a male literature? One should ask why there is only one reality which is encouraged, legitimized and conveyed and that is the reality of good Herzog being castrated by cruel Madeline. To resist this limited and hegemonic vision, which confuses the readers' consciousness; one should encourage another vision, another reality that is suppressed under the dominant vision. When the new vision is set up, the whole text drops its false solidity, so that suppressed meanings can come up and play their roles in the processes of reading. In the following pages, the attempt is to have a resisting reading of Bellow’s Herzog.

A Resisting Reading of Herzog

To start with Herzog, let’s see who the narrative centre of the novel is. Herzog opens with the male protagonist thinking about his mental health “If I am out of mind, it’s all right with me thought Moses Herzog ” (Herzog 7). Immediately after this sentence, which indicates his self doubt, readers read a whole paragraph about his state of mind:

Some people thought he was cracked and for a time he himself had doubted that he was all there. But now, though he still behaved oddly, he felt confident, cheerful, clairvoyant and strong. He had fallen under a spell, and was writing letters to everyone under the sun. He was so stirred by these letters that from the end of June he
moved from place to place with a valise from New York to Martha’s Vineyard, but returned from the vineyard immediately; two days later he flew to Chicago, and from Chicago he went to a village in western Massachusetts. Hidden in the country, he wrote endlessly, fanatically, to the newspapers, to people in public life, to friends and relatives and at last to the dead, his own obscure dead, and finally the famous dead. (Herzog 7)

Here, the paragraph enhances readers’ curiosity about Herzog’s state of mind. What has happened to him? The male pronoun he, has been repeated as many as eleven times in the paragraph to achieve concentration on his plight. Indeed from the very beginning, the male protagonist becomes the focal point of the novel around which other characters especially female ones have to revolve. But what is Herzog’s problem? Why do we see him fallen under a spell…so much stirred…behaved so oddly and always on move from one place to the other? To know the answer, readers should go on reading the whole novel, because the rest of the novel tells the process of arriving at this state. To know his problem as a man, women readers have to listen to him “to have it out, to justify, to put it in perspective, to clarify, to make amends” (Herzog 8). As a result, as “prisoners of Herzog’s perception” (Clayton 188), women readers have no other choice except listening to him justify his crumbling state of mind.

Herzog tells of his divorce and confusion, talks about his intense feelings and impulsive thinking, ratiocinates about Mady, his ex-wife, and Gersbach his ex-friend who secretly has sex with Madeline. He also thinks about the various women in his life Daisy, the first wife, Romana his present girl friend, Sono another woman encountered along the way; and he thinks especially about ideas, philosophy, and culture, examining the ruin of western culture as he thinks of his own plight, to see if both of them can be saved. To get recovery and find sanity, he sets off a real quest into his own past, especially his childhood, through which the meaning of his past is revealed by revisiting a series of experiences.
Moses Herzog calls himself “a prisoner of perception” (Herzog 72), but as Clayton puts it, “actually perception is his prisoner. He sees only what he needs to see, and we see only what Herzog sees (187). In fact, entering the world of the novel is only possible through Herzog with his distorted perception. Whether or not Bellow has maintained ironic distance from Herzog is not important here. It is evident that Herzog is not Bellow, but it does not change the fact that his text is powerfully sexist and exercises a very strong influence over its readers in this regard. On the other hand, nobody can deny that Bellow has created a character on whose development his fiction depends. Indeed, much of the narrative power of the text derives from a depressive and masochist Herzog, “creating ideal construction of reality, humanizing the world after his own image in order to impose himself on reality” (Bradbury 166).

Reading Herzog, readers, therefore, come to notice that the whole novel turns out to be dependent on Herzog’s brilliantly rendered account of his stuff of life, on one hand, and majesty of intelligence, on the other. In fact, Bellow’s achievement as a novelist mostly relies on his ability to create a man whose intellect and encyclopaedic knowledge and his sense of responsibility to correct the fallacies and misconceptions in the contemporary thought becomes ironic when it comes to his failure in managing his heterosexual relations. In other words, Herzog comes as a climax of Bellow’s persistent and continuous exploration of modern heterosexual relations through male consciousness. Herzog's rendering of his failure in heterosexual relation leads to a misogynous handling of the women characters in the novel, but this misogyny can be accounted for to a large extent by a resisting reading of the novel. Indeed a resisting reading can break the tough shell of the text’s common sense to expose how gender ideology shapes the logic of the novel, and how beyond the sensible argument of its male protagonist, there is sexist attitude toward women.

Herzog's problem with women is the most difficult part of his external life. The gallery of women coming and going into his life brings no comfort to him.
Among women, he is mostly obsessed with Madeline, his second wife. He thinks he has done everything possible to please her. He has “quit his academic position which was perfectly respectable and bought a big old house in Ludeyville, Massachusetts (Herzog 11), but in return, Madeline castrates him. “She has her heel in his groin, she wishes to do him in, she votes for his non-existence, she wants to bleed him, to take his all money or symbolically, to castrate him” (Clayton 192). Herzog also tells us that not only Madeline but also his friend, Gersbach, his lawyer, psychiatrist, Mady’s mother, Mady’s aunt have betrayed him. He tells us how “he was swindled, conned, manipulated, his savings taken, driven into debt, his trust betrayed by wife, friend physician (Herzog 164).

As Clayton puts it, Moses Herzog has a tendency to play a victim role (193). Over and over, he tells his story to whoever will listen in the hope that somebody would sympathize with him, and it is his begging for sympathy that makes Geismar see him as “a wailing infant…complaining that his life been ruined by a woman or by a series of women, or by his false friends, or in short by other people, never himself. At the same time, he is clever enough to recognize the disgust resulting from self-pity:

In his terrible passion, which he tried, impossibly, telling his story. Then, in the midst of it, the realization would come over him that he had no right to tell, to inflict it, that his craving for confirmation, for help, for justification was useless. Worse, it was unclean. (For some reason the French word suited him better, and he said ‘Immonde! And again more loudly, C’est immonde. (Herzog 164)

When he recognizes that he would like to be given rest in a hospital, he reacts angrily, and notes with distaste his “own trick of appealing for sympathy” (Herzog 119). Also in response to Sandor’s offer to help, he says, “I ‘m going to shake this off. I am not going to be a victim. I hate the victim bit” (Herzog 88). Nevertheless, he knows that he characteristically falls upon “the thorns of life.
I bleed. And Then? I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed, and what next? I get laid, I take a short holiday, but very soon after I fall upon those same thorns with gratifications in pain or suffering in - joy who know what the next is” (Herzog 214). Indeed, it seems he is not ignorant of his masochism. “what I seem to do, thought Herzog, is to inflame myself with my drama, with ridicule, failure, denunciation, distortion, to inflame myself voluptuously, until I reach a sexual climax (Herzog 216). What can we call these description except masochism? He also knows that “he had asked to be beaten too, and had lent his attackers strength” (Herzog 109) He even knows that his sufferings help him to feel how sacrificial a man he is. “Look how I suffer; look how I castigate myself (Herzog 211). Her lady friend warns that, “You want to win by sacrificing yourself (Herzog 20).

Then, it is not accidental that he happens to be fascinated by Madeline. He falls in love with Mady, because domineering and masculine women always attract his attention. Female arrogance excites him. He is attracted to Mady’s eyes since “they expressed a sort of female arrogance which had an immediate sexual power over him” (Herzog 40). Another textual evidence of his sexual as well as moral masochism is his metaphor of “writhing under this sharp elegant heel” (Herzog 80). Again, we have another image related to his masochism. He remembers in the red-light district “some of the whores, in black lace underthings, wore German military boots and rapped at you with riding crops on the windowpanes (Herzog 195). Why does Herzog remember this image?

With this highly masochistic personality, and with “a flavour of subjugation in his love for Madeline” (Herzog 16), Herzog cannot be expected to behave differently. Indeed, he gets Madeline to do to him what he needs. He knows that “she had beaten him so badly, her pried was fully satisfied” (Herzog 18), but this is exactly what he wants. He needs self-pity as “he had done his best to be sick” (Herzog 8). He remembers how he had let Madeline physically beat him. “Herzog turned round and took these blows on his back. It was necessary. She was sick” (Herzog 57).
The other side of masochism, however, is sadism. “The dangerous underside of the masochism is also to be found in Moses Herzog in the form of repressed sadism (Clayton 195). This hidden sadism can be traced in his being given in secret to sorts of mental violence:

What might have happened if instead of listening so intensely and thoughtfully he had hit Madeline in the face. What if he had knocked her down, clutched her hair, dragged her screaming and fighting around the room, flogged her until her buttocks bled. What if he had! He should have torn her clothes, ripped off her necklace, brought his fists on her head (Herzog 16)

From Stephen Rajack’s real violence against women in Norman Mailer’s An American Dream, to this mental resort to violence against Mady in Herzog, resorting to violence against their wives by American husbands has not changed in American fiction. In another passage, when he thinks of revenge, his wrath takes a violent mental shape. “Ramona would get revenge on people who had once given her a hard time. He too would get back at his enemies. Yemachh’mo! Let their names be blotted out! They prepared a net for my steps. They digged a pit before me. Break their teeth God in their mouth” (Herzog 210)!

Nevertheless, masochism in Herzog is much stronger. He feels that “he has fallen upon the thorns of life” (Herzog 57). But he thinks that he deserves what he was about to suffer. In fact, “his suffering is a sacrifice to his sins. He had sinned long and hard. He had sinned against his heart, his own heart” (Herzog 208). However, what is his sin? John Jacob Clayton’s answer to this question is that his guilt is essentially sexual. “Sex is terribly guilt – producing” (Clayton 195) Twice during the novel, Herzog confesses that he is a prisoner to sex, and sex in his view is connected with dirt. He remembers that how he had made his wife have intercourse with him on the bathroom floor. The connection between sex and dirt
(the bathroom floor) is obvious here. In police station, he ascribes the sexual attraction of a certain prostitute to her dirty ways:

Why would anyone want to give a broad like this a bang? Why! He knew well enough why. Look at the heavy vines in her legs, and look at those breasts, huddled together. They looked as if they have been washed but not ironed. And that slightly herring- eyed look, and her fat mouth. But he knew why. Because she had dirty ways, that was why. Lewd knowledge. (Herzog 304)

Again, in the same place, when he sees Madeline face to face, after a long time, he wonders, "whether she still gave off those odors of feminine secretions-the dirty ways she had with her" (Herzog 360). Thus, the important point for a reader is to see how Herzog describes his wife as a woman with dirty ways as he describes a prostitute. Indeed, he unconsciously compares her wife with a prostitute, remembering her as having dirty ways, which he already uses for a certain whore. In addition, in earlier parts of the novel, Herzog felt sorry for Daisy—his first wife—because her senile mother thought that she is a prostitute and will catch an infection.

Therefore, unconsciously, Herzog associates sex with dirt, and try to project his sexual guilt onto women, but the root of this connection between sex and dirt or the origin of Herzog's guilt feeling toward sex seems to be lying in his childhood experience with a man:

The man clapped his hand over his mouth from the back. He hissed something to him as he drew down his pants. He teeth were rotten and his face stubbled. And between the boy's thighs this red skinless horrible thing passed back and forth, until it burst out foaming. The dogs in the back yards jumped against the fences, they barked and snarled choking on their saliva—the shrieking dogs, while Moses was held at the throat by the crook of the man's arm. He knew he
might be killed. The man might strangle him. He did he know! he guessed. So he simply stood there. Then the man buttoned his army coat and said 'I am going to give you a nickel. But I have to change this dollar.' Moses watched him recede in the mud of the lane, stooping and gaunt in the long coat walking swiftly with bad feet; bad feet, evil feet. (Herzog 325)

The terrible stubble faced man, rotten teeth, skinless horrible thing, jumping and shrieking dogs, muddy lane, and bad feet, evil feet are all to associate sex with guilt. Nevertheless, sex by itself is not so guilt producing as his passivity toward being raped. In fact, he does not try to escape, only because he guessed, "the man might strangle him. Therefore, he simply stood there. The words guess, might and simply are highly suggestive within the whole passage, which can be, in some way, regarded as a self-confessed account of yielding to sexuality. Afterwards, his indifferent handling of what happened to him again suggests his easy yielding to the rape:

At last, he fetched up his wet pant and went home. He sat on the stoop a while and then turned up at supper as if nothing had happened. Nothing! He washed his hands at the sink with Willie and came to the table. He ate his soup. (Herzog 325)

The word nothing, in this passage, is ironic and the word washed seems somehow symbolic. He symbolically washes his hands of the dirt associated with sex. Thus, for Herzog, sexuality is disgusting. To objectify this state of disgust and guilt, Bellow uses the imagery of dogs. "The dogs in the back yards jumped against the fences. They barked and snarled, choking in their saliva- the shrieking dogs" (Herzog 325). The images of dogs jumping against fences and dogs choking in their saliva suggest a mixture of lust and disgust which reflects Herzog’s own mixed feeling toward sexuality.
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To get rid of his guilt feeling, he projects it onto women, especially onto Madeline “Before his marriage to Madeline, he lived with her long enough to know she would make him miserable”. (Clayton 194) In fact, Herzog unconsciously chooses Madeline over gentle Sono or docile Daisy, because he needs to sacrifice by suffering. In other words, he chooses Madeline to punish him for his sins. Then, Madeline becomes instrumental in Herzog’s expiating his sexual sins. The origin of his guilt feeling, however, is not sexual only. Brought up on moral principles according to strict Jewish standards he has betrayed Jewish traditions and family values to the falsehood of modern life:

He is a disgrace to himself, unable to live up to his nineteen-century ideal of a man. This ideal comes from his father who was a sacred being, a king. It is from this father-king that Herzog derives his belief in the dignity of the individual[...]Thus Herzog’s standard would appear to be the majestic nineteenth century individualist combined with the religious Jew. (Clayton 202)

A different interpretation of Clayton’s argument about the origin of Herzog’s guilt is that he has betrayed the values of patriarchy. Indeed, Herzog has not been able to live up to the ideals of the father who is sacred being or a king, from whom he derives his values. In other words, Herzog’s real standard is the majestic nineteenth century patriarchy combined with Jewish tradition. However, why has Herzog betrayed his real standard? Why has he failed to live up to the ideals of his father-king? Indeed, one of the main themes of the novel is concerned with these questions. He must defend his Jewish nineteenth century ideal of a man but he feels that “modern experience has made much of his Jewish experience inapplicable” (Clayton 203). As a result, he seems to be a “broken down monarch of some kind’ (Herzog 39). A broken down monarch is precisely Herzog’s view of contemporary masculine. Indeed, there is some sort of nostalgia- in this metaphor- for a golden age, when patriarchy was in full power. Tired of falsehood of modern life, Herzog eagerly longs to return to that golden time in the past. He needs to get
rid of his false self “a gesture maker, ambitious, fool” (Herzog 60) so that he could “join the children of the race reciting ancient prayers” (Herzog 121). Herzog’s desire for the past is obvious here:

Napoleon Street, rotten, toy like, crazy and filthy, riddled, flogged with harsh weather- The bootlegger’s boys reciting ancient prayers. To this, Moses’ heart was attached with great power. Here was a wider range of human feeling than he had ever again been able to find. The children of the race, by a never-failing miracle, opened their eyes on one strange world after another, age after age and uttered the same prayer in each, eagerly loving what they found. What was wrong with Napoleon street? Thought Herzog. All he ever wanted was there. (Herzog 120)

The nostalgic air of this passage reveals that Herzog’s is not happy with his present life, which seems very different from that of Napoleon Street. Feeling as a reneged, he thinks that no true Jew leaves his children growing alone. Indeed, Herzog feels guilty of not being the father he should have been according to the standard of Jewish family man. Recalling those days of affair with Madeline, he also wonders, “What was he doing in a church?” He was a Jew. Indeed, he has the sense of fall from his Jewish origin. This sense of being a Jew goes back to his family background and his mother’s dream of Moses future:

Herzog’s mother had had a weakness for Jews with handsome beards. In her family, too, all the elders had beards that were thick and rich, full of religion. She wanted Moses to become a rabbi and he seemed to himself gruesomely unlike a rabbi in trunks and straw hat, his face charged with heavy sadness, foolish utter longing of which a religious life might have purged him (Herzog 32)
His quandary is that he is gruesomely unlike to what he was originally supposed to become. He is a Jew and the son of a Father, a Patriarch in whose grip he still is, "there is something inside me. I am in his grip. When I speak of him, I feel him in my head, pounding for order. He will ruin me (Herzog 17). Clearly, Herzog has not freed himself from the control of patriarchy. He thinks, “We must be what we are, that is necessity (Herzog 28) He is a defender of his father’s faith and knows that some denial of his faith in father has led to some sort of “sin against his own heart” (Herzog 208). However, father Herzog is a failure and his individualist dignity is nothing except patriarchal gestures, good only for comic relief:

In 1913 he bought a piece of land near Valleyfield, Quebec, and failed as a farmer, then he came into town and failed as a baker; failed in the dry-good business; failed as a jobber; failed as a sack manufacturer in the war, when no one else failed. He failed as junk dealer. Then he become a marriage broker and failed-too short-tempered and blunt. And now he was failing as a bootlegger. (Herzog 171)

Nevertheless, he “is still a slave to Papa’s pain, the way father Herzog spoke of himself […] his I had such a dignity” (Herzog 149), When Herzog’s mother tries to persuade him to give up bootlegging, he reacts with the same false gesture of dignity:

What should I do, then! Work for the burial society? Like a man of seventy? Only fit to sit at deathbeds? I? Wash corpse? I? Or should I go to the cemetery and wheedles? Mourners for a nickel? To say El malai rachamin. I? Let the earth open and swallow me up! (Herzog 155)
Father Herzog looks comic as Herzog tries to keep his dignity. Indeed the comedy in this passage comes from the way Herzog tries to make him appear to be majestic while he is a failure.

Pulled away by growing up in twentieth century, he cannot be a good heir to this father. Indeed, he is one of the “children of race who opened their eyes on one strange world after another” (Herzog 140). In other words, he inherits patriarchy but cannot put it into practice. Just as modern experience makes much of his Jewish experiences inapplicable; it also makes his inherited patriarchy out of fashion. This is why in American tinged twenty century, he becomes a “broken down monarch”, seeking for asylum in the European tinged nineteen century. In Romana’s house, with its European surroundings, he does not feel himself as a permanent residence of twenty-century America:

Aunt Tamara’s clock began to chime. He went into parlour to look at its old-fashioned porcelain face with long gilt lines. [...] To own a clock like this you had to have regular habits—a permanent residence. Rising the window shades of this little European parlour with its framed scenes of Venice and friendly Dutch porcelain inanities, you saw the Empire State Building, the Hudson, the green, silver evening, half a New York lighten up. Thoughtful, he pulled the shade down again. This asylum was his for the asking, he believed. (Herzog 184) (Italic mine)

Indeed, he pulls down the shade on the present and thinks of an asylum for himself somewhere in nineteen century. All over the novel, Bellow continually juxtaposes the majestic patriarchal nineteen century with the present. To explain Herzog’s problem more clearly, we must notice that, “our picture of the external world must fit our own pattern of memory, desire and dream” (Ferguson 7). To keep with Ferguson’s point, Herzog’s picture of outside world, especially his picture of modern man—woman relationship, does not fit well with his internal
patterns of inherited patriarchy. Therefore, he cannot get along with women. He constantly seeks comfort in women but they add to his troubles. In addition, he is afraid of being committed. In Romana’s house, he feels that he has found his desired asylum, but hesitates “because today’s asylum might be the dungeon of tomorrow” (Herzog 191).

In fact, Herzog is not a man of responsibility. In the whole novel, we do not see him shoulder his responsibility. To justify his lack of responsibility he prefers to be sick:

Herzog is obsessed by the notion of sickness; he even does his best to be sick. He goes to have a medical check up when the season ‘troubles many people, the new roses, even in shop windows, reminding them of their own failures, of sterility and death’ He is pronounced healthy, but he cannot completely believe the physician. He continues to think (and remember) in terms of disease. (Irving 156)

He also does his best to give the impression of being mad. The opening sentence of the novel is the most telling in this regard. “If I am out of mind, it’s all right with me thought Moses Herzog” (Herzog 7). He manages to look insane to some extent, and “some people thought he was cracked and for a time he himself had doubted that he was all there.”(Herzog 7) Why is he trying to look sick or mad? He is trying, because, wants to divorce from all his responsibilities. He is the father of two children from two different wives but not responsible for their upbringing. He destroys his first marriage in an utterly irresponsible manner:

I give up the shelter of an orderly purposeful, lawful existence because it bored me, and I felt it was simply a slacker’s life […] So I took my papers and books, and my Remington office machine with the black hood, and my records and oboe and music down to Philadelphia. (Herzog 109)
Herzog leaves a wife who views it her duty to do her best to provide everything for her scholar husband while he was working on his project. "He had forced Daisy to endure a freezing winter in eastern Connecticut while he was writing Romanticism and Christianity" (Herzog 125). He admits, "By my irregularity and turbulence of spirit I brought out the very worst in Daisy" (Herzog 133). Nevertheless, "she took Moses' word for it that he was seriously occupied. Of course, a wife's duty was to stand by this puzzling and often disagreeable Herzog" (Herzog 132). The word of course may be ironic to some extent about Herzog's patriarchal expectations of his wife, but it somehow reflects the dominant masculine ideology in American society. Indeed, patriarchy takes it for granted that Daisy has to stand by Herzog and help him achieve his goal, necessary for his social climbing, but Herzog is free to leave his wife and child as soon as he feels his married life boring.

He enjoys his leisure in the absence the family. "Wrapped in a blanket like an Indian, Moses read the literature of Enthusiasm in his cottage by the small nickel-trimmed kitchen stove" (Herzog 133). On the other hand, as an intellectual he has other missions "Herzog, responsible to civilization in his icy out post, lying in bed in an aviator helmet when stoves went out, fitted together Bacon and Locks from one side and Methodism and William Blake from the other" (Herzog 133). In fact, he victimizes Daisy to indulge in his passion for intellectualism. "He listened to the radio-debated the pros and cons of Enthusiasm with himself" (Herzog 133).

Herzog plays down his leaving Daisy, as if nothing happened in his routine life. In addition, there is nothing in the novel about how Daisy reacted when being so abruptly abandoned. She is mostly silent during her hard life with Herzog and remains silent as well when she is deserted. Nevertheless, this silence is not only because she is a reserved person, but also because the text provides her with no space to express herself. In other words, the patriarchal narrative structure of the novel closes off her consciousness to the readers. To find out the extent of patriarchy in the narrative structure of the novel, it is just enough to compare Herzog's reaction when Madeline deserts him- and the space it takes up in the
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Later, we find out that Herzog’s has not been even faithful to Daisy and has been seeing Sono Oguki, his Japanese friend. “He had gotten a significant warning once from Daisy’s mother, Polina (Herzog 173). Until then, “neither Polina nor Daisy actually knew any thing about Sono Quki. (What a lot of romances! thought Herzog one after another…)”(Herzog 174) Polina’s warning discloses that it is not his first time to betray his wife:

What are you going to become? Said Polina, Ein ausvurf-
ausgelassen Outcast- dissolute? … What about it? Said Polina, first one woman and then another, then another. Where will it end? You can’t abandon a wife, a son for these women- whores. (Herzog 174)

Always looking for new affairs, Herzog leads a promiscuous life. For him, Daisy is not exotic enough. Unlike Madeline who knows how to use her body to manipulate men, Daisy is a conventional Jewish woman, about whose physical qualities, Herzog is deadly silent throughout the novel. Since for Herzog “the shape of a woman’s breasts matters greatly,” (Herzog 22) Daisy's physical qualities do not appeal to him. In fact, Herzog is a “prisoner of sex” and does not realize the value of Daisy’s sacrifice manifested in her silent endurance of irregular and disagreeable Herzog. Though admitting that he “brought out the very worst in Daisy” (Herzog 133) by irregularities and turbulence of his spirit during his working on his book, he leaves her alone with his child to enjoy in Sono’s house “the best things of life” (Herzog 180). The strange thing is that he “think himself moralist” (Herzog 22) and complains of immoral Madeline and Gersbach throughout the novel.

Herzog’s easy flight from Daisy to Sono shows that he is ready to abandon his moral responsibility in pursuit of his libido. Sono gives him” the best things of
life” (Herzog 180), and asks him for no great sacrifice. “She did not want me to work for her, to furnish her house, support her children, to be regular at meals or to open charge accounts in luxury shops” (Herzog 180). Her only request is that Herzog “should be with her from time to time” (Herzog 180). Herzog admits, “I know I kept her from returning to Japan. For my sake, she disobeyed her father. Her mother died, and Sono did not mention it for weeks” (Herzog 181). His affair with Sono ends when she hears that Herzog has been seeing Madeline Pontritter. Thus, again American man leaves one woman for another. Having no reason to stay any more, Sono goes back to Japan.

Indeed, Sono sacrifices a lot just for the sake of being with Herzog, and that only, from time to time. What makes Herzog so dear to Sono is not revealed in the novel. It is not clear why Sono should stay in America, disobey her father, and ignore her mother’s death just for the sake of Herzog. In other words, it is difficult to accept the logic of the text in this regard. It is, for instance, ridiculous that Sono should keep secret the news of her own mother’s death from Herzog. What is the logic of it? When Herzog does not call her for a month, “She had had pneumonia again. She was weak and pale and she cried (Herzog 181). Why is she so helpless? In a resisting reading, it may be just the male narrator’s narcissism, which makes him to speak so confidently about his influences on women, but there is another cause rooted in historically constructed gender ideology, which puts women entirely at the mercy of men. In the three novels examined in this thesis, we see a gallery of middle-aged women desperately looking for men’s affection either as husband or friend.

One of these women is Ramona Donsell. She is beautiful, intelligent and talented. Herzog thinks she is just a good refuge for him to take a rest from time to time. Indeed, “Ramona wanted to give him pleasure in anyway he might choose” (Herzog 24) But in return, “she wanted to give her heart once and for all, and level with a good man, become Herzog’s wife and quit being an easy lay, she often had a sober look. Her eyes touched him deeply” (Herzog 23- 24). In the bedroom, she
asks Herzog to just mention his desires so that she can satisfy them. As they finish lovemaking, Ramona passionately expresses her gratitude, “thanks God a person like you exist. Darling Moses. Oh Thanks God” (Herzog 212). This sense of gratitude in Ramona after lovemaking signifies how gender ideology perceives lovemaking as a male sacrifice. We also remember Herzog complaining of Madeline’s lack of gratitude after intercourse. “We had intercourse the night before. But as soon as it was done she turned on the light, picked up one of those dusty Russian folios and started to read away [...] Not a kiss. Not a last touch”(Herzog 66). Though Ramona does her best to please him in the bed and attempts to convince him that he is truly a macho man, he continues to harbors misgivings about Ramona:

To accept too many favours from Ramona was dangerous. He might have to pay with his freedom. Of course, he did not need that freedom now; He needed a rest. Still after resting, he might want his freedom again. He was not sure of that, either. But it was a possibility. (Herzog 24)

In fact, Herzog gets benefits from Ramona without paying back. He fears that her pampering is, in reality, a subtle and alluring way to entrap him. As much as he indulges himself in the asylum she offers, he perceives her generous sexual favours as a desperate strategy to find a husband before it becomes too late. He consistently keeps referring to her age and her desperate need to settle down. Of course, he admits that:

From many points of view, Romana was a desirable wife. She was understanding. Educated. Well situated in New York Money And sexuality, a natural masterpiece [...] Lovely ample shoulders. The belly deep. Legs brief and a little bowed but for that reason especially attractive. It was all there. (Herzog 73)
Nevertheless, within American ideological framework of gender, Herzog had to be cautious of such a woman. We also see this fear of Ramona openly expressed by Will, Herzog’s brother, as he wants to leave Herzog alone with Ramona. He asks Herzog:

‘Am I leaving you in good hands Mose?’

‘Is it safe to go you mean? I think you can, with confidence. Ramona is not so bad.’

‘Bad? What do you mean? She’s stunning. But so was Madeline.’

‘I’m not being left in anyone’s hands’.

‘With a mild, soft look of irony, sad and affectionate, Will said. Amen. But what about this ideology. Doesn’t she have some?’

‘Yes I think she has some. About sex. She ‘s pretty fanatical about it. But I don’t mind that’. (Herzog 345)

In a resisting reading, this passage provides readers with useful insights into how American gender ideology has adopted obviously misogynous tone and how a sensible and shrewd man like Will worries over women and tries to protect Herzog against it. Herzog tries to assure Will that he does not intend to marry Romana. Indeed, he just makes use of Ramona to arouse in him “the progenitive, the lustful quacking in the depths. Quack. Quack” (Herzog 344). Ideologically conditioned, Herzog fears to be committed to Ramona, but in the last pages, he discovers that:

there was something intensely touching about her. She struggled, she fought, she needed extraordinary courage to hold this poise. In this world, to be a woman who took matters into her own hand! And
this courage of hers was unsteady. At times it trembled. (Herzog 344)

This passage is extraordinary in the sense that it goes beyond the dominant patriarchal discourse and views Ramona with a feeling of compassion. In fact, to some extent Herzog himself realizes how difficult it is to be an emancipated woman in a society not totally released from patriarchal ideologies. Nevertheless, the irony is that Herzog himself is part of the system under which Romana sometimes trembles to keep her balance.

Unlike Ramona, Madeline does not tremble. She directly goes against patriarchy without making any concession to historically constructed gender ideology. She is also an emancipated woman but unlike Ramona who is trying to make a compromise through finding a husband for herself, she subverts the whole institution of marriage. Madeline marries Herzog, but, unlike Daisy, Herzog’s first wife does not succumb to Herzog’s whimsical ego. As a result, she enters a power struggle with him instead. This power struggle is central to the whole novel. Indeed Herzog’s struggle with Madeline is a fighting for mastery. She is the only woman whom Herzog could never overpower.

Herzog’s pompous masculinity is shattered by his marriage with Madeline. Madeline becomes the center of attention. “Everyone close to Madeline, everyone drawn into the drama of his life becomes exceptional, deeply gifted, brilliant. (Herzog 44). In fact, everyone meeting her, even for a short time, is mesmerized by her beauty and intellectual brilliance. In a letter, a friend describes Madeline as a woman of great charms. “It is extremely exciting to talk to her; she gives a sense of a significant encounter-with life-a beautiful, brilliant person with a fate of her own (Herzog 106)(Italic mine). The last phrase is the best description about Madeline. She is a woman with a fate of her own as a woman. In other words, she does not give in to Herzog to shape a fate for her as other women in the novel do. She takes
the control of her life in her own hand and does not let anybody including Herzog
to decide for the type of life she may lead.

The first step for Madeline to take is to regain her body confiscated by patriarchy
through marriage.

She had told Moses during one of their crises that she had had a
new look at herself nude before the bathroom mirror, ‘Still young’
she said, taking inventory, young, beautiful, full of life. Why should
I waste it all on you [...] He remembered how much pleasure it gave
Madeline to try on clothes in shops and how much heart and pride
there was in her when she looked at herself.’(Herzog 27)

Keeping back her body, Madeline strikes a heavy blow against patriarchal ideology
of confiscation of women’s body in marriage.

A woman’s body is the battlefield where she fights for liberations. It
is through her body that oppression works, reifying her, sexualizing
her, victimizing her, disabling her. Her physicality is a medium for
others to work on; her job is to act as their viceroy, presenting her
body for their ministrations. If she fails to present herself, if she
refuse [...] she is behaving badly. (Greer 114)

Madeline does not let Herzog easily rejoice in her body. Although she has
intercourses with him, she never totally yields her body and soul. She denies
Herzog a satisfying sexual experience. She reduces sexual intercourse to a soulless
activity without any human affection and warmth. As Irving Malin puts it, “She
distrusts sex. She desire powers. She is able to use one for the other”(149). But
why does she distrust sex? Does she instinctively know that “sexuality is the site in
which male power is expressed,” (Humm 33)? Whatever the reason, her behaviour
is significant as an act of resistance, because, sexual mastery of men over women
Indeed Herzog cannot subjugate Madeline, because she does not let him conquer her body. Sex with Madeline has devastating consequences for Herzog. He often describes her passionate look during the intercourse as *murderous* and feels her fervently wishing for his death. Madeline’s vicious gesture during intercourse is not very different from the behavior of a colonized person towards her or his colonizer. Unlike Sono and Ramona who dote on Herzog sexually and try to flatter him by saying he is a macho man, Madeline, in contrast, does her best to damage his sexual powers. In fact, she tries to resist Herzog’s ambition to enslave her sexually like Ramona and Sono and others, knowing that any sexually submissive behavior will open the door for Herzog to be even more aggressive in other areas. Reading the text, a resisting reader would locate many incidents that reveal Herzog’s selfish and imposing way of having sex. These sexual encounters can be seen as the locations in which male power- and resistance to it- is expressed. The following passage is very revealing in this regard:

For a few weeks in Ludeyville, he required Madeline to make love on the bathroom floor. She complied, but he could see when she lay down on the old tiles that she was in a rage. Much good could come of that. This is how the all-powerful human intellect employs itself when it has no real occupation […] Moses knew that in her heart his recumbent wife was cursing him He tried to make his lust comical, to show how absurd it all was, easily the most wretched form of human struggle, the very essence of slavery.(Herzog 226)

The passage is very telling. The idea of making love in bathroom, on the dirt of old tiles, is not amusing for Madeline but she complies. The word *comply* carries the tone of being obedient to power. Indeed, Madeline cannot openly oppose Herzog’s overpowering her, and in spite of her rage, she can only curse Herzog *in her heart,*
an obvious expression of male highhandedness. Indeed, the whole scene reads very much like a series of stratagems, dominant on the part of Herzog, and annoyed on the part of Madeline. The words such as, *comply, lay down, rage, recumbent, curse, wretched, struggle,* and *slavery* in the passage are highly suggestive in the context of power and resistance to it. On the other hand, Herzog knowingly exerts his power to annoy and humiliate Madeline to get as much control over her as he wishes. These humiliating scenes of sex with Madeline are so important in the power game that Herzog says *much good could come out of that.* Nevertheless, nothing good came out of it. Madeline never becomes a sex slave.

Contrary to Herzog’s portrayal of Madeline as a castrating bitch throughout the novel, there are some evidences in the text, which give a different story of the life of this couple. Aunt Zelda reminds Herzog of the sort of life he had provided for Madeline in the Berkshires:

That was bad. Especially winters. You should have had more sense. That house made a prisoner of her. It must have been just dreary, washing and cooking, and to have to hush the baby, or you’d raise hell, she said. You couldn’t think when June was crying, and you’d rush from your room hollering. (Herzog 45)

Herzog’s does not deny Zelda’s description of his life with Madeline in Berkshires. “Yes I was stupid, a blockhead.”(Herzog 45) Zelda, then, talks of Madeline’s other grievances. “You have been reckless about women […] She says you were a dictator, a regular tyrant. You bullied her” (Herzog 45). Herzog’s answer to these grievances is illuminating. “I do seem to be broken-down monarch of some kind. I was thinking, like my old man, the princely immigrant and ineffectual bootlegger. And life was very bad in Ludeyville – terrible, I admit.” (Herzog 46) Herzog’s calling himself a broken-down monarch is very meaningful here. In fact, he blames his failure to sort out his life in Ludeyville on *thinking like his father.* He also remembers his father as another broken-down monarch in
America. Indeed Madeline’s resistance disappoints him to “be a patriarch, as every Herzog was meant to be” (Herzog 210).

Apart from aunt Zelda’s views, which give different details of Herzog’s life with Madeline, some passages in the novel reveal how Herzog’s intellectualism and messiness puts Madeline under huge pressure:

It is grotesque how disorganized you are. You are no better than any other kind of addict- sick with abstraction. The whole thing is a neurotic mess. These bushes of notes, and this crappy house. It needs four servants, and you want me to do all the work. (Herzog 129)

Herzog’s reaction to Madeline’s complaints demonstrates the infuriating way of treating her grievances “Herzog made himself dull by repeating what was right. He was maddening, too. He realized it. He appeared to know how everything ought to go, down to the smallest detail”(Herzog 129). In fact, Herzog himself realizes that he makes a lot of noises and troubles over every petty thing so that the atmosphere of the home becomes maddening, but “all he asked, it seemed to him, was a bit of cooperation in his effort, benefiting everyone, to work towards a meaningful life (Herzog 129).

As a resisting reader, one can decipher what a bit of cooperation means or what is his effort benefiting everyone. In fact, he tries to make a Daisy out of Madeline. In other words, his demanding a bit of cooperation is synonymous with making use of Madeline as a servant wife for himself while working on his ambitious intellectual project. Although “Herzog’s intellectual pretensions are presented with an unmistakable comic exaggeration, (Sharma 99) his unfinished study of Romantics:

was supposed to have ended with a new angle on modern condition showing how life could be lived by renewing universal conations;
overturning the last of the Romantic errors about the uniqueness of the Self; revising the old Western, Faustian ideology; investigating the social meaning of Nothingness. (Herzog 45)

His snobbishness takes a ridiculously exaggerated shape, when, we are told, Herzog thought that “the progress of civilization – indeed the survival of civilization- depend on the successes of Moses E. Herzog” (Herzog 132). We, as readers, may mock such arrogance, but Herzog himself believes in his effort, as he calls it, to work toward meaningful life for everybody, and expects everyone, especially women, including Madeline to help him in his prophetic concerns. This vanity is a significant causative factor in the growing confusion of Herzog’s mind, which, in turn, brings about many crises in his married life between him and Madeline. While tackling family crisis, Herzog’s consciousness remains preoccupied with wide ranging philosophies, thoughts and beliefs:

The contents of his consciousness include, in a partial jumble, the ideas of American business community, the philosophy of risk in regards to radio-activity, the latest legislation about taxes, the law and order problem in metropolitan cities. Herzog is obliged to consider the adverse effects of Hulme’s ideas about romanticism. He takes into consideration Heidegger’s concept of absurdity in terms of which he attributes modern man’s crisis to the very fact of his coming into existence. (Sharma 100)

No wonder, then, Madeline accuses him, “You’re no better than any other kind of addict- sick with abstractions, or aunt Zelda reminds him of being “overbearing, gloomy. You brood a lot” (Herzog 129). It may be easy to understand his excessive brooding; he is an intellectual after all, an academic, but it is hard to justify the following accusation of Zelda:

‘You’ve been reckless about women’
‘Since Madeline threw me out, maybe, Trying to get back my self-respect’

‘No, while you still were married. Zelda’s mouth tightened’

‘Herzog felt himself redden. A thick, hot sick pressure filled his chest. His heart felt ill and his forehead instantly wet’ (Herzog 45) (Italic mine)

With Zelda’s revealing that Herzog was seeing some other women, while married to Madeline, one realizes that Herzog himself is no better than Madeline and Gersbach whom he condemns as adulterous. He was also not less fierce than Madeline was in his reactions to family matters:

Moses was continually after her about money. Beginning his reproaches, he tried to keep his voice low. It was always something trivial that set him off- a bounced cheque, a chicken that had rotted in the icebox, a new shirt torn up for rags. Gradually his feelings become very fierce. (Herzog 129)

In a resisting reading, then, one can thwart the text’s politics to exonerate Herzog as an innocent man castrated by an evil woman. As a result, a resisting reader may look at Madeline not as a bitch, but as a resisting female who does not give in Herzog’s patriarchal indulgence. On the other hand, as a patriarchal word, the word bitch itself is illuminating. Indeed:

a witch, a bitch and a goddess may actually be the same person; the difference in the image is in the eye of beholder. A beautiful woman is despised as a bitch, if she uses her weapon of tongue and sex to diminish a man’s sense of worth. (Ferguson 8)

In other words, women who are assertive enough to challenge patriarchy are labeled as bitch. These women are considered as unnatural, because they do not
live up to their ideologically constructed image in the male dominated society. Not complying with the demands of patriarchy, these so-called bitchy women agitate the whole system of gender ideology and interfere with men’s quest for identity:

Many twentieth century male authors, involved mostly in a quest for a self-identity, have justified men’s treatment of women as sex objects to be used instead of loved on the grounds that modern women are all bitches and castrators who interfere with or deny men’s search for identity: women are seen as reinforcing society’s pressures for conformity to its cultural patterns and hence as denigrating encroachment on his inalienable right to be himself. (Ferguson 27)

Mary Ann Ferguson’s above observation proves quite applicable in Saul Bellow’s Herzog. We have seen in this novel a male protagonist who is looking for an ideal self. In other words, he tries to create his “ideal construction of reality, [...] humanizing the world after his own image in order to impose himself on reality (Clayton 187). These constructions are very important for Herzog “I put my whole life into these constructions” (Herzog 33). Nevertheless, Madeline come in between and thwarts his quest for an identity. Madeline denies Herzog’s quest for an identity, because his ideal comes from his father, who was “a sacred being, a king” (Herzog 147), a real patriarch indeed. It is from “this king- father that Herzog derives his belief in the dignity of the individual” (Clayton 202). He is “still a slave to papa’s pain (Herzog 149) and still admirer of his majesty, “The way father Herzog spoke of himself […].His I had a dignity” (Herzog 149). Thus Herzog’s ideal self appears to come from the majestic nineteenth century individualist. In fact, he cares for the beauty and dignity of man, upheld in majestic patriarchal nineteen century. But aren’t all these what patriarchy needs to maintain its futile gestures to subjugate women and save its position?
Herzog’s identity seeking quest also connects him to his Jewish background. In the family of Herzog’s mother, “all the elders had beards that were thick and rich, full of religion. She wanted Moses to become a rabbi” (Herzog 22), but “he seemed to himself gruesomely unlike a rabbi now in the trunks and straw hat, his face charged with heavy sadness (Herzog 22). Indeed, he must defend his Jewish nineteenth century ideal of a man to find his own real self. But what is going to come out of this identity quest of Herzog for women? What is the status of a woman in the consciousness of a nineteenth century Jewish man? The answer seems clear.

Thus, Herzog’s quest for identity is nothing but longing for full patriarchy. His effort to revive the image of his father is aborted by Madeline’s resistance. She reacts angrily when he repeatedly talks of his father’s pain and dignity, “he was your father. I don’t ask you to share my horrible father. So don’t try to force your old man down to my throat” (Herzog 130). The word force suggests how insistently Herzog is obsessed with his father’s ways. On the other hand, Herzog attempts to define himself as a man in a modern mass society:

Well, for instance, what it means to be a man. In a city. In a century. In transition. In a mass. Transformed by science. Under organized power. Subject to tremendous controls. In a condition caused by mechanization. After the later failure of radical hopes. In a society that was no longer community and devalued the person. (Herzog 208)

Herzog reacts to terrifying force of modern city life. “Since city has gradually come to symbolize the very essence of contemporary life, it is usually presented in literature less as a physical locale but more as a physical metaphor having complex moral significance”(Sharma 7). What disturbs Herzog in a city is “the immediate pressure of his environment and the limiting condition of his social matrix” (Bradbury 32) which makes him “ask some fundamental questions about nature of
his own humanity. In such an environment, Herzog’s description of his individuality begins with his “wild internal disorder or even with the fact that he was quivering” (Herzog 208). Herzog feels that “he cannot tolerate the pressure of organization. Things press upon him; they limit his control” (Malin 145). To look at his identity problem, one should also take into account the volatile nature of modernity. When society is changing rapidly, thoughtful people may have a difficult time knowing who or what they are. Only by clarifying situations, conditions, and understanding the true nature of the outside changes, can a man begin to face and deal with what happens around him. The greater the light shed on these changes, the better equipped are individuals to discriminate and understand the implications and the meanings of those powers, which confuse and blind them.

Indeed, the spirit of modern city is the spirit of modern industrial civilization. It represents the very essence of contemporary experience in all its complexities and contradictions. One major part of this contemporary experience is the emergence of emancipated woman in social scene. In fact, as a part of the process of historical development, a new generation of female appeared to shape the character of the individual and the whole way of life. No wonder the contemporary literature focuses on the effect of this newly emerged female generation and dramatizes the issues which are, in one way or the other, vitally connected with individual’s quest for meaningful life.

Madeline is a modern woman. Though, “she had religious feeling, but the glamour and the social climbing were more important” (Herzog 118). As soon as she enters Herzog’s life, she resists Herzog’s patriarchal way of treating women. After a short while, he realizes that Madeline is different from other women. For Herzog women have always been either mothering like mother Herzog or Sono, or sensual, like Ramona "But he was dealing with a new female generation, which was what he told himself" (Herzog 118), and he was not used to this; he was used to being a favourite (Herzog 118) (Italic mine). Belonging to new generation, Madeline also does not share Herzog's nostalgia towards his mother:
But Madeline was not to be interested in Mother Herzog, twenty years dead, however mother-bound this nostalgic gentleman’s soul might be. Moses, thinking, ruled against himself. He was a fatherly person to Madeline—he couldn’t expect her to consider his mother. She was one of the dead dead, without effect on the new generation. (Herzog 120)

The emphasis on Madeline’s belonging to a new generation and Herzog’s being a fatherly person to her suggests how Herzog thinks of himself as belonging to the past. On the other hand, Herzog’s past, as I showed earlier, is what he needs to uphold his identity. Indeed, the very bond of Herzog to the past—his religious heritage, his attachment to majestic nineteen-century ideal of a man—weakens his accommodation with modern society. The point is that Herzog’s conception of man’s greatness is based on some basic universal values, which are no longer valid for modern character. “Modern character is inconstant, divided, vacillating, lacking the stonelike certitude of archaic man, also deprived of the firm ideas of seventeenth century clear hard theorems” (Herzog 134). In a brilliant contemplation, Herzog explains why modern character lacks the firm ideas of seventeenth century:

In the seventeenth century, the passionate search for absolute truth stopped so that mankind might transform the world. Something practical was done with thought. The mental also became real. Relief from the pursuit of absolute made life pleasant. Only a small class of fanatic intellectuals, professionals still chased after these absolutes. (Herzog 330)

Thus, since seventeen century, the quest for absolute truth was sacrificed for the sake of making life pleasant, but Herzog, as one of those fanatic intellectuals still insists on absolute truth, and belief without which “human life is simply the raw material of technological transformation of fashion, salesmanship,
industry, politics, finance, experiment automatism, et cetera” (Herzog 229). Herzog refuses to accept the “submission of the humanistic channels of thought and feeling to the ascendancy of scientific rationalism” (Glanday 1). This pragmatic scientific system of thought, Herzog thinks, has made “the universe for our safe use, to give us comfort, ease and support” (Herzog 66), and these comfort, ease and support “have liberated the masses from the old troubles and created private life but gave nothing to fill it with” (Herzog 150). So there is a real vacuum, as Herzog says, “people are dying- it is no metaphor- for lack of something real to carry home when day is done. See how willingly they are to accept wildest nonsense” (Herzog 39) Though due to scientific rationalism, man’s working days last not so long as old times, it has replaced the image of man as a romantic individual of humanist tradition with that of mass man of modern humanity. For these mass men “the practical questions have become the ultimate questions as well (Glanday 65).

What I discussed in last few pages briefly shows that in Herzog, Bellow creates an intellectual male protagonist, who makes use of his powerful polemics to rid himself of modernist ideas. Chiefly by the very polemics, the text is one of the twenty-century’s major American rejections of modernist tradition. In the light of this anti- modern paradigm in the text, we can now return to examine further the nature of Herzog’s problem with Madeline.

Herzog’s criticism of modern society is partly due to his unconscious desire to control Madeline. Herzog is extremely clever; he recognizes her resistance, and he recognizes that no longer he has absolute power to dominate her, "I had pains in my belly in order to dominate her" (Herzog 199). Therefore, he theorizes her resistance in the light of his criticism of modernist humanity. In his view, Madeline belongs to new generation, she is one of those modern characters who suffer some sort of inner vacuum, a sickness that can be found in both individuals and communities. Indeed, Herzog sees that there is “a conjunction between personal sickness and communal malaise, a sickness that creeps through the whole community” (Glanday 97). There is no denying that Madeline’s question
or her sickness, as Herzog calls it, is a communal issue. It is even political, as feminists believe that what is personal is also political.

The important point, however, is that Herzog misleads the readers by identifying Madeline’s resistance with modernist power seeking hunger. Indeed, he identifies her with modern power-oriented society. Probably he has Madeline in his mind when he says, “invariably the most dangerous people seek power” (Herzog 67) Power, Herzog thinks, is a substitute. It is, “the ability to be without developed personality” (Glanday 101). In fact, Herzog connects Madeline’s resistance to her allegedly inner vacuum, and portrays her as someone for whom any relationship with others is nothing but a sort of power play. Herzog tries to imply that Madeline knows how to win the play through learning the techniques of exploitation and domination. In other words, “the strength to do evil is sovereignty” (Herzog 126) for these people. Bellow’s ability to create a power-seeking image of Madeline is so remarkable that many critics classify Madeline as the archetype of domineering woman who “eat green salad and drink human blood.”(Herzog 48) Michael K. Glanday in his book, Saul Bellow and the Decline of Humanism gives the following description of Madeline:

She takes her example of strength from the prevailing political model, which posits forces in confrontation, balances of terror, duplicity with honour. To be strong one had to be beyond the vulnerability of commitment, to dissemble with conviction, to be armour-plated. (99)

Another important critic, Irving Malin sees Madeline in the same manner:

She attempts to assert her masculine will. She distrusts sex; she desires power. She is able to use one for the other-as in her relationship with him and Valentine-but she is never satisfied to let
things stand. She is on the move compulsively discovering new worlds or men to conquer. (149)

No doubt, these critics have surrendered to the impressive logic of Herzog's polemics. To show the flimsiness of this dominant male reality in the text, we can find, through a resisting reading, many gaps and lapses in the same text. To oppose the image of Madeline as a cruel, power-seeking woman, one should include the whole power context, in which Herzog–Madeline relationship is defined. As explained earlier, one way of analyzing this relationship is to see the situation between them as a relationship of power and control. In other words, one can look at them in terms of how they use power to impose their own will against each other.

Herzog is a self-indulgent patriarch, abandoning his first wife and child out of boredom and hunger for fulfilment. For him patriarchy is a sacred institution and, though ripped away by modernism to some extent, he still subscribes to it. In many passages, not only, he identifies with his patriarch father, but also others see in him a father. “First of all, she said I resembled her father in too many ways” (Herzog 199). In another place, we are told, “he was a fatherly person to Madeline” (Herzog 120). The implication of being a fatherly person is significant as patriarchy grants father nearly all the power. Traditionally, patriarchy, as power-structured arrangements makes it possible for the father to exercise his unquestioned authority through consent or through violence. Given this traditionally unquestioned authority of the father, Herzog starts to bully Madeline in every aspect of life. In the following passage, Herzog tells Ramona what Madeline says about being bullied by him "She said that when we were in a room together I seemed to swallow and gulp up all the air and left nothing for her to breathe. I was overbearing, infantile, demanding, sardonic and a psychosomatic bully"(Herzog 199).
Herzog's derives his power from many sources. Apart from patriarchy, which institutionalizes his power, he is influential in academic world as a well-known professor:

His reputation was good. His thesis had been influential and was translated into French and German. His early book not much noticed when it was published, was now on many reading list, and the younger generation of historians accepted it as a model of the new sort of history ‘history that interest us –personal, engage-and looks at the past with an intense need for contemporary relevance.(Herzog 12)

He also has money. “On the strength of his early success he had never had difficulty in finding jobs and obtaining research grants. The Narragansett Corporation had paid him fifteen thousand dollars over a numbers of years to continue his studies in Romanticism” (Herzog 10). He has enough money to afford the house near Ludewyville for twenty thousand. In addition “he was well-connected” and could “find a position for Valentine Gersbach.”(Herzog 12) He has many friends, including lawyers, writers, psychologists and doctors. Finally, he has his well-to-do brothers who are ready and affluent to support him financially. What’s more, he derives much more power from his strong mind. His polemics is overwhelming. He is also very ambitious in his studies:

His first work showed by objective research what Christianity was to Romanticism. In the second, he was becoming tougher, more assertive, more ambitious. There was a great deal of ruggedness, actually, in his character. He had a strong will and a talent for polemics […] a taste and talent also for danger and extremism, for heterodoxy, for ordeals, a fatal attraction to the City of Destruction. (Herzog 12)
Not satisfied to be an ordinary Herzog, he “characteristically, obstinately defiantly, blindly [...] tried to be marvellous Herzog (Herzog 100). He wants to “be a smashing success in the private realm, a king of hearts” (Herzog 100) and a brilliant success in public as well. “He was going – he smiled secretly now admitting it-to wrap the subject up, to pull the carpet from under all other scholars, show them what it was, stun them, and expose their triviality once for all (Herzog 126).

There are, however, not many resources for Madeline to obtain power. Unlike Ramona, she has no business and hence depends financially on Herzog. Nevertheless “she is a beauty, and a very rare type, too (Herzog 47). She is also “vivacious, intelligent and such a charmer” (Herzog 105). She is ambitious and determined “as the glamour and social climbing were more important” (Herzog 118) to her. Her power also comes from her strong will “a brilliant person with a fate of her own” (Herzog 106).Moreover, “she’s been terrific, a serious person […] as serious as Herzog (Herzog 44).

With Madeline, Herzog makes his second attempt to live a married life. At first, he expects to enjoy his usual influence, the power he always had throughout his life in his relationship with women, “but with Madeline, it was going to be altogether different” (Herzog 125). Indeed, Madeline’s resistance changes the whole scenario. She simply abstains from doing “all the work in a house, which needs four servants” (Herzog 129). When she defies Herzog’s power in forcing her to keep the house tidy and when he confronts the ensuing nastiness in his domestic life, Herzog does remember his first wife Daisy whom he describes “childishly systematic about things” (Herzog 132). Nevertheless, Madeline’s resistance is only a reaction. Indeed, she exercises her power only after she feels that Herzog is going to reduce her simply to a servant wife. “It must have been just dreary, washing and cooking, and to have to hush the baby” (Herzog 45). Otherwise, aunt Zelda reminds him, “you’d raise hell, you couldn’t think when June was crying, and you would rush from your room hollering” (Herzog 45).
Germaine Greer in her book, *The Whole Woman* explains the gender ideology behind housework. “A man who marries expects his house to be kept clean whether he says so or not. Many a woman is harassed by her husband's expectations of order” (142). Indeed, “the disregard for neatness and hygiene that characterizes the young male seldom survives into marriage (Greer, *The Whole Woman* 142).

Madeline is shrewd and refuses to give in the ideology, which expects women to do all the housework. She is strong enough to endure the squalor resulting from not doing most of the cleaning:

The kitchen was foul enough to breed rats. Egg yolks dried on the plates, coffee turned green in the cups-toast, cereal, maggots breeding in marrow bones, fruit flies, house flies, dollar bills, postage stamps and trading stamps soaking on the Formica counter. (Herzog 127-28)

A regular filthy kitchen is likely a sign of power play. “The men who leave ziggurats of dirty dishes festering in the sink are actually involved in a power play which has no intention of losing” (Greer, *The Whole Woman* 142). What men usually need to win this power play is just to wait and watch women’s gradual surrender. Women will soon find life unbearable, and begin cleaning up. Nevertheless, Madeline does not give in, simply because the kitchen remains dirty, and when Herzog asks for “a little order in these surroundings” (Herzog 130), her answer is quick, firm and accurate. “You'll never get the surroundings you want (Herzog 130) Herzog says that he needs an orderly environment to focus on his intellectual project to improve human condition and “all he asked was a bit of cooperation in his effort benefiting everyone, to work toward a meaningful life” (Herzog 129). But Madeline sees the whole thing as a neurotic chaos. “It is grotesque how disorganized you are. These bushels of notes. You’re no better than any other kind of addict, sick with abstractions”. (Herzog 129) Thus, unlike Daisy,
she resists becoming a silent servant for her scholar husband. As a result, she sleeps with Herzog in a "disorderly bedroom" (Herzog 63) and quarrels with him in “untidy parlour” (Herzog 14), and their kitchen is in a state of squalor.

Madeline’s chaotic and disorderly method of house keeping is the result of another sphere of power struggle. Herzog requires a tidy surrounding to get his scholarly work done and Madeline in denying such a surrounding injures “a great project” (Herzog 132). In fact, Madeline destroys the tranquil atmosphere which needed for Herzog to be a “marvellous Herzog” in the realm of intellectuality. Though many critics believe that Madeline simply tries to castrate Herzog intellectually, a resisting reading, however, can locate in the text numerous evidences that show how Herzog insists on his right to nourish his genius at women’s expense, including Madeline. Throughout the novel, we see many women doing their best to provide him with everything needed, just because he is doing a great job in the realm of intellectuality. Indeed, he uses their bounty for his own purpose.

Unlike submissive women who see it their duty to create a favourable atmosphere for this man of intellect to advance human knowledge, Madeline enters in a sort of intellectual rivalry with Herzog. “She decides to finish her graduate studies in Slavonic language” (Herzog 12). She always favours intellectual discussion with Herzog’s friends. Her success in this sphere is so amazing that Herzog is obviously frightened:

I understand that Madeline’s ambition was to take my place in the learned world. To overcome me. She was reaching her final elevation as queen of the intellectuals, the castiron bluestocking.. And your friend Herzog writhing under this sharp elegant heel. (Herzog 82)

Herzog’s fear of Madeline’s intellectual achievement does not reflect a personal anxiety. It echoes the fear of American sexist society in dealing with a new female
generation whose most important aspiration is intellectual achievement. Indeed, with Madeline’s growing intellectual depth, Herzog’s credit to supremacy over her should be gradually fading away.

Nevertheless, with a crafty manipulation, the text is successful to make the passive reader believe that Madeline’s intellectuality is not a true one. In the following paragraphs, it will be shown how the text succeeds in persuading the reader to see Madeline as simply gesture makers instead of a true intellectual. To underrate her intellectuality, for instance, Herzog imputes to her intellectual conversation with Shapiro—one of his friends—a sexual dimension:

Shapiro is very courtly. And he was impressed with Madeline. He thought her so beautiful, so intelligent. Well, she is. The conversation was spirited. Shapiro had come to see Moses ostensibly to get ‘advise’ actually to ask a favour—but he was enjoying Madeline’s company. She excited him and he was laughing as he drank his quinine water[…] She had on blue trousers and a yellow Chinese blouse, the coolie that I bought her on Fifth Avenue. She did not want to miss any of the conversation. As she bent to set things out on the lawn table, Shapiro couldn’t keep his eyes from the shape of her behind in the tight cotton knit fabric. (Herzog 75-6)

Reading the passage, one gets the impression that Shapiro is more captivated by Madeline’s sexuality than her intellectuality. In fact, reader is craftily manipulated to accept that Madeline cannot be very intelligent just because she is a beauty. The value of Madeline’s intellectuality is further brought down by referring to her church experiences:

Culture—ideas—had taken the place of the church in Mady’s heart (a strange organ that must be!). Herzog sat thinking his own thought on the grass in Ludeyville, his wash pants torn, but his face that of
an educated Jewish gentleman with fine lips, dark eyes. He watched his wife, on whom he doted (with a troubled, angry heart) as she revealed the wealth of her mind to Shapiro. (Herzog 77) (Italic mine)

The opening sentence of the passage suggests that Madeline’s intellectuality, like her once religious beliefs, is whimsical, shallow and temporary. Herzog’s, however, is real, as we see “his face that of an educated Jewish gentleman with fine lips, dark eyes.” The whole scene is dramatic. Madeline tries to influence Shapiro by revealing the wealth of her mind. Herzog seeing her exciting Shapiro is irritated. Therefore, he ignores them and watches the garden:

The lawn was on an elevation with a view of fields and woods. Formed like a large teardrop of green, it had a grey elm at its small point, and the bark of the huge tree, dying of dutch blight, was purplish grey. Scant leaves for such a vast growth- An oriole’s nest, in the shape of grey heart, hung from twigs […] Herzog was worried about that elm. (Herzog 78)

In a sense, Herzog identifies with his garden on an elevation. Indeed, he feels morally elevated above Madeline. He feels sad, like a large lonely aged elm dying of brilliance but with not much leaves for such a vast growth. Indeed, Herzog thinks that how his huge potentiality practically leads to little output in a theatrical world. He observes that how Shapiro's flattering treatment of Madeline, makes her happy and brilliant:

‘Chicago, by all means! said Shapiro That is the school for graduate studies. A little woman like Mrs Herzog is just what the old place needs, too,

‘Fill your big mouth with herring, Shapiro! Herzog thought, and mind your own fucking business. Madeline gave her husband a
rapid sidelong look. She was flattered, happy, she wanted him to be reminded, if he had forgotten, how high a value other people set upon her'. (Herzog 80)

Reading this passage, one sees that Madeline tries to make her husband respect her intelligence. Therefore, it is an opportunity for Madeline- to speak freely to Shapiro and be appreciated, genuinely - to persuade Herzog that she also has good mind. "She complained that he never listened to her. He wanted to shine all the time (Herzog 78) Thus; we see that Madeline becomes very happy when an intellectual person, who happens to be another male, admires her in front of his intellectual husband. The implication is that intellectuality in Bellow's text seems to be only a male attribute. In fact, Bellow is openly sexist in assigning intelligence to his characters. His male protagonists are all real men of thinking, while his women characters, though enthusiastic, are not allowed to be genuine intellectuals. Behind Bellow's treatment of his female characters, there is an ideology, which downgrades women's intellectual achievement. The stereotype of a highly educated woman has usually been the butt of ridicule in literature. Even now, the image of a highly educated woman is usually associated with an unattractive female who is careless about her appearance. It seems that American gender ideology makes women to be either beautiful or intelligent. "Beginning in puberty, American girls becomes afraid of success in school, hiding their learning as much as possible or deliberately failing (Ferguson 15). Even women themselves share this ideology. They do not expect other women to be highly intellectual:

Asked to grade the performance of scholars, a group of college women rated as inferior articles to which women's names were attracted and rated the same articles as superior when men's name were attached to them. Perhaps this tendency accounts for the fact that women downgrade women in general. (Ferguson 15)
Nevertheless, Herzog's fear of Madeline's intelligence is genuine, because she belongs to a new generation who are determined to undermine the stereotypical image of women as anti-intellectual creatures. We remember that she is a consistent reader, "As I was leaving her body, she was reaching for the book." (Herzog 66) Her attachment to books is so strong that Herzog's sharp remark about her old books triggers a fit of anger in Madeline. She is "avid for scholarly conversation" (Herzog 76) and "is preparing for her doctoral examination in Slavonic languages. As I mentioned earlier, Herzog himself notices a danger to himself in Madeline's increasing intellectual depth. "She was reaching her final elevation, as a queen of intellectuals"(Herzog 82).

Thus, we see a typical patriarchal behaviour, reacting to Madeline's intellectual progress, a behaviour that exposes the contradictory nature of patriarchy. On one hand, Herzog tries to downgrade Madeline's intellectual genuineness by comparing it to her previous whimsical belief in the church, and, on the other hand, he is obviously frightened by the very intellectuality he tries to cheapen. In other words, if Madeline's interest in intellectual issues is just a whimsy, why does Herzog feel a threat in it? The answer to this question may be found in his desperate admission that "you must sacrifice your poor, squawking, niggardly individuality [...] to historical necessity"(Herzog 205). The implication in this sentence is that Herzog, as a clever educated patriarch, bitterly prepares to recognize the changes, the historical necessity would certainly bring about. In other words, he knows that, due to historical necessity, intellectual maturity of new female generation is inevitable, no matter how much he tries to deny it.

The last scene of Herzog's confrontation with Madeline is very dramatic. After Herzog's car accident which involves his daughter June, Madeline arrives to see what has happened to her daughter. Masterfully portrayed, the scene is one of the most touching parts of the novel. Bellow's effort to create a dramatic conflict between Herzog and Madeline after several months is greatly rewarded by the power and vividness of the passage. Resisting reader, however, locates in the
passage a number of strategies employed to persuade the readers to look at the Madeline from a male point of view. In the following paragraphs, I try to show how these strategies function to achieve the intended effects.

In the police station, after the car accident, Herzog tries to explain to the police officer about his appointment with an intermediary friend who is supposed to get June back to Madeline. The police officer asks:

‘Well, now, Moses, why ain't you bringin' the kid straight back to her mother?’

‘You see … we're not on speaking terms. We've had too many scraps.’

‘Appears to me you might be scared of her.’

Herzog was briefly resentful. The remark was calculated to provoke him. But he couldn't afford to be angry now.’ No, sir not exactly.

What makes police officer think that Herzog is scared of Madeline? Herzog must have given some hints. Nevertheless, in patriarchal society, it is humiliating to be openly accused of being scared of women. So Herzog denies, but his reaction to police officer's intention to call Madeline to the police station clearly shows that his denial was just a gesture:

‘Okey we ll call your buddy and the kids mama too’

Herzog exclaimed, Oh don’t call her! (Herzog 300)

When police officer insists that it is necessary to bring Madeline down to police station and see if she has a complaint against him, Herzog again tries to convince police officer not to call Madeline to the police station, "There isn't any complaint,
The text structures the conversation between Herzog and police officer in a way that suggests Herzog's fear of Madeline. This fear is later justified after Madeline enters the police station to take charge of June. Her first look "was devoid of intimate recognition" (Herzog 305). Then she tries not "to grant him a look of recognition" (Herzog 305) at all. In the meantime, Herzog takes the chance to observe her once more and through this observation, the text manages to introduce some traits, which complete the puzzle of Madeline as the archetype of the domineering woman. One of these traits is Madeline's self-control:

The word to describe her conduct was masterful. Her heels had made commanding noise clearly audible in this buzzing room [...]. He could not help admiring the perfection of her self-control. She never hesitated. When she took the milk from Junie, she knew precisely where to drop the container, though she had been only an instant in the room. By now, she had certainly made an inventory of all the objects on the desk. (Herzog 305)

When police officer shows her his loaded gun, her face takes a delightful look and Herzog recognizes "the hard clear look of joy in his eyes" (Herzog 307). Seeing the loaded gun, she takes the immediate advantage in her battle by claiming that Herzog is a dangerous criminal who should be imprisoned. With her masterful answers to police officer's questions, Madeline is shown to attempt to implicate Herzog with violation of the law by keeping an unlicensed loaded revolver. When Herzog says that he "never intended to use that gun except to hold papers down" (Herzog 308), Madeline, pointing to the bullets, looks Herzog in the eyes, and says:

"One of those was for me, wasn't it!"
You think so. I wonder where you get such ideas? And who was the other for? He was quite cool as he said this, his tone was level. He was doing all he could to bring out the hidden Madeline, the Madeline he knew'. (Herzog 308)

Madeline, however, keeps silent. Her reaction becomes non-verbal:

As she stared at him, her colour receded and her nose began to move slightly. She seemed to realize that she must control her tic and violence of her stare. But by noticeable degrees her face becomes very white, her eyes smaller, stony. He believed he could interpret them. They expressed a total will that he should die. This was infinitely more than ordinary hatred. It was for his non-existence, he thought. He wondered whether the sergeant was able to see this (Herzog 308-9)

With this paragraph, the text seems to take the revenge on Madeline for her challenging patriarchy. In this passage, Bellow makes a monster out of her. She is more than just an archetype of domineering woman. She is shown entirely and ruthlessly wicked. Indeed, she is displayed as the symbol of all the brutality and cruelty of the world.

In a sharp contrast to the venomous confrontation with Madeline, the hearing of his brother’s voice on the telephone stirs family emotion in Herzog. “Herzog could do nothing about the feelings stirred by hearing Will. They came to life suddenly at hearing the old tone, the old name. He loved Will (Herzog 309). To be fair, the text is harsh to Madeline. It depicts her as the source of pointless evilness. As a modern woman, Madeline may be challenging or even harsh, but she is only reacting to Herzog's patriarchal behaviour. Unlike what the text tries to suggest, she remains human. Readers remember her motherly anxiety when she enters the police station after the car accident:
At this moment, Madeline arrived. She came in, saying, where is my Child....! Then she saw June on Herzog’s lap and crossed the room quickly. She lifted the milk quickly and took up the girl in her arms [...] Madeline examined June’s arms, and legs felt her with nervous hands. (Herzog 305)

Yet, the main point in reading Herzog remains its narrative canter. Herzog is not reliable. His perception is very biased. It is useful to look at his vanity in the following sentences. “The progress of civilization- indeed the survival of civilization –depends on the success of Moses E. Herzog. And in treating him as she did, Madeline injured a great project” (Herzog 125). The treatment is comic but it does not reduce potential dangers. All the cruel leaders had similar ideas. They thought that history awaits them to save civilization. Similarly, Herzog writes to Monsignor who converted Madeline to Catholicism, “the no doubt mad idea entered my mind that my own actions had historic importance and this made it appear that people who harmed me were interfering with an important experiment” (Herzog 106). Thus, Herzog makes his conflict with Madeline universal and seeing himself a defender of Man, sees Madeline a potential killer of humanity.

Therefore, within this ideological mindset, Herzog’s judgments are shaped. He does not see things as they are. He distorts them to his liking. For instance, he exaggerates his suffering and keeps repeating the story of his betrayal by Madeline to whoever will listen. These recollections impugn not only Madeleine but, more significantly, they impugn Herzog himself for overvaluing his own suffering. His sense of injury may be great but what of the pain felt by people like his childhood friend Nachman whose wife has lapsed into insanity? What of the pain of Madeleine's mother Tennie who is left by her playboy ex-husband and her inattentive daughter to age alone? Herzog is, however, obliquely aware of the absurdity of his suffering. At one lucid point, he borrows a line from Shelley to express the relative meaninglessness of his suffering: "I fall upon the thorns of life,
Bellow characterizes women less adequately than he does men. Nevertheless, Madeline is the most fully-drawn woman character in all his novels. She is the most assertive at the same time. Does it tell anything? Perhaps. Herzog is obsessed with assertive women. He easily forgets those women who yield to him. However, with Madeline, resisting him, he runs into trouble. In one level, as I tried to show earlier, it may be because their relationship becomes the site of confrontation between Herzog's patriarchal aspirations and Madeline's modern expectations. In another level, their relationship is shaped by Herzog's psychic condition. "What I seem to do, thought Herzog, is to inflame myself with my drama, with ridicule, failure, denunciation, distortion to inflame myself voluptuously, aesthetically, until I reach a sexual climax" (Herzog 208). This is exactly a description of masochism. The text provides even more evidence in this. "He had asked to be beaten too, and had lent his attackers strength" (Herzog 103) He find "gratification in pain or suffering in joy" (Herzog 27). He thinks that he "deserves what he was about to suffer" (Herzog 9). He even knows that he uses his suffering a sacrifice. "His suffering is a sacrifice to his sins. He had sinned long and hard. He had sinned against his heart, his own heart" (Herzog 208).

Whatever the cause of their painful relationship may be, the resisting reader knows that the text, locating the center of consciousness in Herzog, employs cunning strategies to create sympathetic readers who are mostly like-minded males of similar experiences. In fact, what the text tries to create is a sympathetic male readership who understands Herzog's suffering in the hands of Madeline. However, what of a reader, say perhaps a woman who happens to be experienced in similar relationship in her real life? Does she identify with Madeline? Or Does she abandon her female self and sympathize with Herzog? The answer simply depends on the type of the reader she is. It is almost certain that no ordinary female reader is ready to identify with Madeline, so heartlessly depicted. Indeed, there is no
space for those women readers in the novel who want to attach to their female self. Passive female readers, however, have to allow some sort of gender transformation to occur and read the text as male readers do. In *The Resisting Reader*, Judith Fetterley argues that in the political context surrounding literature, women risk identification with the "implied author," his beliefs and values. Such identification causes women ultimately to identify against their own history, experience, and beliefs. Indeed, in reading *Herzog*, women are invited to participate in an experience from which they are excluded. To put it simply, woman readers read and enjoy a novel in which almost every experience is shaped to subvert female consciousness.

Yet, for a woman reader, who sees Madeline too heartless to identify with and, at the same time, does not want to abandon her female self, there is another way to read *Herzog*. She should read the text as it was not meant to be read. It should be read against itself in an act of resistance. In resisting reading, a woman reader is not surrendering her consciousness to a male author's hands to shape as he wishes. Rather, she approaches the text to see if it - at least parts of it or a different reading of it - is accommodating to her consciousness. "A reading which focuses as much on the resisting female reader as it does on the text will hopefully yield useful insights into both meaning and the differing effects of the text of its male readers" (Cronin 477). To take Cronin's word, for a successful resisting reading, apart from resisting female reader, text should also be heavily focused. Indeed, through intense focusing on the text, a resisting reader can locate the breaks, gaps, fissures, and discontinuities in the text and make use of them to go beyond what the writer tries to convey as the only way of reading. In fact, as I argued in the first chapter of this thesis, literature provides some spaces for resistance at the same time. In other words, it is an oversimplification to suggest that a literary text is a monolithic, one-dimensional hegemonic construct.

To sum up, in a resisting reading, the text of Bellow's *Herzog* drops its false solidity and reveals its underlying politics of gender. From one point of view,
*Herzog* is a study of the distortion of modern human relations, the failure of modern marriage and the comic incompatibility of heterosexual love with the male quest for higher consciousness. Nevertheless, the way Bellow renders all these themes leads to negative stereotypes of women in his text. Indeed, behind its intelligence, sophistication, observation, there is a virulent hostility to women, which calls upon the sympathies of readers. The gender policy as such not only fails to illuminate the subject of gender relations, but also succeeds very well in reinscribing the old damaging female stereotypes.