

“BELLOW’S TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN HIS NOVELS AND STORIES”

BY

JAHARAT ARA

B.A. (HONOURS), CHITTAGONG COLLEGE,
UNIVERSITY OF CHITTAGONG, 1990
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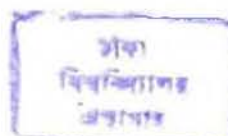
ABSTRACT

Saul Bellow's treatment of women has not attracted a great deal of critical attention. This study will therefore focus on the manifold aspects of women in Bellow's fiction. For this purpose, this thesis concentrates on four novels and four stories of the writer. It scrutinizes changes in Bellow's treatment of women in different phases of his literary career. This study also examines Bellow's skills in exploring women both in their individual spheres and in relation to the people around them. Thus it endeavors to unfold various aspects of women in the Bellow canon.

Chapter One of this study examines Bellow's treatment of women in his first novel, *Dangling Man* (1944). Although Bellow shows little concern in this novel for women's psyche, the women of *Dangling Man* have distinctive qualities. Women are featured in the novel as assertive and free. They do not play a vital role in determining the major actions of the novel. However, they are realistically drawn. Chapter Two discusses women's roles in *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953). This chapter highlights Bellow's ability to depict various types of women. Women in this novel are vital for the plot as they bring about significant changes in the protagonist's life. Chapter Three reveals Bellow's observation about various aspects of men-women relationships in *Herzog* (1964). In this novel, we see Bellow exploring many important factors that determine the relationship between the sexes. Chapter Four discusses women in *Humboldt's Gift* (1973). Women in this novel are found to be multidimensional and more than mere projection of the male-psyche. The final chapter of this study analyzes women in four stories. Among these stories, "Leaving the Yellow House" is particularly significant for it introduces us to the first female protagonist in the Bellow canon.

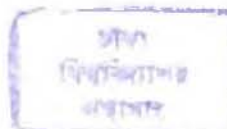
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Although this study is quite unique, and although Bellow has used a woman protagonist in only one of his novels, his fictions always are rich because of the way they reveal women from various angles as they live their lives in today's world. On the whole, this study analyzes in detail the treatment of women in Saul Bellow's novels and stories.



For my mother,
whose inspiration is always with me in my every achievement.

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“Art, literature, philosophy, are attempts to found the world anew on a human liberty: that of the individual creator; to entertain such a pretension, one must first unequivocally assume the status of a being who has liberty.”

(Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 720)

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INTRODUCTION

Saul Bellow (1915-), one of the leading post-war American writers whose status can only be compared to that of Hemingway or Faulkner" (*Saul Bellow in the 1980s*, 1) has won many prestigious awards for his fictions. In 1976 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. As Malcolm Bradbury notes: "He won it at the age of 61, by which date he had behind him a record of seven major novels, one novella, a good number of short stories, several plays and essays written over thirty-five years..." (*Saul Bellow: Contemporary Writers*, 20). These vast array of literary works have received worldwide attention from reviewers and critics who have analyzed Bellow's fictions from manifold aspects.

Interestingly enough, Bellow is mostly viewed as a humanist and contemporary neo-transcendentalist by almost all the major critics. From 1966 to 1974 critics such as Brigitte Scheer- Schätzler (1965), Keith Opdahl (1967), Pierre Dommerges (1967), Robert Det Weiler (1968), John J. Clayton (1968), Irving Malin (1967, 69), David D. Galloway (1970), Nathan Scott (1973), Sarah Blacher Cohen (1974), M. Gilbert Porter (1974), and Earl Rovit (1974, 1975) wrote helpful books discussing and unfolding important avenues of his works (*Saul Bellow in the 1980s*, 1). These critics emphasized Bellow's preoccupation with humanism. Their discussions illuminate Bellow protagonists' psyches, the various complex situations they encounter, and the societies they live in.

Although these scholars have probed deep to analyze Bellow's works critically and discuss subtly most aspects of his works, to a certain extent they have ignored his characterization of women. In this connection, Irving Malin's reproach is noteworthy. In his introductory remarks to *Saul Bellow and the Critics*, Malin expressed his utter despair at the absence of any lengthy discussion of

Bellow's women by the critics. As he puts it: "I am troubled by the absence of any lengthy discussion of Bellow's women. Critics assert they are stylized or unreal. But these adjectives are not enough to explain *the complexity of recurring stereotyped roles*. Only after Herzog do critics describe 'characters'; Ramona and Madeleine force them to do so" (9). Malin also bids critics to write about Bellow's women characters: "... it is time for someone to write an entire essay on all the women" (*Saul Bellow and the Critics*, 9).

As stated in the introduction of *Saul Bellow in the 1980s (A collection of Critical Essays)*, "The application of feminist theory and methods to the Bellow canon surprisingly begins as late as 1979 and 1980" (4) in the forms of dissertations, articles and reviews discussing Bellow's presentation of women in general. Writers such as Louana L. Peontek, Nantana Buranaron, Esther Marie Mackintosh, Joseph McCadden, Sherry Levy Reiner, and Judith Scheffler wrote about Bellow's women from the early 1980's from feminist perspectives. However, as both Gloria L. Cronin and L.H. Goldman observe, most of these critics failed to "distinguish between Bellow's misogyny and that of his protagonists" (*Saul Bellow in the 1980s*, 4).

On the other hand, in the introduction to *Saul Bellow in the 1980s: A Collection of Critical Essays* both Cronin and Goldman point out: "In the 1960's critics like Leslie Fiedler and John J. Clayton had both lamented that Bellow's work was singularly lacking in real or vivid female characters" (5). Leslie A. Fiedler comments, "Bellow is not very successful when he attempts to deal with the sentimental and erotic relations that are the staples of the great European novels; his women tend to be nympholeptic projections,..." (*Saul Bellow and the Critics*, 7).

There are, of course, some positive approaches to Bellow's depiction of women. For example, a recent Bellowian critic, Ada Aharoni, seems to be more realistic and less idealistic in her outlook about Bellow's treatment of women. Indeed, of all of Bellow's critics, Aharoni is the one who, as both Cronin and Goldman observe: "seems to have taken seriously Malin's injunction particularly with regard to his hint of the complexity of the women characters in the novel" (*Saul Bellow in the 1980s*, 5).

Aharoni begins her paper, "Women in Saul Bellow's Novels" by criticizing earlier critics who failed to see Bellow's women as 'convincing, real and vivid' (*Saul Bellow in the 1980s*, 95). She argues that "Bellow's artistic technique imposes some limitations on his portrayal of women characters, as we perceive them through the minds of his male protagonists who often overshadow them;" (5). However, Aharoni chooses to discuss only "a few representative female characters" (5) to analyze Bellow's characterization of women. Nevertheless, she views Bellow's works as rich and vast in depiction of women of all kinds (*Saul Bellow in the 1980s*, 96).

But it must be said that Bellow's women have not attracted enough attention from his critics. This work thus not only reviews the ideas and views of previous critics regarding Bellow's treatment of women but also undertakes the task of systematically analyzing the women in the Bellow canon. To do so, it has focused on four of his major novels and four stories. It is to be hoped that this work will be able to present a comprehensive and stimulating account of women characters. *how? only four out of seven novels are included*
The works chosen for discussion are the novels *Dangling Man* (1944), *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), *Herzog* (1964), and *Humboldt's Gift* (1973). Each of these four novels represents significant phases of Bellow's writing, now spread over four decades. The short stories chosen for analysis are

"The Gonzaga Manuscripts" (1954), "A Father-To-Be" (1955), "Leaving the Yellow House" (1957) from his collection, *Mosby's Memoirs and Other Stories* (1969) and the long story "What Kind of Day Did You Have?" (1974) from his collection, *Him With His Foot In His Mouth and Other Stories* (1974). The selection has been made in the belief that these chosen fictions encompass almost all the major categories of women in Bellow's narratives.

Since *Dangling Man* (1944) is Bellow's first novel, I have started my dissertation with this piece to see how he had depicted women at this primary stage of his writing. Although in this novel we see Bellow mainly preoccupied with the predicament of a man, women have their distinctive roles in it. Iva, the central female character of this novel, supports her husband's bid to do creative writing by taking the major financial responsibility of the family. We observe that although at the beginning of the novel this situation caused a silent war between husband and wife mainly because of "Joseph's inferiority complex" (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 71), they are finally reconciled like many other normal couples who experience ups and downs in their conjugal lives.

Bellow proves his concern for women as he makes the protagonist of *Dangling Man* realize that women should be respected for what they are. It would be a vain attempt if any man tries to change a woman. As Joseph realizes at the end: "I learned that Iva could not live in my infatuations. There are such things as clothes, appearances...the enjoyable evening...Women- thus I reasoned - were not equipped by training to resist such things" (DM, 98). Thus Bellow seems to support women's distinctiveness. Here the writer seems to assert women's free choices. He affirms the idea that women should not be forced to change their habits.

In addition to Iva, in *Dangling Man* Bellow has successfully drawn some other minor female characters. They are realistically drawn and have human drawbacks as well as potentialities. These women are presented as bolder, more autonomous, and more courageous than his protagonist. But what is lacking in Bellow's depiction of women in this novel is that he does not focus on a woman's mind. Neither Iva nor the other women in this novel are exceptions to this practice. So we know little about a woman's psyche from this work. Moreover, in this novel, Bellow seems not to have bothered about women as individuals. They are merely drawn in various situations where the protagonist meets them. Hence women function as appendages in this early Bellow novel.

Almost nine years later after the publication of *Dangling Man*, in *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953) we observe various types of women through Augie, the protagonist, as and when he meets them in the course of his adventure-filled life. 1953 is also the year when Simone de Beauvoir published her famous book *The Second Sex*. In this book, her most challenging observation about patriarchal society is "...we are exhorted to be women, remain women, become women" (de Beauvoir,13). In *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and The United States*, Sheila Rowbotham observes "the emphasis upon 'becoming' challenged the view that a 'changeless essence' of femininity determined women's destiny. Her phrase resonated with a new generation ready to accept that one's womanhood was of one's own making" (280). Unwittingly Bellow seems to have drawn this particular aspect of modern feminism in his characterization of some of the women in *The Adventures of Augie March*.

At first we see Augie's mother. She is the type of the meek, fragile and submissive woman. Through Augie's mother, Bellow gives us the picture of a miserable woman who lacks social dignity, freedom, and economic independence.

He presents her as the “domestic” type. We cannot appreciate her docility but her role sometimes evokes our sympathy. One other woman, Anna Coblin, is a mother figure whom Augie resents when she tries to treat him as her son. Grandma Lausch is materialistic and power hungry. She is the first woman who tries to shape Augie according to her own wishes. In addition to these mother figures, Mrs. Renling appears in this novel as another domineering woman who tries to adopt Augie as her son. She always asserts her power over everything she possesses. Nevertheless, Mrs. Renling’s concern for Augie is so extreme that she does not even like his relationship with others, especially with women. At the end, Augie manages to break with her when she tries to overwhelm him with her personality.

Almost all of these women support de Beauvoir’s feminist view about traditional women as they have been developed in the mold of patriarchal society. They are “traditional”, “male-biased” (*Feminism and Philosophy*,¹) women who cherish certain ideas that represent patriarchal values. For example, Anna Coblin, Augie’s mother, Grandma Lausch and Mrs. Renling are such women. They cannot think about their world without depending on men.

Although the domineering women have a common tendency to change Augie according to their wishes, their thoughts, outlooks, styles and backgrounds are different. Grandma Lausch represents traditional values, Anna Coblin a middle class, half-literate woman, while Mrs. Renling is the modern upper class European woman.

Beside the domineering type, in *The Adventures of Augie March*, modern, bold and free women play vital roles as Augie’s friends, lovers and mates. Mimi Villar is one such woman; she enters Augie’s life simply as a friend. Mimi is a

rebellious voice as she criticizes women who lack self-judgment and who merely exist under the dominant shadows of men. Mimi neither wants to dominate others nor wants to be dominated.

Unlike Mimi, Sophie Geratis is passive, cozy and submissive. She passes time with Augie for a short while but has no intention of marrying him. We observe an interesting similarity between Kitty (Joseph's mistress in *Dangling Man*), Mimi and Sophie as they get involved in relationships with men without any idea of marrying them. Thus they are the embodiments of modern women who choose their own ways. They are independent and none can impose anything on them.

In *The Adventures of Augie March*, we observe two other women who are as peculiar and adventurous as Augie. One is Thea Fenchel. She is reckless and treats her relationship with Augie as a part of her adventurous life. Once her adventure with Augie is over, she loses interest in him. Thus she proves to be the kind of woman who lack commitment to a emotional bond. Another is Stella, an actress who aspires to become famous. She too lacks commitment to a emotional bond and counts more on success.

In fact, in *The Adventures of Augie March*, Bellow introduces us to different types of women who are vital for the plot as they bring significant changes in the protagonist's life. These women are noteworthy for their lively presence. Moreover, Bellow pays a lot of attention to them. In this novel, Bellow's skill in depicting women of various kinds is praiseworthy, and represents a considerable development over *Dangling Man*.

Moreover, if we see *The Adventures of Augie March* from a feminist perspective, we find that in this novel many Bellow's women represent some basic aspects of certain feminist ideas. For instance, in the introduction to book two of *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir, "The mother of modern feminism" as Ynestra King attributes her (*Feminism and Philosophy*, 358) mentions:

The women of today are in a fair way to dethrone the myth of femininity; they are beginning to affirm their independence in concrete ways;...Reared by women within a feminine world, their normal destiny is marriage, which still means practically subordination to man; (31).

Bellow's presentation of modern women such as Mimi Villars, Sophie Geratis, Thea Fenchel, even Kitty (*Dangling Man*) appears to "dethrone" those set values of "femininity" that demand from a woman "subordination to man" (de Beauvoir, 31). They display women who seek their independence, choosing their ways all by themselves. They do not accept marriage as their destiny; rather, they have affairs with men with no idea of marrying them. Thus though women are not central to the novel or what we must say, and though they are mostly interpreted by men, here Bellow's narrative is unfailingly rich in depicting women free of traditional patriarchal values. In other words, by preserving their freedom they have embodied de Beauvoir's ideas.

However, the contrast between Augie's mother and Mimi Villar in this novel is a proof that Bellow is keen in his observation of different types of women. In this novel we also see women ranging from the "domestic" category to that of independent and modern women. Thus they have belied Malin's observation that

Bellow's women appear in "recurring stereotyped roles" (*Saul Bellow and The Critics*, 9).

Ten years later, Bellow wrote *Herzog* (1964). In this novel, the protagonist's ex-wife Madeleine is drawn vividly and is perhaps the first Bellovian woman to have captured the attention of critics. She is as important as Herzog, the protagonist of the novel, and her influence on him is immense. Herzog's divorce with her is the incident from which the plot takes off. She had married Herzog, an aging professor of philosophy hastily, but realizes that her marriage with him will prevent her from fulfilling her ambition of scholarly achievement. When she finds that she has to lead a loveless married life, she discards Herzog and starts living with another man. Madeleine is outspoken, independent and energetic. Among Bellow's women, she comes closest to being a feminist.

In *Herzog*, Bellow presents another woman who plays a major role in determining Herzog's life. She is Herzog's first wife, Daisy. Unlike Madeleine, she provides Herzog with every support that he needs. However, she is treated poorly by Herzog. Still another woman, Sono Oguki, is Herzog's Japanese mistress. Like Daisy she is also dedicated to Herzog. But Herzog does not reciprocate her feelings. Thus we see that both Daisy and Sono are meek in nature. Herzog treats them shabbily while he receives the same treatment from Madeleine.

If we compare these three women, we find that unlike Daisy and Sono, Madeleine is quite independent and firm. She ignores all patriarchal values. She does not shape herself according to other people's choices; rather, she takes things into her own hands and struggles to shape her own destiny. Madeleine, in fact, represents free women who determine their own fates and glow with vitality whereas Daisy and Sono let their lives be determined by others and remain

vulnerable before men. However, since they sacrifice themselves for love's sake we cannot look down upon them; rather, we should appreciate their sincerity and dedication.

Ramona, another woman who has a relationship with the protagonist in the novel, appears as a "great comfort" (*Herzog*, 26) to him. She is mature, intelligent and hard-working. She falls in love with Herzog because his ideas attract her. One significant aspect of her character is her sexuality. Although Herzog enjoys Ramona's style, approach, and attitude, he feels that Ramona has made herself "a sort of sexual professional" (*Herzog*, 26). Nevertheless, her help allows him overcome his crises and restores his peace of mind. She is unique in her beliefs and perceptions. Once she loves Herzog, she is ready to do everything for him. Ramona is a beautiful projection of warmth, affection and practicality.

Herzog can be regarded as Bellow's masterpiece at least in part because of its vivid presentation of women like Madeleine, Daisy, Sono and Ramona and because of its detailed description of their psychology, social positions, struggles, dreams, passions, failures and achievements. Typically, in this novel Bellow portrays women in relation to his male protagonists but we observe that Herzog's relationship with women is not a success story. This novel shows further development in Bellow's handling of women. He is successful in revealing them in different situations and explores many factors determining men-women relationship.

In *Humboldt's Gift* (1973), we find women characters, who typically of Bellow, are related to the two major male characters, Von Humboldt Fleisher and Charlie Citrine. Although Bellow's women in this novel are less important than the men, they can be struggling, domineering, ambitious as well as meek, passive

and submissive. Certainly, they are more than mere projections of the male-psyche.

Kathleen is a meek and obliging character. In her passivity, she is, to some extent, like Daisy and Sono in *Herzog*. In the end though, she manages to free herself and gets back her freedom. In her we see the life of a woman who had loved a man of literary genius and was thrilled by him like a college girl (HG,358). Only when she successfully breaks down the 'spell' cast on her by Humboldt does she come into her own. Like Daisy and Sono in *Herzog*, Kathleen's portrayal reveals that Bellow not only sees his male protagonists as suffering at the hands of women, but also views the way women are treated badly because of men's personal whims.

The character of Denise in the novel is, in contrast, that of a haughty and class conscious woman. Her unscrupulous attitude spoils her marriage with Charlie. She appears to be a woman who possesses an intelligent head but lacks a loving heart. We find her interested in money, status and power but negligent about love, care and mutual respect. Charlie once classifies the modern American women as "petty bourgeois, husband killers, social climbers, hysterics, etcetera" (HG,12), Denise certainly belongs to such a category.

Demmie is the only woman in the novel who supports Charlie's ideas and helps him. Like Ramona in *Herzog*, Demmie encourages Charlie and becomes a source of inspiration for him saying, "you'll do great, Charlie. Just great" (HG,130). She even discusses philosophy (HG,148). We find her multi-dimensional. She is melancholic, exuberant, intelligent, educated, religious, and at times juvenile and mature. Thus Demmie is a complex woman. She has a strong belief in the integrity of mind and body. Through her Bellow shows that a

combination of both mental and physical purity can accentuate the actual goodness of human characters.

In contrast to Demmie is the character of Renata. She unscrupulously uses her beauty to attract men. She loves Charlie mainly for his fame and money. She is deceitful as she has an affair with a man called Flonzaley while sleeping with Charlie. She tries to convince Charlie that she would make a good wife of him. But Charlie finds her extremely materialistic and hesitates to marry her. After staying together with Charlie for a while, she finally marries Flonzaley. Her deviousness is highlighted as she dumps Charlie with her little boy in a hotel in Spain and marries Flonzaley. Nevertheless, Renata is a convincing character. She reveals the prejudices of a patriarchal society. She challenges a male-dominated society where men are free to shift their relationship from woman to woman but disapprove of women if they go for several relationships at a time.

Although the stories are necessarily painted in small canvases, Bellow's women get equal attention in them. As in his novels, we find the women in Bellow's stories appealing for their unique qualities. Their diverse roles are essential to determine major developments in his plots.

For example, though in "The Gonzaga Manuscripts" (1954), the protagonist's quest for the manuscripts is the major theme of the story, Bellow presents women in it in many ways. Countess del Camino is a woman for whom Gonzaga wrote his love poems and whose action of burying the poems in her grave ultimately prevents Clarence from carrying out his mission of restoring the manuscripts. Miss Walsh appears hostile to Clarence while Miss Unger comforts him. Thus though women are minor characters they have effective roles that controls the main action of this story.

"A Father-To-Be" (1955) describes the story of a young research chemist who suffers because of his fiancée's unscrupulous behavior. Joan is an inconsiderate and extravagant woman who appears to annoy Rogin. In this story we see men-women relationship from an angle that is striking. When Rogin wonders, "A pair of spirits, practically alike, so why shouldn't there also be equality? I can't always be the strong one" (*Mosby's Memoirs and other stories*, 154), he becomes a voice of suffering men who desire equal sacrifice from women. Bellow might be suggesting that to establish a harmonious and balanced relationship, women too ought to share responsibilities with men. Although as a woman Joan is not convincing, her role is an important one since she helps unfold the suffering of Rogin by controlling his emotional ups and downs.

In "Leaving the Yellow House" (1957), Hattie is presented as a self-reliant and courageous woman. Despite being a lonely, old woman, Hattie never loses her capacity to fight adversity. Through Hattie's character, Bellow shows that he observes women not only in relation to men but also in their individual spheres as they struggle to make a life of their own.

"What Kind of Day Did You Have?" (1974) records the story of a woman, Katrina, who remains an object of a man's desire for a long time but finally asserts herself. The way Bellow delineates women in this story proves him to be quite concerned about women's problems in a male-dominated society.

If we look at Bellow's women from feminist perspectives, such as "liberal", "Marxist", "radical", "psychoanalytic", "socialist", "anarcha", "ecological", "phenomenological", and "post-modern" (*Feminism and Philosophy*, 3), we find that unwittingly he has drawn them as the representatives of almost all of these philosophies. It is also interesting to note that Bellow echoes

the idea that all women do not think alike, by showing a great variety of women who exercise their freedom in their distinctive ways.

In conclusion to *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States*, Sheila Rowbotham declares, "Women's history in the twentieth century includes demands like the vote and equal pay,...along with the glance of pleasure or the wild act of personal daring" (574-75). Rowbotham's comment is applicable in cases of Bellow's depiction of women like Kitty (*DM*), Thea Fenchel, Stella, Sophie and Mimi (*AAM*), Madeleine and Ramona (*Herzog*), Demmie and Renata (*HG*) and Hattie in "Leaving the Yellow House". These women are the embodiments of "the glance of pleasure or the wild act of personal daring" (Rowbotham, 575) that characterize modern women.

Although Bellow has shown the problems of both his male and female characters, his characterization of women are more balanced. We find a similarity between Bellow's depiction of women and Rowbotham's expectation of how women should be observed in this century. As Rowbotham notes:

...the history of women this century can be interpreted as a complex, sometimes conflicting quest for both personal and social balance. Balance, after all, is a word which contains a sense of justice, self-possession and equilibrium; it is also decisively affected by surrounding circumstance (*A Century of Women*, 580).

It is interesting to note that like his men Bellow's women faces miseries and ambiguities. We also observe that Bellow's protagonists have problems not only with the opposite sex but also with their own selves. We cannot say that Bellow holds a positive view of his men whereas his women always get negative

treatment. On the contrary, he is impartial and can depict men who are full of deficiencies. Critics who find Bellovian women either unconvincing or portrayed negatively have judged them unfairly. Bellow's depiction of women is realistic and genuine as he sees them in relation to their "surrounding circumstance" (*A Century of Women*, 580).

In the chapter "Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology, and Nature/Culture Dualism", in *Feminism and Philosophy*, Ynestra King, a feminist philosopher quotes de Beauvoir's comments regarding women and peace, and feminism and ecology (359): "Why should women be more in favour of peace than men? I should think it a matter of equal concern for both!"¹ Bellow's presentation of women such as Madeleine (*Herzog*), Renata and Denise (*HG*), Miss Walsh in "The Gonzaga Manuscripts" and Joan in "A Father-To-Be" seems to be supportive of this argument of de Beauvoir. Though Leslie Fiedler viewed them as "unconvincing" (*Love and Death in the American Novel*, 363) and most major critics are harsh in their criticism of these Bellovian women, Bellow himself appears liberal in his attitude towards them. These women are assertive and sometimes more powerful than men. Though they are viewed mostly by men, Bellow has not failed to show them in their individual spheres. Though they do not have sound relationship with men, they are treated as individual human beings.

Arguing Separation?

CHAPTER ONE

DANGLING MAN

Written in the diary-form, *Dangling Man* (1944) is Bellow's first novel. As in most of Bellow's fictions, the central character is male. Though in this novel Bellow's main focus is on the character of Joseph, he proves his skill in drawing female characters too. We will show how Bellow has depicted women's personal and social lives as well as those of his men. This discussion will present how the writer has seen women in the experiences of men. Women characters in this novel do not speak or act directly. However, since we come to know of different situations and characters through Joseph who writes about them in his diary, women characters are reflected through him.

Iva, the central female figure in *Dangling Man*, appears as the calm, quiet and dutiful wife of Joseph. When Irving Malin, a leading critic, describes Iva's actual position in the novel, he finds her to be missing most of the time, even in Joseph's thoughts.² We see that Joseph is indifferent to Iva though she supports his bid to do creative writing. Malin also points to Joseph's inferiority complex and lack of enthusiasm or gratitude in a situation where Iva, the wife, is the 'breadwinner' (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 71). Joseph, in other words, is a conventional male suffering from self-pity. On the other hand, Iva is strong and has a mind of her own.

Iva's strength is a threat to the existence of Joseph. According to Malin, "He is 'afraid' of any strength on her part, of any individuality" (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 71). It is noteworthy that from the time he keeps his diary Joseph expresses his alienation from his wife. He writes, "Iva is a quiet girl. She has a

way about her that discourages talk. We no longer confide in each other; in fact, there are many things I could not mention to her”(Dangling Man, 12). Joseph’s statement helps us see how cold and apart they remain though they live under the same roof as husband and wife.

It is quite interesting to note that Joseph wants Iva to be away (Malin, 71). Since they cannot open their heart to each other, there is a lack of communication between the two. The impression we get at first of Iva is that she is ‘a quiet girl’(12) who lacks warmth. She loves Joseph but would like to preserve her own options in life. She does not want to change Joseph’s mode of living. But Joseph wants to command Iva; for instance, “He has taken a great deal of trouble with his wife, urging her to read books of his choosing, teaching her to admire what he believes admirable. To what degree he has succeeded he does not know” (29). This is really a patriarchal attitude, and this attitude implies that Joseph is domineering in his treatment to Iva.

Although Malin finds Joseph to be a domineering husband, he seems to support his ways. For example, Malin seems to be negative in his attitude to Iva as he finds Iva’s world of clothes, appearance, furniture, light entertainment, mystery stories, the attraction of fashion magazines, and everything else to be ‘materialistic’(Saul Bellow’s Fiction, 72). It is difficult to disagree with Malin when he depicts Iva as a passive and materialistic woman. But Iva’s behavior also asserts her individuality. Though usually passive, she disobeys Joseph in a party, asserts her will, and gets drunk even when Joseph orders her not to drink and records for us, “I did not mean to be disobeyed. Yet a little later I saw her at the bowl and frowned at the quick motion with which she raised her arm and drank” (44). In discussing this scene in *Saul Bellow’s Fiction*, Malin has no interest in supporting Iva. Rather, he finds Joseph’s world to be a spiritual one where he fails

to establish any sound communication with the materialist milieu of Iva (Malin,72).

But though Joseph tries hard to subject Iva, he is constantly worried that his treatment of Iva is not fair. From utter consciousness of his real condition that is his self-pity, a jobless, financially dependent husband which causes him a feeling of ignominy, most of the time Joseph fails to disclose his heart to Iva.

Like most other critics, Malin feels that Bellow has not drawn any female character positively. According to him, neither Iva nor the other women of *Dangling Man* are fully drawn (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*,72). He finds all women to be causes of anxiety as well as dangerous. For example, he characterizes Iva's mother, Mrs. Almstadt, as a rather 'bossy woman' (Malin,72) who takes care of her sick husband and her silly son-in-law. But Malin's observation is inadequate, perhaps because he always tends to see these women as drawn idealistically. These women appear merely when their male counterparts encounter them and Joseph, the male protagonist mentions them according to his needs. Most of the time, he does not get on well with women. But as far as these women's lives can be seen, they act in a practical world. They have many features that may cause either respect or hatred for them in readers as well as critics. So it would be a mistake if we see them only as female figures carrying out all the negative traits of human nature.

However, Joseph's treatment of his mother-in-law is disrespectful. He has always expressed his utter disgust at the woman. At one moment we find him describing her in a grotesque manner: "... She powders herself thickly, and her lips are painted in the shape that has become the universal device of sensuality for all women, from the barely mature to the very old" (19). Thus Joseph shows his

antipathy against all women whom he considers merely as the object of sensuality. When he says, "she is forever on the watch for new packs and face lotion"(20) we see how negatively he draws the character of his mother-in-law. As Malin notes: "Calling her vain, stupid, and proud, Joseph adds resentment to his fear of the old lady"(72).

But we cannot agree with Joseph that this lady is altogether vain since she takes care of her sick husband: "She bought his clothes, and she had dressed him for bed like a mandarin or a Romanoff prince"(20). Her husband also does not seem to be annoyed with the way she is. He rather says, "Katy's still a child; she never grew up"(21). Although she talks a lot, he accepts her garrulity without any complain against her, "I don't pay any attention to it. All women are talkers. May be Katy talks more than most, but you got to allow for that" (20). We also find Joseph amazed to see that his father-in-law is delighted with her: "wanted her slovenly, garrulous, foolish, and coy, took pleasure in enduring her. His face, as we looked at each other, took on a doglike aspect. I was perturbed, and rebuked my imagination" (22). At this juncture, we find Joseph's father-in-law to be liberal in his dealing with his simple wife. In contrast, Joseph's attitude towards the conjugal life of this old couple is rather indifferent. He is a cynic who fails to find anything to appreciate in the mutual relationship of his parents-in-law.

Joseph fights against women all the time. But these women are not passive either. The encounter between Joseph and Etta is quite hostile. Etta looks down on Joseph and the two start fighting over a simple matter when Joseph visits his brother's house. Although Etta is his niece and younger than him, he does not hesitate to spank the girl. Malin is quite perceptive as he narrates that "the spanking symbolizes the basic hostility Joseph has towards all women- a hostility which is fearful at the same time"(Saul Bellow's Fiction,73).

Before the fight with Etta, Joseph described their relationship thus: "My niece and I are not on good terms; there is a longstanding antagonism between us. Ours was not a rich family. . . She prefers her mother's people. Her cousins have automobiles and summer homes. I am in no way a credit to her" (61). Joseph believes that his low-class family background is the actual reason of Etta's hatred towards him. He does not even like his sister-in-law, Dolly. He looks at her bare neck and defines it as the "stretched forth necks" (60) which he thinks resembles "the neck of the daughters of Zion, haughty and wanton which once provoked the prophet Isaiah to utter disgraceful words for them"(61). It is noteworthy that most of the time Joseph utters humiliating words to women. He describes either their physical deformity or their obsession with physical beauty. For example, he describes his mother-in-law's futile attempt to look beautiful. He records his negative impression of Etta thus: "Etta is a vain girl. I am sure she spends a great many hours before the mirror" (62).

However, we find Kitty offering some relief for Joseph since he finds her not 'intelligent or even clever'(96). Though Kitty initially appears to be 'a kind of pet-unassertive, soft'(Saul Bellow's *Fiction*,73), she ultimately proves herself assertive when she asks Joseph to leave Iva (Malin,73). Kitty's gesture brings the situation to a point from where Joseph fails to continue the relationship anymore. So this relief from Kitty is not long-lived . Observing Joseph's failure, we can agree with Malin's observation: "Ambiguity, tension, ambivalence, these words describe Joseph's relationship with women" (Saul Bellow's *Fiction*,73).

A recent Bellovian critic, Ada Aharoni describes Iva, the pivotal female character of *Dangling Man*, as an energetic woman who dearly cherishes her independence. At the same time, she finds Joseph enthusiastic about Iva and grateful to her for suggesting that, "instead of searching for new employment, he

should use the time to complete writing his book on Diderot, and that in the meantime they could live on her salary".³ But this enthusiasm diminishes as soon as society starts treating him as inferior or subordinate to Iva. Joseph's problem is that he fails to overcome the typically patriarchal belief that men should always take the responsibility of earning money. This belief inhibits him. It is not only a severe drawback of Joseph but also of traditional patriarchal society and it prevents the development of harmonious relationship between the two sexes. As Aharoni notes, "Living on his wife's salary constantly gives Joseph the disagreeable feeling that he is 'kept' by her" (*Saul Bellow in The 1980s*, 96). In a more congenial atmosphere, the situation could have been different. Aharoni positively appreciates Bellow for his depiction in *Dangling Man* of the consequences when the woman in the family becomes the breadwinner.

Iva's outlook is unconventional as she not only works to earn money but also gives Joseph liberty, 'to read and to do all the delightful things'(11). Her initiative should have been praised by Joseph and they could have become supportive of each other. But while Iva leaves space for Joseph, he tries to change her.

If we compare Malin's judgment with that of Aharoni, we will find the latter to be more positive in her attitude to Iva. Unlike Malin, Aharoni supports Iva's way of life. Aharoni feels for her and speaks in favor of Iva's choices of things since, "after her long hours amid books and periodicals at the library, she needs to relax at home with such lighter entertainment" (*Saul Bellow in The 1980s*, 96). Aharoni supports all these in terms of individual taste and as an expression of a woman's own inner self. She argues: "What is wrong in liking furniture, clothes, appearances and even mystery stories? Why should Iva be built on the model of the intellectual he would like her to be?" (Aharoni, 97). Thus

Aharoni views Iva as a very modern feminist who seeks recognition of a woman's identity through her freedom of choice.

Aharoni sees the Kitty-Joseph affair as means of getting Joseph's insight into the essence of the 'concept of freedom'(Aharoni,97). This critic does not pay much attention to Kitty. It is clear that Kitty shows a glimpse of independence in her own way. While visiting Kitty, Joseph senses 'the lively, plump, high-coloured, scented, gross girl behind the talk'(*Dangling Man*,99). Kitty is frank, free, and flexible about moral values. She may not have any intellectual interests, but she possesses a sort of freedom which is expressed by her obsession with the things she buys on a Caribbean tour mapped by Joseph (*DM*,96). It is noteworthy that Kitty shows no hypocrisy and does not hide her relationship with another man. The final scene between the two is ironical for Joseph : "She looked behind, and turned to me with a smile, but half in contempt, as much as to say, 'It isn't my fault that that isn't your shirt hanging on the chair' " (103). He cheats in his relationship with Iva by maintaining a secret affair with Kitty and gets his due as Kitty discards him for another man.

Kitty's gesture is bold and autonomous whereas Joseph lacks the courage to tell Iva that he has an extra-marital affair. From his relationship with Kitty, Joseph learns that every individual treasures his or her own freedom. Though Aharoni does not concentrate on the minor female figures of the novel, she is able to offer a fresh insight into the characters. She praises Bellow for bringing his protagonist "to a full realization that Iva is not only his wife, but a person in her own right, with tastes of her own, and that he has to accept her the way she is" (Aharoni,98).

Though most of the time we get an impression of Iva's cold, mechanized personality, everything shows her love for her husband. She does not speak much

or appear to be lively. But at the end of the novel, she reveals her eagerness to get Joseph's attention. When Iva tries to do what Joseph expects from her, he remains non-cooperative. Once, when Iva is searching for a book and requests Joseph to help her find it, Joseph answers evasively, "It's probably buried among the others. Why don't you read another book? There're plenty"(93). But Iva wants the book because earlier Joseph has insisted on her reading it. But as long as she tells him this, Joseph answers, "But that was long ago, months and months ago. You should have read it in a few hours" (94). Joseph's reluctant answer makes Iva furious. She can no longer check herself and bursts out, "And it's months and months since you took an interest in me. Lately, for all you care, I might just as well not be here. You pay no attention to what I say. If I didn't come home for a week you wouldn't miss me" (94). Obviously, Joseph's silent response to everything Iva does makes her think in such a way. However, there is no truth in Iva's claim.

But Joseph does not show his concern for what Iva says. Rather, he feels irritated and leaves home thinking that it is better to go out in the rain "than spending the evening with a nagging wife" (94). Leaving Iva at home all by herself, Joseph goes out to seek pleasure from Kitty. To him Kitty appears "simple, warm, uncomplicated, and matter-of-fact"(96). For the time being, Joseph finds pleasure in Kitty's company. He apparently thinks that Kitty is not bothered about his marital status since she is unconventional about her views on marriage and love.

But Joseph is not sure about his affair with Kitty and is in a confused state about the rationale behind this relationship. When he starts visiting Kitty, he fails to bear 'the strain of living in both camps'(101). In other word, he cannot cope with the pressures of a dual life. Though he comes to Kitty for relief he is constantly searching out the reason for his fascination with this girl. He cites Iva's

insurgence (for example, at the Servatius party) as an excuse for an extra-marital relationship. He also confesses that he wants to mould Iva after 'Burckhardt's great ladies of the Renaissance'(98) and 'Augustan women'(98). But he is soon able to see that he is mistaken about Iva :

Iva was formed at fifteen, when I met her, with likes and dislikes of her own which (because, for some strange reason, I opposed them) she set aside until the time when she could defend or simply assert them. Hence our difficulty. There were nervous quarrels. She, in brave, shaky, new defiance, started to enjoy her independence. I let her alone, pretending indifference (*Dangling Man*, 98).

But Joseph's realization leads him to distance himself from Iva and he soon renews his search for freedom. Aharoni points out that Joseph's attitude to Iva's choices and interests of things are 'patriarchal'(Aharoni,97) . She emphasizes that Joseph, typically for a man, sees a woman as shaped by his needs. And Joseph is not free from male chauvinism: "One of the major sources of their misunderstanding was that Joseph had looked down on Iva's 'superficial' interests" (Aharoni,96). They live together under the same roof but in their ways of life they are poles apart.

However, Joseph comes back to Iva only when Kitty becomes engaged with another person. Then, he can no longer visit her 'on a friendly basis'(101). In contrast, Iva is always loyal to Joseph. Despite their misunderstandings, she arranges to celebrate their sixth wedding anniversary, "She was determined that this was not to be just another evening" (114). Certainly, she is determined to keep the relationship a happy one.

Unlike Joseph, Iva is a practical woman. She accepts money as a gift from Joseph's step-mother. She rationalizes it thus: "Now, Joseph, don't be angry," Iva said. "We can use the money. We both need things" (124). She understands its necessity in life. But Joseph is not serious about money or other material things. This shows the difference in their perspectives on life.

Bellow does not focus on Iva's life. While we see how Joseph passes most of his time sitting quietly all by himself we do not know how Iva acts in her working place and how she responds to her surroundings. Since almost all of Bellow's protagonists are men, his women find expression only in relation to them. Iva is no exception to this practice. Bellow himself does not bother to enter the psyche of a woman. So we know little about how a woman thinks in crises or how deeply she feels for everything about life. We only know or see how she acts in relationships with men.

Nevertheless, and though Joseph does not give much attention to Iva, he loves her profoundly. For instance, when Joseph's mother-in-law wants Iva to stay with her for sometime, he expresses his intense feeling for Iva, "I love Iva too much to turn her over to them" (118). Although Joseph writes at the beginning that they no more confide in each other, we see an intense romantic exchange between the two one evening, "We had an enormous sunset, a smashing of gaudy colors, apocalyptic reds . . . I woke Iva, and we watched it, hand in hand. Her hand was cool and sweet. I had a slight fever" (124). Iva's less demanding nature finally brings them closer and Joseph admits that Iva has changed herself to the extent that she does not protest against the 'rooming-house life'(152), "she seems less taken up with clothes; . . . Yet she is as far as ever from what I once desired to make her" (152). On the whole, we can say that with all the ups and downs of life they remain close to each other.

However, the problem that Joseph faces in his relationship with most women of the novel may be the result of his loneliness. Malin believes that the problem lies in the loss of his mother and subsequent loneliness. He wants an understanding woman but fails in getting one (Malin,73). This critic's argument indicates that Joseph is a weak , albeit complex character who takes it for granted that no woman can be the equal of a man. Joseph's attitude to women is clear in his appreciation of women's position as house-keepers. As Malin notes:

At least there is praise when he[Joseph] gazes at Marie, the maid, polishing the windows, 'In those moments at the window, how different Marie was, how purely human as she rubbed the glass. I sometimes wonder if it can be entirely a source of pleasure to clean . . . But it has its importance as a notion of center, of balance, of order'(113).

Perhaps, Joseph has a craving for order or balance throughout his life. But why does he find order and balance in Marie's simple daily household work but is unable to praise Iva's work as the bread-winner? Surely, we can say that his prejudice about women prevents him from appreciating Iva's contribution to the family.

If we compare Malin and Aharoni, we discover that they differ in their views about Bellow's women. While Malin is cynical about Bellow's portrayal of women and finds his women lacking in qualities that can bring about a harmonious relationship between the two sexes Aharoni looks at the relationship from an unusual angle. But neither Malin nor Aharoni discusses the characters fully. As we have seen, the relationship between Iva and Joseph is miserable for

many reasons, but at the same time they share some things from time to time. Like many other couples, they pass through the ups and downs in their relationship.

In fact, we can conclude that Bellow's women in *Dangling Man* reflect reality. Also, though Bellow is mostly concerned here with Joseph, he is keen enough to see women like Iva, Kitty, Etta, Dolly, Mrs. Almstadt and many other minor characters in the novel who also contribute to give a complex and interesting shape to the story. He does not take the side of any of the two sexes. He neither tries to solve gender issues nor does he write in support of men. Indeed, his vantage point in presenting various types of men and women makes his that of a scrupulous on-looker of life.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ADVENTURES OF AUGIE MARCH

The Adventures of Augie March (1953) is the story of a picaresque character who meets a number of women in the course of an adventure-filled life. Most of the time women come in the scene only in relation to Augie, the central character of the novel. He is the central focalizer and we see women mainly through his eyes. This chapter will thus analyze almost all the female characters who have relations with Augie.

The novel begins with Augie's introduction of his family. He introduces his mother first. However, Malin finds her 'less of a parent than a child' (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 77). He dismisses her influence on Augie and declares that Augie cannot have any respect for her. But Augie's feeling for his mother is evident in many ways. It is true that she is "simple-minded"(1) and "didn't have much to teach"(1) Augie but when he says, "My brothers and I loved her"(1), his feeling for her is obvious.

As far as we can tell, Augie's mother had been abandoned by his father. We also know that she was not legally married to the man. Critics do not have much to say about her. Perhaps she fails to draw their attention because of her timid and passive nature. Whereas almost all other female characters of the novel try to shape Augie's life, she remains passive. Her soft nature makes her a victim of ruthless domination by Grandma Lausch, an old Russian woman. When Augie notes: "Mama was Winnie's servant, as she was Grandma Lausch's" (1), he gives us an accurate picture of her actual position in her own home.

Her meekness deprives her from every right she could have enjoyed. She gives up her authority over the March family and accepts her fate of being ruled over. As the critic Judie Newman observes: "Love forces Mama into servitude"(18). Her wretched condition is that of "love-originated servitude" and she is "simple-minded, abandoned with three children"(10). Grandma Lausch is thus able to take a leading position in the family.

Even at the beginning of the narrative, we hardly hear her voice. Bellow depicts her as meek and powerless: "Mama surrendered powers to her [Grandma Lausch] that may be she had never known she had and took her punishment in drudgery"(10). Her passivity subjects her to others. Augie places her among women who are prone to the superior force of love. Her susceptibility makes Augie see his father as the 'marble-legged Olympian God, Zeus'(10) and his mother one of those goddesses who were always ready to fulfill the lusts of that powerful God. This evaluation of the hero reveals his mother's vulnerable temperament. We can see in her some sort of characteristic qualities of 'the ideal woman'(*The Second Sex*,234) as Montherlant, the famous French philosopher and novelist assumed.⁴ For Montherlant "The ideal woman is perfectly stupid and perfectly submissive; she is always ready to accept the male and never makes any demand upon him"(*The Second Sex*, 234). Needless to say, this is the attitude of a man who dreams of imposing his will on a woman. Augie's mother fulfils all the qualities of "the ideal woman" (*The Second Sex*,234) by remaining submissive throughout the novel.

Even Simon, her eldest son starts dominating her. At one moment, when she tries to earn money by sewing pins and making them fit into Roosevelt Campaign buttons, Simon stops her in a very harsh manner. Earlier, she had suffered terribly at his hands as he put her out of the house and sold the furniture

for his personal gain. But she could not protest against the wrongs done to her. Augie considers his mother's simplicity to be conducive to maintaining domestic peace: "In general I considered it a blessing that Mama was simple. I thought that if there were any character here that were intriguing or quarrelsome- and how would there fail to be? – there must be some awful events in the innermost privacy of the house"(234). But Augie does not understand that his mother suffers inwardly. Finally, Simon treats her to the worst at his wedding ceremony. To save his honor before the rich guests, Simon attempts to force her to give up the white cane she needs for support. But while she puts on the glasses instructed by the son, she does not give up her cane. This is the only episode where we find her adamant and asserting her will. Here Augie approves of "Mama's exhibition of will, wondering at the surprises the meek will pull"(241). Her gesture here shows a flicker of defiance in a half-blind, introverted woman who can at least retain her dignity before a money-minded and materialistically blind child.

She loves her children but is unable to assert her authority and remains silent before any decision taken by Grandma Lausch: "Against the old lady's authority she didn't dare to introduce her feelings"(13). She remains silent when the old lady rebukes Augie for his petty crimes. She even remains helpless when Grandma takes the decision of sending Georgie to an institution: "Mama in her heart, high voice tried to answer but only spoke confusion. She was anyway incapable of saying much that was clear, and when she was excited or in pain you couldn't understand her at all" (51).

Remarkably, throughout the novel, we find this woman living in a world of her own. She works silently. She is, in fact, a symbol of suffering humanity:

when she had a grief she didn't play it with any arts; she took straight off from her spirit. She made no fuss or noise nor was seen weeping, . . . when sick she was that way also. She climbed into bed in her gown, twisted her hair into braids to keep it from tangling, and nothing to do with anyone until she felt able to stay on her feet (54).

Despite her suffering, we never see her seeking help from others. Most of the time she busies herself with household work and remains isolated from the rest of the world. Augie's mother is the type of miserable woman who lacks social dignity, freedom, and economic independence. She dutifully rears three fatherless children. However, her domestic role emphasizes her docility. We sympathize with her but cannot always appreciate her passivity. Nevertheless, her silent presence attracts our attention. Most of the time we feel for her perhaps because of Augie who is always prone to uttering piteous words, and is compassionate to his mother.

Grandma Lausch is a contrast to Augie's mother. One Bellovian critic, Jonathan Wilson, classifies this woman, in the "hags"(Wilson,24) category as the type of the problematic women found in Bellow's canon.⁵ Irving Malin describes her as a tyrannical woman who governs everyone like a "sovereign"(*Saul Bellow's Fiction*,77). As far as we can see, this woman works indefatigably to retain her hold over the March family. Another critic, Robert.R. Dutton observes, "This old woman is really no relation to the Marches: sometimes earlier she had rented a room in their house and has stayed to exercise a dominant authority over the entire family".⁶

Although she asserts her power over the March family, her background reveals that her helplessness fated her to live with the March family since she had

been abandoned by her own family. Although her disposition is that of the widow of a powerful Odessa businessman, she has been, in fact, rejected by her sons, "The daughters-in-law did not want her, . . ." (5). After coming to live with the March family, she starts re-asserting the power she was used to, "... for so many years she was used to direct a house, to command, to govern, to manage, scheme, devise, and intrigue in all her languages" (5). Her position in the March family finds an acute representation in Wilson's comment, "Grandma is quick to replace her lost sons with Augie and his older brother, Simon; and finding that their soft, half-blind mother offers little in the way of opposition, Grandma soon establishes herself as the head of the March house-hold". (*On Bellow's Planet: Reading from the Dark side*, 81).

This old woman has been described as 'one of the Machiavellis of small street' (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 77) by Malin to whom, "She becomes Augie's mother (and father), teaching him about the ways of the world: corruption, pride and masquerade" (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 77). She is the first woman who tries to shape Augie according to her own wishes. She teaches Augie to lie for a trifle gain, such as to get a pair of glasses for his mother from the free dispensary, "Coached by Grandma Lausch, I went to do the lying" (4). Hence Grandma's tutelage makes the hero a liar.

In fact, Grandma Lausch is materialistic and power hungry. Newman is percipient when she states, "Within her household Grandma demonstrates a Machiavellian grasp of power politics, a sovereign full of guile, strategy and command, converting the Marches into her subjects".⁷ Grandma actually supports American Capitalism. She pushes Simon into the main-stream of American Capitalism. Newman is severe in her criticism as she points out some of the contradictory actions of the woman (*Saul Bellow and History*, 25).

Grandma believes in ‘the message that worldly asceticism leads to worldly success’(Newman,25). She therefore trains Augie and Simon in clean habits, duty and restraint, encouraging them to perfect themselves by their own efforts” (Newman,25). As Augie observes, “Any way, she had us under hard control, we had to brush our teeth with salt and wash our hair with Castile, bring home our report cards, and sleeping in skivvies was outlawed; we had to wear pajamas”(28). At the same time, Grandma subscribes to a belief in democratic freedom believing that history offers each individual the chance to attain nobility. For this belief she draws examples from democratic and republican contexts: “ What did Danton love his head for, or why was there a Napoleon, if it wasn’t to make a nobility of us all” (36-7). However, “Honest Augie is roundly condemned by Grandma, however, while dishonest Simon gains her favour. When Grandma warns Augie of the terrible fate which awaits him if he does not pull up his economic socks, she reveals her true values” (Newman,25).

Grandma sometimes treats Augie so that it appears as if she understands both his potentiality and his drawbacks. She says, “It isn’t that you don’t have a brain, you’re just as smart as anybody else. If Kreindle’s son can be dentist you can be governor of Illinois. Only you’re too easy to tickle. Promise you a joke, a laugh, a piece of candy, or a lick of ice-cream . . . In short, you’re a fool, . . .” (29). Grandma’s comment gives us some idea about Augie’s personality. A careful reading of the novel helps us see the truth in Grandma’s comments.

However, Augie himself is ambivalent about his feelings for Grandma. He admires ‘her regal style’ (Dutton, 66) but most of the time fails to accept her vindictive ways. He is attracted to her perhaps because he finds her foreign. Dutton explains Augie’s confused feelings thus: “Her roots are in Europe, and Augie as a young boy is fearfully impressed” (*Saul Bellow*, 66). Augie once

confesses his ambivalence about her and his realization of the roots of his fascination is clear as he connects her with a class that impresses him: "... the courts of Europe, the Congress of Vienna, the splendor of family, and all kinds of profound and cultured things as hinted in her conduct and advertised in her speech" (30).

Grandma Lausch is the person who allures Augie towards reading famous novels. She would often send Augie to the library for books. She used to read *Anna Karenina* and *Eugene Onegin*. Dutton finds her symbolic of the Victorian mores to which American literature was largely bound during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She is firmly stuck to an authority based on reaction and tradition. She finds comfort in the romantic past and steadfastly denies the ugly present (*Saul Bellow*, 67). When Augie says, "I sometimes induced myself to see, beyond her spotty yellowness and her wrinkles and dry bangs, a younger and resentful woman in her eyes" (15), we can also visualize her romantic indulgence in the lives of characters of the novels she used to read.

She always remains hostile to Augie's mother and asserts her power over her as if she holds proprietary rights over the family. She cares less for love than for respect and declares, "A child loves, a person respects. Respect is better than love" (9). She propagates this philosophy only to induce respect towards her but fails in getting any herself. Augie describes her as a "Timur, Jesuitical, an autocrat, a member of the elite intelligentsia, and pouncy old hawk of a Bolshevik" (7). These indicate his real feeling for Grandma, who fails to arouse real respect in Augie. When Simon says, "She's really nothing to us, you know that, don't you, Aug?" (33), we can easily understand the impact of her actions on the March brothers.

Jonathan Wilson describes Grandma Lausch as a sadistic woman since she derives pleasure from the pain that she causes(*On Bellow's Planet: Reading from the Dark Side*, 81). She sends George to an institution saying that the move was inevitable. Augie argues that George 'hadn't done wrong yet'(62) but Grandma will not wait for him to do any damage. For her he has 'reached his development of a man'(61) and his nature is such as to cause him inevitably to do wrong. Using the future as a threat, as Augie notes: "She was happy when she could act in behalf of this inexorability she was all the time warning us about"(51). Newman argues against Grandma's whimsical action thus: "If events are inexorable, however, and man's nature fixed, there is no need for the perfecting guidance of Grandma Lausch. Her benevolent despotism can serve no useful function" (*Saul Bellow and History*,70). When Augie and Simon escape from her control, Grandma accepts that "as inevitable given their nature, and on that score she formed the opinion bitterly that both Simon and Augie were not born with talents" (Newman,70).

But at the same time we see her uneasy when she is asked to say good-by to George: "what is there to say good-by? I'll come and visit him later on"(57). Augie thus finds her feeble and vague despite her attempt to show herself powerful, "She didn't have the strength to go and look at the results she had worked hard to get and then still keeps on trying to hold power in her hands. And how was I supposed to interpret this refusal if not as feebleness and a cracking of organization?"(57).

After George's departure from their home, the March family has 'a diminished family life'(58). They start 'getting to be more common and rude'(58) to the old lady. At times, she becomes 'power-robbed'(58). We can see how her action has worked against herself. As Newman states:

By accepting that human nature conditions events, not historical development, Grandma initiates her own decline in power. The clash between Calvinist election ethics and the free election of democracy is rendered imagistically (symbolically) in Grandma's fall on election day. On a day which marks the individual's free control over his actions in history Grandma falls (*Saul Bellow and History*,26).

Grandma's fall on election day is called an "election day fall"(55) and clearly "she sensed that new days were pushing out the last of an old regime, the time when counselors and ministers see the finish of their glory, and Switzers and Praetorian Guards get restless"(55). Later, "it was Simon who took care of the surplus, and no longer Grandma, as in the old administration" (93). Once Augie and Simon see her as weak and fallen, her power is lost. Grandma views Augie's failure as evidence of his determined nature, Augie and Simon draw a similar lesson from her weakness. When she locks her door it is "a change in the main established order"(66); when she re-emerges from her room, Augie feels that change in the order and sets himself free of her tutelage (Newman,26). Finally, "as Grandma ages, her authority over the March family begins to wane and finally it becomes extinct"(Wilson,81).

Although she stays with the March family for a long time, she lacks a deep emotional bonding with them. The news of her move to the old home makes her glad. Augie relates her feeling thus, "And she was glad of rescue from us by her sons; where she would be among equals and exchange intelligent views"(95). Augie's observation reveals her mind. Until the last moment, she acts as if she is going to be relieved from the curse of living with her inferiors. At the moment of her departure she does not look back at all and wraps with caution 'each of her things of great value'(95) and shows her delight since at last she is going to be transferred to some better place she really belongs. Thus Grandma reveals a heart

devoid of feeling for the March family whom she had dominated long. But to her utter despair she finds the old home a far worse place. Here she must share a room with three others. The place really has shattered her dream of living among equals. She faces the ignominy but tries to keep her pride intact till the last moment by paying Augie a quarter for carrying her useful things.

If we consider her case carefully, we will feel pity for her. She is authoritative but fails to preserve her authority. Finally, she faces doom. Although she once sent George to the 'Home'(57), she herself is unable to accept the same fate when she grows old. Newman observes her predicament thus: "When Augie visits Grandma Lausch he finds that she has forgotten George's name and that her memory of the March family is unreliable. While she is a central fact in Augie's history he realizes that he is quite peripheral to hers"(*Saul Bellow and History*,34). Augie realizes that to her the March family is not as important as she had been to them. Newman comments aptly on the whole life-span of this old woman: "Grandma Lausch's life, like all human history, is not a systematic advance, building on what went before, but in Augie's description an old varicose channel, with its own byways and dead ends" (*Saul Bellow and History*,34).

Anna Coblin is another 'mother'(Malin,77) figure Augie meets in the novel when he comes to live with her family for a certain period of time. What we come to know about her is that she is Augie's mother's cousin and, therefore, a relative. She too treats Augie as her own son in place of her real son, Howard. But Augie resents her 'motherly'(Malin,77) treatment of him. His feeling of resentment may have been further ignited by the previous bitter experiences of the mother figure of Grandma Lausch. Malin describes Anna as a tyrannical woman since she wishes to accommodate Augie to her own version of reality.

Anna's son Howard has run away from home to Nicaragua to fight against the rebels and left her saddened: "She grieved terribly, as if he [the son] were dead already"(16). Her attitude reveals her simplicity. She seems to be a very simple woman who can be satisfied merely by the fulfillment of daily essentials. Grandma Lausch once described Anna as a happy and satisfied woman noting that "Her brothers found her a husband, bought him a business, she had two children in her own house and a few pieces of real-estate besides"(17). Thus we too can visualize Anna as a woman who remains happy with simple materialistic achievements. Her desires, sorrows and satisfactions are common. She is not complicated in dealing with matters of everyday life. She wants Augie to marry her daughter, Friedl. Without hesitation she addresses him thus, "Hear, Owgie, you'll be my son, my daughter's husband, mein kind!" (17). She is always obsessed with the idea of marrying off her daughter to Augie: "She kept this project of marriage going all the times. When I cut my hand . . . she said, 'It'll heal before your wedding day, . . .'"(18).

Also, Anna is a woman who exaggerates things not knowing the consequences involved: "And now that Howard had run away all her enemies were somehow implicated as hell's agents and deputies, and she lay in bed, crying and cursing them: 'O God, Master of the Universe, may their hands and feet wither and their heads dry out;'"(18). This suggests her short-sightedness. She is a firm believer in religion but her belief is that of a fanatic. She sees herself as a martyr, "in the suffering mothers' band led by Eve and Hannah"(19).

But her beliefs keep her away from the real world. She does not know where Nicaragua lies or who Sandino is (19). She also believes that "Heaven and eternity were not too far"(19). In some ways she resembles the type of women we know from Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. According to de Beauvoir,

most women lack the sense of factual truth and are extremely confused (*The Second Sex*, 611). Anna belongs to the pack of women who imagine a lot and know very little.

In fact, Anna behaves as though she lives in a medieval world. Newman is surprised by Anna's lack of depth. This critic also finds her religious stories not much more than tales of sex and violence. As Augie notes, "... and it was a queer account I got from her of the Creation and Fall, the building of Babel, the Flood, the visit of the angels to Lot . . . She didn't abridge much in stories like the one about Isaac sporting with Rebecca in Abimelech's gardens, or the rape of Dinah by Shechem"(27).

Anna Coblin's life is home oriented. She is careful about her household duties: "She had meals on time for the men, she saw to it that Friel practiced and rehearsed... that the new orders were attended to"(19). At the same time, her vision of life is so narrow that she is not at all concerned about anything outside her family. Her constant wailing over her missing son shows how limited her world is. She is a self-centered, doting mother and finds the whole world meaningless if anything happens to her child.

Anna is more duty-bound than loving in her relationship with her husband. She looks after her family and finds pleasure in doing so. She likes to dominate her husband. Her brother, Five Properties is more important to her than her husband. Both Anna and her brother dominate the man to such an extent that he merely stays in the family as a minor member. Anna's husband's position in the family finds a ridiculous expression as Augie observes, "He was not beaten down by Anna or Five Properties or other members of the family. . . . he had his own motives and he had established his own right of way with the determination of a

man who is liable to be dangerous when he makes a fight. And Anna gave in”(21). Hence, we cannot say that Anna has a good relationship with her husband.

Anna Coblin often appears ridiculous: “Anna was a strong believer in eating” (20). She likes to arrange meals with a vast array of different foods: “Bowls of macaroni without salt or pepper or butter or sauce . . . and big bottles of orange pop” (21). This attitude proves her obsession with food. Like most married women, she also finds special satisfaction in her work in the kitchen: “Cooking is revelation and creation; and a woman can find special satisfaction in a successful cake or a flaky pastry, for not everyone can do it : one must have the gift”(*The Second Sex*, 472). She also attracts our attention by the way she keeps her house neat and tidy.

Anna is not a spendthrift. As Augie observes “Cousin Anna was a saving woman, she sang poor and didn’t spend much on herself” (23). She is typically feminine in her self denial. She buys expensive gifts for her family members. She deprives herself from worldly pleasures and sacrifices herself for her family. In fact, she is typical of women from middle-class backgrounds. She passes most of her time living within a narrow world. While she cares for trifles she ignores the great subjects of life.

Teaching him about proper clothing, riding and good food, Mrs. Renling tries to mold Augie in her own image: “There is Mrs. Renling, ‘pushing fifty-five’ who ‘plays terribly on [his] vanity,’ . . . all the while she regards him as a son who can be perfected”(Malin,78).

Moreover, Mrs. Renling is a upper class woman who always asserts her power over everything she possesses. In describing Mrs. Renling’s features Augie

tells us, . . . “she had so much more force than anybody else around; with her light eyes and the pale, fox stain of her freckles lying in the dust of powder or on the back of her hands, with long hard rays of the tendons” (131). She easily overpowers Augie. She tries not only to shape Augie’s habits but also his will. But as Malin notes, “Her noble concentration—her leadership—confuses Augie. He almost succumbs to it, wanting to remain a submissive, cute child . . . but he finally asserts what little will he has, and he fights this new mother” (*Saul Bellow’s Fiction*, 78).

Malin has his doubts about the relationship between Augie and Mrs. Renling. He raises some questions about the nature of the “physical” (Malin, 78) attraction between Augie and Mrs. Renling: “Does Augie find Mrs. Renling attractive because she is ‘foreign’? or does he find her ‘will’ attractive? Does she love him because he is handsome or weak?” (Malin, 78). These questions make us consider the relationship from an angle which makes us think of it as more than a mother-son relationship.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Renling’s concern for Augie is so extreme that she does not like his relationship with others, especially with other women. She starts showing her disgust at Augie’s interest in Willa Steiner, a waitress. She slights the girl and rebukes Augie in a very harsh manner telling him that she is astonished at his interest in a girl whom she considers “... not even a pretty girl. She has a nose like a little Indian” (134).

Mrs. Renling becomes so desperate to divert Augie’s attention from the girl that she even offers him money to spend on whores. She calls Willa ‘a little prostitute’ (134) and warns Augie against her by declaring that all she [the girl] wants is Augie’s money. And she also suggests to him that he could go

somewhere else to have such company for which she [Mrs. Renling] would give him money. She describes Willa as someone who is trying to get Augie 'roped'(135) whereas she herself is trying hard to adopt him.

She even becomes jealous when she finds Augie interested in girls and tells him then: "you know nothing about girls; girls want to marry" (135). To get Augie away from Willa she does not even hesitate to make plans. When Augie realizes her tricks he feels embarrassed: "It didn't occur to me, when Mrs. Renling had me drive her to Benton Harbor . . . that she was getting me away from Willa"(135). Such actions prove her extreme possessiveness. If her affection for Augie were simply that of a mother, she wouldn't have controlled his emotional life so. Augie cannot escape Mrs. Renling's interference in his love life as long as he stays with her. Even when Augie feels a deep emotional attachment for Esther Fenchel, Mrs. Renling opposes it saying, "Augie, when is this love nonsense going to stop? You'll hurt your system. Is it that important?" (143). It is as though she is scared of any kind of disturbance in the universe she has designed for Augie. She "praised the male in all things as if she was working for Athena" (143) while she is harsh to the women.

Most of the time we see her passing time with Augie. Wherever she goes, whatever she does, she takes Augie along with her as her preferred companion. Augie loses all his freedom in the hands of Mrs. Renling. She keeps a constant watch on Augie's movement. She expresses her fear that Augie might 'end up in trouble'(143) because women are so attracted to him. But when Thea says, "she is a sexy-looking woman for her age . . . and they don't think it's so terrible for a woman to have a much younger lover"(145), we realize how people look at their relationship.

However, Mrs. Renling cannot hold Augie for long. We find him embittered when he says, "Just when Mrs. Renling's construction around me was nearly complete I shoved off. The leading and precipitating reason was that she proposed to adopt me" (151). She at times starts calling him "son"(152), though Augie does not want her to mother him. He refuses her proposal of adopting him, and this makes her angry: "offer him gold and he says, no, he chooses shit!" (153). She also menaces Augie by telling him that if he does not accept her proposal he would face troubles in life. In the end, Augie manages to escape her influence, but not before Mrs. Renling proves to be an autocratic, domineering woman, who for some time shapes his life.

Among the authoritative women in Augie's life such as Grandma Lausch, Anna Coblin and Mrs. Renling, one thing is common. And that is their attempt to fit Augie into their own versions of reality. But in their thinkings, outlooks, styles and backgrounds they are different from each other. We cannot say that the one resembles the other. Instead, we see their different personalities. Grandma Lausch represents traditional values, Anna Coblin stands for middle-class, half literate women, while Mrs. Renling is a modern European woman who possesses money and is educated as well.

Beside the domineering women, we find some modern, bold and free women who play vital roles in Augie's life as his friends, lovers and mates. For example, Mimi Villar, who enters Augie's life simply as a friend is quite modern in her outlook. Robert. R. Dutton is right in finding Mimi's view of life, of society, and of man's goodness healthy and cynical (*Saul Bellow*, 56). How Augie views Mimi is clear when he says, "I had noted her with appreciation, may be the more fit to judge because I had no thought of making her myself" (204). He

realizes that she is frank: “. . . she would say anything, and had no idea of what could hinder her”(204).

All her activities suggest her natural, free and bold nature. Once we know her background , we feel interested enough to see the girl from an unconventional angle: “Mimi came from Los Angeles. Her father had been an actor in the silent movies. She would speak of him when she wanted to say how she hated English men”(204). Thus she expresses freely her feeling about anything or anybody she likes or dislikes. Although Mimi has been expelled from the University, she acts as if it were really not that serious a matter at all. Augie tells us about the type of woman she is: “You wouldn’t doubt that she was capable of the offense, if it was one, and as for the penalty, it was favourite subject of her ferocious humor” (204).

Hooker Frazer, a graduate assistant in Political Science, is Mimi’s lover. As far as we can tell, Frazer is a married man and Mimi is aware of his marital status. But she loves Frazer because of his ideas, intelligence, and personality. Moreover, she is sympathetic towards him. She is proud that she has rescued Frazer from a wife who could have ruined his life since she feels, “A man can’t do anything while putting up with that” (208).

Hence she speaks against women only to convince us that Frazer’s wife is also one of the women who ‘really are no good’(208). She declares with mock indignation, “They want a man in the house. . . If the husband is Socialist, she’s a Socialist, hotter than he, and if he changes into a Technocrat she beats him to it” (208). From Mimi’s declaration one thing is clear: she has an impartial, and keen insight. She easily reveals the fact that most of the time women accept men’s ideology and philosophy as their own just to win men’s favour. Through her hatred of such mental disposition of women, Mimi has shown her love for

individual identity. In fact, she speaks against the attitude of women in general. She criticizes women who lack self-judgment and who merely exist under the dominant shadows of men. Mimi's rebellious voice makes her one of those free women who love their independence. She sympathizes with Frazer since she thinks he is not happy in his married life. She hates the idea of a marriage where she thinks a couple coexist like animal. She neither wants to dominate others' life nor does she want to be dominated by others.

On the contrary, Mimi understands the plight of all women when she suffers. She understands that suffering brings a woman closer to their real self: "They do themselves more credit, there's more reality in women. They live closer to their nature... They see their blood, and it does them good, while men are let to be vainer" (258). Thus Mimi has also become the voice of suffering women and her character shows Bellow's concern for women in general. Here we see how keen the writer is in revealing the sufferings of women from a particular aspect.

But we see Mimi's peculiar way of living as well: "she was a thief too; she stole her clothes from department stores, stole a good deal, since she liked to dress well"(210). When caught, she escapes the penalty of the court by convincing the court psychiatrist that she is a kleptomaniac. Although she is guilty of the offense, she urges Augie to do the same if he is caught in such a situation(210).

We also see her unusual sympathy for a stickup man whom she hurts in saving herself from his assault. She tries to visit him in hospital and it surprises us when she tries to shield him from the court's verdict. Moreover, when she has failed to save him that way, she at once starts sending him packages and letters: "Not because she feared harm from him when he got out, but out of remorse" (210).

Even her love for Frazer is very unconventional: "She wanted him to worry, or to give him practice in learning to worry about her and not about himself" (211). We find Mimi more dedicated to the bond than Frazer: "But neither was love his calling, as it was hers. And she was very severe and exalted about this. She too could have lived in desert wilderness for the sake of it, and have eaten locusts" (211).

Mimi's relationship with Augie is noteworthy. She shares everything with him and depends on him. When she is made pregnant by Frazer, Augie persuades her not to take the risk of abortion. But she is determined to do so, and Augie helps her and feels for her: "At the moment of putting my arm around her feeling her need and wanting greatly to do all I could to meet it she broke into sobs. The thing affected me too; I caught it from her. So we held together like what we were not, a pair of lovers" (257).

Even at the moment when she needs help to overcome the complications caused by the medicine she has taken for the abortion, she seeks help from Augie. When she suffers terribly from the severe pain caused by the drugs, she holds Augie in a tight grip. At this moment, Augie supports her in every way. And we see how deep Augie's feeling for the girl is. His feeling for this girl is stronger than anything else. He breaks up his engagement with Lucy Magnus, a millionaire's daughter, only because of his concern for Mimi. He cares little for what others think of him since he is determined to meet Mimi's needs. Augie is bold enough to take all responsibilities till Mimi's life is safe. Because of his benevolence, Augie comes closer to Mimi. She is also very grateful to what Augie has done for her. After her recovery from the torment we find her kissing Augie gratefully. She feels proud of having a friend like Augie. Augie and Mimi thus typify the mutual trust and interdependence between a man and a woman.

Mimi is courageous enough and takes responsibility for her actions. She herself decides to have an abortion. Though she loves Frazer, she does not think of marrying him merely because he has made her pregnant. She thinks of her pregnancy as an accident and does not want to take a major decision like marriage only because of this accident. Mimi, thus, represents the modern American woman who can even risk her life for the cause of freedom. Though sometimes she complies with the demands of situations, she believes in free love. But when she employs coercion in her affair with Frazer, her attitude contradicts her beliefs. Also, and as Newman observes, though Mimi enjoys freedom herself, she denies it to her child. Newman says, "Her belief in fate contradicts her freedom: In her particular choice Mimi appears to have exercised her freedom, but it is also her general fate to choose, one way or the other" (Newman, 44). And this attitude towards life makes Mimi merely a helpless creature in the hands of fate.

Like Mimi, Sophie Geratis is another woman who cherishes her independence. Although for a short period of time we see Augie engaged to Sophie Geratis, certain significant aspects of Augie's character is revealed through their relationship. Augie's initial description of Sophie reveals that he is attracted to her physically, "This small Greek girl was shapely every which way, in legs, mouth, and face; her lips went a little forward and their expression was sweetened a lot by the clear look of her eyes" (296). Clearly, Augie is tempted enough to come closer to the girl. Finally, Augie gets Sophie and finds happiness in a physical relationship with her. Augie, in other words, finds pleasure in physical contact with Sophie.

Sophie is also bold enough to involve herself in amorous advancement with Augie. She has her own notion of loyalty: "She thought she was being sensible, storing up pleasure so she wouldn't have any unfaithful craving once married"

(297). Although she is already engaged with another person and knows that she shall be married within six weeks' time, she does not mind sleeping with Augie.

Since this Greek girl is passive, cozy and submissive, Malin finds her suitable for Augie. But he considers only Augie's masculinity that has always been threatened by other women and fails to see her in perspective (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 79). Malin finds Augie as an 'idol' (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 79) for Sophie. But we cannot support this assertion because of their unequal status. It is true that even after Augie leaves her for Thea, she comes to accompany him at a critical moment. Lonely because of her divorce, she asks Augie to marry her. She also assures him that she will make him a good wife. But if we think of how Malin looks at the relationship, we cannot accept his view. The relationship between an idol and a worshipper cannot be treated as an equal one. An inferior cannot have a balanced relationship with a superior. Moreover, Augie does not think of Sophie as worth treasuring. He simply passes time with the girl. However, if we examine carefully some of Sophie's actions, we will be unable to agree with what Malin says about her type.

Sophie Geratis boldly undertakes the relationship with Augie without any idea of marrying him. What she wants initially is just to spend time with him. And she silently leaves Augie when Thea comes to the scene. She looks at the relationship merely as a relationship without commitment on her part and she is sure that Augie is going to marry some other girl.

When Sophie is ready to leave Augie, he tries to stop her. But since Augie himself realizes that his feeling for Sophie is not solid and since he is not sure about their relationship, he finally gives up hopes of getting her back, "To have her again I realized I'd have to pass a large number of tests and perhaps last of all

I'd have to ask her to marry me . . . I couldn't any longer honestly furnish that gay interest that had brought us together" (301). Thus we find Augie lacking commitment in the relationship.

Sophie's role seems almost to be one of indicating how restless Augie is in his relationship with women. Sophie is not possessive. She approves the hero's relationship with Thea. And we find her wise in leaving Augie when she understands that she should not stay between Augie and Thea. Thea's presence does not provoke any sort of jealousy in her though Thea comes to visit him when she is in Augie's bed. In fact, Sophie's actions suggest her unconventional nature. She enjoys sexual liberty before marriage. Sophie is so free that she chooses her way and none can impose anything on her. Certainly, she strikes a distinct note in the novel.

Thea Fenchel approaches Augie though she is aware that Augie loves her sister, Esther, at first. We find Thea persistent in her bid to win Augie. Thea's attempt becomes successful as Augie also fails to resist her invitation. Once he is in love with Thea he appreciates her ways: "Other women I had known—well, I didn't blame them that I loved them less than Thea . . . But as far as I was concerned, Thea had perfect life" (312). Augie's exuberant feelings about her also find expression in his admission: "I loved her to the degree that anything she chanced to do was welcome to me, I was very happy. . . like a king, as to the pleasure of my face, looking on, watching her" (312). About Augie's feeling for Thea, Malin observes: "Thea Fenchel is beautiful, but Augie is more aware of her 'hot, prompt, investigative, and nearly imploring face'. He sees her 'strong nerve', her 'recklessness' that gives 'as much concern as admiration'" (Malin, 78). Malin is apt in his observation since we also find Augie meeting every demand of Thea.

Although Augie comes to know that Thea is still married to another person, he finds relief in the thought that she is going to get a divorce from that man. Thea is a wealthy woman and treats guns, boots, cars and most important of all, large amounts of money with aristocratic carelessness. This unbalances Augie. He enjoys everything about Thea for a while no matter how peculiar she can be. For instance, when he says he has no money, Thea tells him, "take what you need from the refrigerator" (313). We see Augie pick up what he needs and not wonder why she puts money there. Moreover, they move from shop to shop to try on clothes and Augie puts on dresses according to Thea's choices and is delighted. At one moment, Augie pictures himself as a distinct person like 'the Duke of Wellington' (314). We find him ready to do anything Thea wants, and he also says, "I went where and as she said and did whatever she wanted because I was threaded to her as if through the skin" (315). Thus he is well adjusted to Thea's mode of life, albeit for a very short while. He meets Thea's demands. Malin notes this side of their relationship and observes: "She assumes many things, believing that her will is supreme. Gradually Augie begins to sense that he is a 'slave' " (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 78). But Augie is as usual easy prey to any dominating figure. As a result, he becomes a victim of Thea's recklessness.

Thea considers Augie as one of her adventures whereas Augie is seriously in love with her. Thea is a woman who always gets what she wants and Augie is only one more object for her. In a jealous rage she tries to test Augie's love for her. She asks the hero to compare his feelings for her with his previous feeling of love for the other women he has met. Since she is first to fall in love, she cannot be sure whether Augie is serious or not. However, she boasts childishly, "Oh, but I came to look for you, not you for me. I had no pride" (317). She also criticizes ruthlessly Augie for being so easy to everyone, "You want people to pour love on

you, and you soak it up and swallow it. You can't get enough. And when another woman runs after you, you'll go with her" (317). It is really ironical that this comment of Thea proves true later on. Thea's suspicions about Augie's stability is right. We cannot blame her in this respect because she has already seen him falling in love with Esther and has found him in bed with Sophie too. Nevertheless, she gets him in her embrace within a very short time.

Thea finds pleasure in taming an eagle which she calls Caligula. She is delighted to find that Augie is ready to do anything she wants. After a certain period of pleasure and adventure, Augie finds himself in the same position as Caligula: "But I know that, both in love, we were not quite the same in purpose. She had the idea of an action for which love makes you ready and sets you free. This happened to be connected with Caligula" (349). Thea appears to be peculiar and her peculiarity is obvious in the eagle-taming incident. Malin tries to show that her peculiarity is one reason why Augie is compelled to fall in love with her (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 79).

However, Augie moves away from Thea as Stella approaches the scene. When Thea is diverted from the eagle to snakes, Augie cannot stand it anymore: "Why these snakes? Why did she have to hunt snakes?" (369). Augie's disgust proves that his fascination for Thea's adventurous nature is fading away. When Augie expresses his intentions to help Stella in her relations with Oliver, Thea is unable to tolerate it. She reacts then with extreme jealousy, "By a little flattery anyone can get what he wants from you, Augie. I've told you that before. Where does that put me? I came after you. I flattered you. But I can't outflatter everyone in the world" (387). She persuades him not to move in with Stella but Augie does not listen to her. Ready to oblige Stella, he again proves his will to help others. As a result, he is distanced from Thea.

Perhaps, because Thea is always looking out for change, once her adventure with Augie is over, she too loses interest in him soon. Although she has tried so hard to keep Augie away from Stella, she forgets him unscrupulously. She has tried not to be defeated by other women at one time. Hence, she struggles to keep Augie under her control. But she soon falls in love again with Talavera, a young man.

After helping Stella get out of Oliver's reach, Augie comes back to Thea. But Thea refuses him saying, "I didn't want you to come back. I 'm sorry you're here now. You're not special. You're like everybody else. You get tired easily. I don't want to see you anymore" (396). This time Augie wants to make up the breach and get her back. But Thea dismisses the possibility. To his utter despair Augie realizes, "Evidently she didn't believe what I had come to say. She didn't believe because she didn't feel, and didn't feel because of a broken connection" (409). Thus finally, Thea abandons Augie.

The interesting aspect of their relationship is that both of them show their intense desire for each other but their desire fails to bring them to a lasting emotional bond. They fall in love but do not trust each other. Thea is also one of the domineering women who try to overshadow Augie. In fact, Thea is the type who cannot commit herself to a long lasting relationship.

Malin finds Stella as passive as Kitty (the mistress of Joseph in *Dangling Man*). He also sees in Stella 'a materialist' (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 79). Though we cannot agree with Malin's view of Stella as a passive woman, we cannot deny that she is materialistic. We see her running after money and power. At first, we see her with Oliver, a man of fifty, an old editor. Stella is an actress and aspires to become famous. When Oliver promises to make her famous, she stays with him as

his mistress. But as soon as Oliver is in danger, she decides to leave him. She has simply dumped Oliver who had been her benefactor for a long time. Thus we find Stella to be an opportunist, who refuses to share Oliver's misery when the man is to be arrested .

Augie helps Stella spontaneously as he is convinced that she should stay out of Oliver's reach. Stella is clever enough to see her weakness for him. Finding Augie in the same position as she is she comments, "But one of the things I thought is that you and I are the kind of people other people are always trying to fit into their schemes" (384). And Stella is right as we see both of them work to fulfill each others' demands.

Both Augie and Stella prove to be fragile in their commitments. When Augie is already engaged with Thea and thinks that he is not vain and nonsensical to fall in love with Stella, he responds to her bid to have an intimate encounter when they stay together. He first thinks that he is merely helping her escaping from Oliver but immediately when they come closer they do not hesitate to consummate their relationship physically. Thus both prove to be fickle in their nature.

Stella knows well that she is not honest and assumes that "Nobody should pretend to be always one hundred percent honest. I wish I knew how to be seventy, sixty percent" (473). Significantly, Augie also finds Stella mysterious in many ways and urges her not to be 'a mystery intentionally' (473). We can oppose Malin's judgment that "Stella becomes an independent child (simple and deceptive); Augie cannot boss her and more important cannot obey her" (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*,79). Here Malin tries to show that Stella's personality is such that it makes her independent. But why does Malin think that Stella is independent?

Which attitude of Stella provokes him to say so? In the beginning she stays under the care of Oliver and dreams of success. Her intention of exploiting Oliver's attraction for her is evident here. Apparently, she marries Augie for love. But as time passes, we see her change; she opts to go to Alaska with an American theatre company after their wedding. Thus her obsession with the world of show-business proves to be stronger than anything else in the world.

Stella lies frequently. Augie discovers her later working for Cumberland, a tycoon, as a hostess. She confesses to Augie: "He wouldn't let me be independent. If he found out I had a savings account he made me spend the money. He thought I should be helpless" (526). From her confession we come to know that she also wanted to be a hostess of a lumber company 'for fifteen thousand a year' (526) something of which Augie knows nothing. All these are instances to prove that Stella can never stay independently due to her fascination for a luxurious life.

Augie mentions: "There is a certain amount of simple-mindedness in Stella as well as deception, a sort of naïve seriousness" (527). She tries hard to be an actress and for this she has embraced what others had to offer her. Although she is a flop in films, she does not give them up. Augie realizes that, "She doesn't have any terrific talent for acting, but that's how it appears to go. People don't do what they have a talent for but what the preoccupation leads to" (529). Such an evaluation of Stella by Augie makes it clear that Stella is also determined to become an actress.

According to Malin, Augie's marriage with Stella is an unstable one. Though Augie decides to marry Stella, it is not obvious that he does so only out of love. Rather we find Augie saying, "What I wanted was to have somebody living with me for a change, instead of the other way around" (515). He also says that he

has been wrong all through his life in choosing the right person but before marrying Stella he concedes that he has the greatest confidence in his love for Stella and her love for him. But it is also true of Augie that his dream of setting up a foster home has compelled him to marry Stella. And it is significant that Augie ultimately comes to the realization that he would mostly do as she wanted because he loves her most. As a result, his dream of setting up a foster home has never come true.

Augie seems to be more considerate in case of Stella since he accepts her the way she is. Before marrying her Augie finds that:

She spent lots of money on clothes... But I didn't bother my head about it. Since she went along with me in my scheme for the foster home and academy, and she enthusiastically did, what difference could her wardrobe make? In fact, I was proud that she was so elegant" (476).

Thus we find Augie justifying his decision to marry Stella. His arguments reveal the fact that his scheme of a foster home is the main reason for which he marries Stella. But once they are married Stella does not work for Augie's scheme. Rather, we find her pursuing her own career.

On the whole, in *The Adventures of Augie March*, Bellow has presented us distinct types of women who play significant roles in the novel. In fact, in this novel, Bellow shows his concern for women as well as men. Women like Mimi, Sophie, Thea and Stella are almost indispensable in determining the plot of the novel. They bring significant changes in the protagonist's life. It is interesting to

note that they hold on to their freedom and individuality whereas Augie most of the time fails to do so.

In this novel, Bellow's women are noteworthy for their lively presence. They remain flesh and blood characters who have human shortcomings as well as positive sides. In other words, Bellow is realistic in drawing women characters. With his artistic genius, he depicts women as they live in the modern world. In writing *The Adventures of Augie March*, Bellow might have begun with a specific idea of writing a novel only on the character of Augie March but because he is unstable in his relationships throughout his whole life, Bellow focuses on his women too. Augie proves that he always tries to comply with each situation he is in, but does not succumb to anyone for long. However, Bellow does not show that women are always responsible for Augie's unstable relationships with them. Rather, he seems to be investigating the situations that determine various aspects of men-women relationship. That is why in *The Adventures of Augie March*, Bellow's women characters are given significant roles to play in the overall plot of the novel.

CHAPTER THREE

HERZOG

Herzog (1964), arguably Bellow's masterpiece, presents Moses.E.Herzog's life, especially his relationship with women. At the outset of the novel, we find him in a depressed and lonely condition because of his conflict with his second wife, Madeleine. Madeleine is perhaps Bellow's first fully developed woman character and has been the center of attention for readers and critics in many ways. Indeed, Madeleine's character is no less important than the protagonist of the novel. Other women in the novel also help develop the main plot of Herzog's story and play noteworthy roles.

Herzog's life style shows his unstable relationship with women. The critic Forrest Read describes vividly this particular aspect of his life:

Herzog is heroically cosmopolitan in women, ideas, and places. He has had affairs with women from Japan to Poland; he has a domestic wife who is thought to be promiscuous but isn't, and a bluestocking ex-wife who is thought to be a model mother but wants to be promiscuous; as if that weren't enough he is taking on a woman who, by having combined the old Eve, the modern handbooks, and efficient business methods, has made Eros the perfect servant and all purpose problem solver.⁸

Read's comments describe a very important side of Herzog's life: his abrupt switches from woman to woman. Why does Herzog fail to have a stable

relationship with the women around him? Is it because he has got problems which hinder him from communicating soundly with the opposite sex? Or do these women have some drawbacks or qualities that always bring misery to him and them? We may find the answers of these questions once we see how Bellow himself has drawn his female characters in the novel.

Madeleine's character has been analyzed by critics from various perspectives. Madeleine's influence on Herzog is certainly immense. Most critics discuss Madeleine's character by focusing on her relationship with Herzog. The plot also takes off from the incident of Herzog's divorce with Madeleine.

Herzog, a professor of philosophy and a scholar in Romanticism, proves to be an utter failure in his married life. We know that his first wife Daisy had received miserable treatment from him though "As long as Moses was married to Daisy, he had led the perfectly ordinary life of an assistant professor, respected and stable" (13). At this period, he has completed his first research paper. But his ambition leads him into an affair with the intelligent, beautiful, and highly ambitious Madeleine.

Madeleine does not mind when Herzog starts a life in a remote countryside after their marriage. But after a year in the country, Madeleine finds herself too young and too intelligent to be buried in that remote place. Being bored, she decides to start her studies in Slavonic languages. Madeleine's decision brings their relationship to such a state that they can no longer continue to live under the same roof as husband and wife.

Although Herzog has done everything for Madeleine, he fails to get her love. From Herzog's accounts, we know that due to Madeleine's insistence he

buys a house for her in Ludeyville with forty thousand dollars, his father's 'hard-earned money'(14). This is an obvious instance of how Herzog wants to keep Madeleine happy. But Madeleine decides to divorce him after a year. Certainly, we pity him since Madeleine takes this decision abruptly and Herzog has to give his consent to it: "He had to give it, what could he do? And the divorce was painful. He was in love with Madeleine; he couldn't bear to leave his little daughter" (14). No doubt from his perspective Madeleine is a ruthless woman. But on this point, and as we find Herzog himself confessing, he deserves what Madeleine has done to him. We must also admit that Herzog is no less responsible for his sufferings: "What he was about to suffer, he deserved; he had sinned long and hard; he had earned it. This was it" (16). Maybe his guilty conscience pricks him for what he has done to his innocent first wife, Daisy, and his devoted mistress, Sono.

At a crucial moment of his relationship with Madeleine, we find Herzog reminiscing about Daisy. We see in his recollection a picture of how Daisy was. Unlike Madeleine and the other women in Herzog's life, she is a very simple and conventional Jewish woman, shy but stubborn. She is a country girl and 'childishly systematic about things'(158). Although Herzog once leaves Daisy since he is bored by the orderly life that she leads, finding himself in a mess with Madeleine, he soon yearns for Daisy's way of life, "Stability, symmetry, order, containment were Daisy's strength"(158). After all, when Herzog leads a disordered life, Daisy always gives him support.

But despite the support Daisy provides for Herzog, he is dissatisfied with her and fails to reciprocate her feelings. He never gives her the support she needs. For example, when Daisy's father dies and she leaves to see him, Herzog is too involved with his literary career to respond to Daisy's crisis. Thus we see that

while Daisy cares for Herzog he ignores her. In other words, Daisy has been treated very badly by Herzog. 

To make the situation worse, Herzog becomes an adulterer. Daisy does not notice that 'he had fallen in love for a while with his Japanese friend Sono'(206). Sono Oguki is 'a person of means' to Herzog. He passes many enjoyable moments with Sono. In many ways, Sono too is dedicated to Herzog. For example, though she is not sure about God, she decides to have faith in Him if Herzog does so. She always treats him nicely. In thinking about her later, Herzog regrets not marrying Sono who never asks for anything from Herzog except his company. But Herzog treats Sono badly. He never tries to understand her. She does not go back to Japan for him and disobeys her father for his sake. But Herzog does not go to see her even once when she suffers from pneumonia for a whole month. Thus we see how heartless Herzog can be. Both Daisy and Sono are meek in nature and devoted to him. Perhaps, Herzog presumes that women will accept his rejection while he himself is unable to bear any such treatment from them.

Bellow presents different types of women characters in this novel. It is interesting to note that he contrasts Daisy, Sono and Madeleine. Madeleine is outspoken, independent and energetic. Among Bellow's women, she comes closest to being a modern feminist. She symbolizes Bellow's attitude towards modern women.

However, critics are almost harsh about her. Malin finds her 'will'(Saul Bellow's *Fiction*, 149) to be masculine. According to Malin:

She distrusts sex; she desires power. She is able to use one for the other—as in her relationships with him[Herzog] and Valentine—but

she is never satisfied to let things stand. She is 'on the move', compulsively discovering new worlds or men to conquer ... She converts; she becomes a graduate student; she changes her fashions . . . and the social climbing were more important (*Saul Bellow's Fiction*, 149).

But once we go through the details of Madeleine's life we cannot accept all that Malin says about her. His comments on Madeleine as aspiring for 'social climbing' and as an abuser of sex for power and vice versa are unfair. If 'social climbing' were more important to her she could have avoided being the mother of Herzog's child. It is true that she is 'on the move'(Malin,149) but this movement is more for self-dignity and a stable life than for raising her social status. Her actions do not suggest that social climbing is her only aim.

Malin also finds similarity between Madeleine and Thea Fenchel (the adventurous girl in *The Adventures of Augie March*). He appears harsh in his comments on Madeleine when he says, "She also exerts power over men who fight it reluctantly. But she is more carefully described—the hostility makes her portrait extremely vivid—and she stands as the archetype of domineering women who 'eat green salad and drink human blood' " (Malin,149). But Malin's comments here are surely biased. When he says she exerts power over men, he makes her to be the type of women who victimize men who deserve to be pitied. But men can be domineering as well as women. Even if Madeleine exercises power, why should she be treated as the archetype of the domineering women? When Herzog himself is ready to do anything for his young, intelligent, and beautiful lover Madeleine, it will be an inadequate observation to see her only as a domineering personality; she caters to Herzog's needs, and demands from him only what a lover or wife can demand. At the same time, Malin fails to note that Herzog is a

domineering personality who gets hurt simply because he has failed to make Madeleine an obliging wife. Moreover, Malin does not take into consideration how Madeleine had been brought up.

In contrast to Malin, Newman sees how desperate Madeleine is for some 'rules' in life: "Madeleine's attraction to Roman Catholicism depends upon her need for a creed in which contingency is denied, in which life has 'rules' " (Newman,123). Newman sees Madeleine as caught between

Warring allegiances—love and her religious faith—each rightfully claiming her. Rejecting her own bohemian upbringing by Pontritter, impresario and modern tragedian, ... Madeleine hastens into the arms of the Monsignor, who 'made female converts with his burning eyes'(121), Pontritter exercises a similar way over his wife, Tennie, who has sacrificed her life to his artistic genius" (*Saul Bellow and History*,114).

On the whole, it will be more consistent of us if we judge Madeleine by concentrating on those aspects that shaped her personality. We know that 'Madeleine hated her father violently'(16). She had never seen a sound bond between her parents. This might be the cause of her insecurity. Perhaps in her relationship with Herzog she had been craving for security. But when she understands that she does not love Herzog, she gives up the relationship. Because she had been sexually abused in her childhood, she is haunted throughout her life. Ada Aharoni feels that this incident might be the cause of her sexual frigidity towards Herzog (Aharoni, 99). But Malin seems to ignore the details that explain Madeleine's hostile, masculine attitude.

Robert. R.Dutton is more severe in his criticism of Madeleine. He sees Madeleine as a complex presence in Bellow's work. He sees her as someone whose central purpose is "to represent the object of man's pursuit and adoration of what is nebulously called 'Success' " (*Saul Bellow*,130). Dutton notes that Bellow might have had utilized the notion of the proverbial 'bitch-goddess'(Dutton,130) of success in depicting the character of Madeleine since she is so often characterized in the novel as a 'bitch'(Dutton,130).

According to Dutton, "Everyone admires her great beauty; she is vain, demanding everyone's admiration and attention; she insists on dominating every situation. Deceitful and nasty to those in her power, she is always looking for new recruits to her standard" (*Saul Bellow*,130). But Dutton's observation is chauvinistic and he cannot appreciate Madeleine's individuality. Herzog has a successful career and is after further success in his field. A critic like Dutton seems to accept this as normal for him but criticizes severely Madeleine's ambition for further achievement in her chosen field.

Malin and Dutton are similar in their observations about Madeleine's character. For example, both depict Madeleine as a power hungry woman, and both see her as an opportunist who abandons everything for success. But if we think through things for a moment, we will find that they blame Madeleine for the same thing that they find praiseworthy in the man. Herzog is more choosy and fickle in his relationship with the opposite sex. Careful observation reveals that Herzog is even more guilty of the crimes Madeleine has been accused of. Regarding the critics' view of Madeleine in general, Aharoni's observation is apt:

Some critics have found Madeleine unsympathetic, cold, unstable, and neurotic. Leslie Fiedler, in *Love and Death in the American Novels* says that Madeleine ‘seems a night-mare projection bred by baffled malice, rather than a realized woman; and Herzog’s passionate involvement with her remains, therefore, unconvincing’. But Herzog’s passion for Madeleine is the psycho-center of the novel, and if it were unconvincing, Herzog would not have been the masterpiece it has been acclaimed to be; neither would Bellow have received the Nobel Prize for literature, when his main opus is deemed to be “unconvincing” (*Saul Bellow in The 1980s*, 102).

Aharoni’s observation is convincing since Madeleine’s marriage with Herzog is her first involvement with the opposite sex. Valentine is only the second person in her life and she has decided to stay with him after leaving the loveless marriage. She is honest and clear-sighted about what she is going to do. She thus tells Herzog, “it’s painful to have to say I never loved you. I never will love you, either... So there’s no point in going on” (17). But though Herzog himself has discarded other women without thinking much about what he had done to them, he feels humiliated and cheated when Madeleine leaves him: “It occurred to Herzog that she had beaten him so badly, her pride was so fully satisfied that there was an overflow of strength into her intelligence. He realized that he was witnessing one of the very greatest moments of her life”(17). This convinces us of the fact that Herzog’s male ego has been injured when Madeleine took the decision to discard him. Aharoni also points out that Herzog fails to become supportive of Madeleine’s drive because of his envy of her intellectual achievement:

There is a basic antagonism between their marriage and Madeleine's studies. Like many modern intellectual women (we are told that she was a brilliant Radcliffe graduate), Madeleine finds that her family does not give her sufficient scope, challenge, or satisfaction; she feels the deep need for further growth and for pushing a career (Saul Bellow in *The 1980s*, 99).

Contrary to almost all the other critics, Aharoni views Madeleine as so lifelike a character that she thinks Herzog's passionate involvement with her is convincing. She also views Madeleine's seemingly 'cold and unstable' (Dutton, 130) character as "certainly the symptoms of the unfulfilled and unsatisfied woman" (Aharoni, 102). Aharoni observes aptly that Madeleine "is not given the opportunity to 'grow', and much of her frustrations stem from the fact that Herzog thwarts her intellectual drives and goals" (*Saul Bellow in The 1980s*, 102). We also agree that Madeleine does not get much encouragement even from her own family to reach her intellectual goals.

Madeleine had perhaps thought that Herzog would help satisfy her craving. But as far as we can see, Herzog wants her to help him in his studies but does not show any interest in Madeleine's work. This, at least, is obvious from his complaining tone, "She's built a wall of Russian books around herself . . . in my bed," (99). Herzog also gives a description of how cold Madeleine remains even at intimate moments and for this he blames her work. Madeleine, however, reacts violently at Herzog's sharp remark about the books in their bed. Herzog's antagonism towards Madeleine's work is also evident in the episode when he comments on some of the moments of the misunderstanding between them : "Something about the books, may be, interference with her studies. If I say the house is dirty, it stinks, she thinks I'm criticizing her mind and forcing her back

into housework. Disrespectful of her rights as a person . . ." (75). Pointing out this problem, Aharoni notes that at the beginning of her marriage Madeleine probably had hopes that Herzog would make some allowances for her career as well as his own. But Herzog wants her to forego her own intellectual pursuits to help him with his book on the Romantics. He feels hurt, thwarted, cheated, and frustrated when she shows no inclination to do so, and goes on pursuing her own studies. By that point Madeleine has ceased to view herself as a function of the needs of a man who fails to satisfy her own deepest needs (Aharoni, 99). Thus we find Herzog indifferent to Madeleine's intellectual drive. He has no real respect for Madeleine's impulses. He could have fulfilled Madeleine's expectations and by so doing could have built up a sound relationship based on equality.

Although most of the time we hear about what Herzog had done for Madeleine, we find him lacking in the sympathy necessary to understand a woman like Madeleine even when he had been her lover . At the beginning of their meeting we note how Madeleine is looking at Herzog: "To her he was a fatherly, graying, patient seducer (he could not believe it!)"(140). They have had a physical relationship before their marriage, but Madeleine always appears as cold and lacking in the passion needed for such intimacy. She had passed nights with Herzog but after that, "She took no notice of him; she was trying in some way to be rid of him as her daytime life began" (139). Moreover, we see contradictions in her behavior; she wants Herzog madly at the night but appears to be dispassionate in the morning. But Madeleine's actions do not provoke Herzog into wondering about why she is changeable and restless in mood. This is also a kind of carelessness on Herzog's part. It proves that he never had really tried to enter Madeleine's mind.

However, Madeleine's love for freedom is obvious, especially when she expresses her hatred for the life her mother leads: "She's such a slave!"(143) said Madeleine. She hates her mother's one-sided love for her father. She expresses her indignation at those activities of her mother that cause the woman to become a mere scapegoat to the man's will: "She still goes to that rotten acting school after hours and keeps his books. He's the great thing in her life - another Stanislavsky. She sacrificed herself..." (143). This expression could have enlightened Herzog about Madeleine's mental state before their marriage. But as we have seen, he has never taken into consideration how Madeleine thinks and has never thought about what she has been experiencing and trying to express. He does not notice her much, and never asks himself: why is Madeleine so unstable? Why is she demanding a family life from Herzog if she does not have much passion for him? Perhaps, he does not feel the need to discuss Madeleine's problems. Before marrying, he merely considers her as a young woman with whom he has to deal.

Nevertheless, it is true that Madeleine has married Herzog hastily. She has almost forced him to get a divorce from Daisy, Herzog's first wife. In a threatening tone she says, "What makes you think I intend to have a lifelong affair with you? I want some action" (145). We also see how indignant she is about a word such as 'feeling'(145). She denies Herzog's feelings for her as "sentimental crap"(145). She looks firm when she says, "I want to be married...This other stuff is just balls! My mother had to live a bohemian life. She worked, while Pontritter carried on. He bribed me with nickels when I saw him with one of his broads" (145). From such an outburst we can perceive how terrible has been her suffering from her childhood. She demands a shelter from Herzog. No doubt, she has a deep desire for security. Perhaps, she finds in Herzog 'a father figure' from whom she can get every support.

Aharoni poses a question regarding Madeleine's decision to marry Herzog: "Why did Madeleine, who is in her early twenties, want to marry Herzog, her forty-four-year old professor?" (Aharoni,103). She answers her question thus:

She [Madeleine] probably saw in him a father figure who would replace her own father whom she had lost to the theater. She also may have converted to Catholicism for the same reason, seeing in the Monsignor a father-figure with whom she could freely talk and confess herself –a close relationship she had never had with either of her parents (Aharoni,103).

Aharoni's comments explain clearly Madeleine's decision to marry Herzog. Thus, on this point, we can conclude with her that Madeleine appears to be confused about which way to go. In sorting out such a confused state of mind, we can say that Madeleine's complexity belies Dutton's observation that Madeleine is an image of "deception and hypocrisy" (Dutton,130).

Nonetheless, Herzog's conviction reveals that despite everything he has to say against Madeleine as a wife, he had been happy with her, "As long as I was Mady's good husband, I was a delightful person. Suddenly, because Madeleine decided that she wanted out– suddenly, I was a mad dog" (48). After Madeleine leaves him, he acts hurt. Although an ex-husband, he continues to be jealous. He feels: "Madeleine had convinced Zelda[one of their friends] that she too was exceptional. Everyone close to Madeleine, everyone drawn into the drama of her life became exceptional, deeply gifted, brilliant..."(51). Herzog thus envies even Zelda for her closeness to Madeleine.

In addition, Herzog's conversation with Aunt Zelda, a close friend to both Madeleine and him, brings into light certain aspects of their mutual life that convince us of his carelessness about many things that required his attention. In many cases he does not treat Madeleine well. Aunt Zelda points out that his big mistake was to bury Madeleine, a young woman, 'in the Berkshires, with nobody to talk to'(53). She also observes, "That house made a prison of her. It must have been just dreary, washing and cooking, and to have to hush the baby, or you'd raise hell,..."(53).

Moreover, Herzog wants Madeleine to help him with his studies. Only in this respect, is he willing to admit her studious nature, "Madeleine shared my interests, I thought-she's a studious person"(53). Although Herzog has done what Madeleine wanted him to do, he has become 'a dictator, a regular tyrant'(53). In fact, Madeleine's way of life at times exasperates him, specifically her extravagance with money. He exclaims: "You said you had to learn to handle money. No one ever trusted you. Well, you're being trusted now and the checks are bouncing" (153). He also starts blaming Madeleine for her indifference to household work, "It was always something trivial that set him off - a bounced check, a chicken that had rotted in the ice-box, a new shirt torn up for rags. Gradually his feelings became very fierce" (153).

In this respect we can mention the critic Dutton who stresses Madeleine's complete irresponsibility as far as money is concerned: "She spends outrageous sums on everything from maternity clothes to cigarette boxes" (Dutton,56). He criticizes her for being a woman who "takes everything that Herzog can give her - his name, money, reputation, and even his learning; and, when he can give nothing more, she moves to Gersbach, that 'public-figure' of a man, 'that loud, flamboyant, ass-clutching brute...' "(Dutton,102). But Dutton is unfair when he

calls Madeleine an opportunist. Once Herzog's wife, she has every right to use his money. Though her point of view may be materialistic, Aunt Zelda's opinion is justified when she says, "A girl had a right to expect from her husband nightly erotic gratification, safety, money, insurance, furs, jewelry, cleaning women, drapes, dresses, hats, night clubs, country clubs, automobiles, theater!" (54).

But when Madeleine starts to live with Gersbach after leaving Herzog, she seems quite different in her attitude. We find her living a simple, domestic life. When Herzog tries to carry out his plan of killing both Madeleine and Gersbach, he comes upon Madeleine "cleaning up after dinner, scraping dishes in her own style of abrupt efficiency"(313). This episode reminds us about how she used to dislike doing household work when Herzog had insisted on her doing so; then she had complained: "It needs four servants, and you want me to do all the work"(154). Thus we see a gulf of difference between the two Madeleines. We realize that Herzog and Madeleine failed to enjoy a life based on mutual respect and sharing.

Thus Herzog lacks the insight into Madeleine's character, and the respectful attitude towards her that could have made her do what he had been wanting her to do. As we have seen, he always tries to make her do things his way. Consequently, Herzog's demand makes Madeleine resentful: "You'll never get the surroundings you want. Those are in the twelfth century somewhere. Always crying for the old home and the kitchen table with the oil-cloth on it and your Latin book...oh, what balls!"(155). Thus Madeleine displays her refusal to act according to Herzog's demands and we see that the feeling is reciprocated by Herzog.

Although Herzog loves Madeleine, he attempts to dominate her. He wants a life lived according to his wishes and cares little for what Madeleine really wants.

As a husband, he fails to come to terms with Daisy as well as Madeleine. He fails to respect these women. Thus “Madeleine leaves Herzog for Valentine who shows much more interest in her as a person and an individual”(Aharoni,100).

Moreover, Herzog’s contempt of Madeleine’s desire for personal success becomes so grotesque that he starts feeling a sort of competition between them: “I understand that Madeleine’s ambition was to take my place in the learned world. To overcome me” (98). Herzog’s feeling is that of a jealous husband who is afraid his wife might exceed him intellectually.

Herzog’s jealousy and unstable nature becomes evident in the episode when Shapiro visits their home. Both Madeleine and Shapiro are amused to find each other ‘stimulating’. Shapiro readily acknowledges Madeleine’s intellect with appreciative words. When he learns that Madeleine is not only a beauty but also an educated person “preparing for her doctoral examination in Slavonic languages” (90), he is eager to have further discussion with Madeleine. From a conversation between Shapiro and Madeleine we come to know how well-read Madeleine is.

But Herzog is enraged to see that Madeleine discussing with enthusiasm topics such as the Russian Church, Tikhon Zadonsky, Dostoevski, and Herzen. He keeps himself aloof from the conversation intentionally, revealing thereby that he has failed to accept others’ appreciation of Madeleine’s knowledge. Madeleine wants him to praise her the way everyone else does. But since Herzog does not show much interest in her intellectual pursuits, she feels offended: “She complained that he never really listened to her. He wanted to shine all the time”(93).

Herzog, in fact, confesses that he had often made a pretence of hearing Madeleine's lecture on particular topics far into the night, though he was actually too sleepy to listen to what she was saying. Time and again, Herzog's behaviour proves that he never took seriously Madeleine's drive for intellectual attainment. On the contrary, he did injustice to her thoughts and feelings. He believes that Shapiro is much more interested in Madeleine's physical beauty than in her knowledge. He becomes indignant when Shapiro proposes that Madeleine study in Chicago. But Herzog's resentment cannot stop Madeleine from her pursuit of higher studies; in fact, she becomes even more serious then to show Herzog that she can succeed all by herself.

Indeed, Herzog proves himself to be tyrannical since he always gives Madeleine the feeling that he is her 'benefactor'. He always acts as if she should be 'thankful' to what he had done for her. Madeleine screams out in a fight they have that Herzog is constantly reminding her that he had saved her, sacrificed his freedom for her, and gave her everything he could. Thus if we analyze their relationship thoroughly, we can see that Herzog is less understanding and tolerant than he is made out to be.

Despite being depicted as a cold, ruthless, unstable personality, Madeleine is obviously a woman determined to grow, ignoring all patriarchal values. She does not shape herself according to other people's choices; rather, she takes things into her own hands and struggles to shape her destiny all by herself. She could have passed her life supporting other people's causes and being only a passive but beautiful woman. But she does not do so since she ^{is her} quests ^{for} for an independent career. Madeleine, in fact, represents the free women of modern world who glow with determination and vitality.

Unlike Madeleine, Ramona appears as a 'comfort' to Herzog. She is mature, intelligent, and hard-working. Like Madeleine, Ramona Donsell has also been Herzog's student. She has completed her M.A in art history and runs a flower shop. In describing her features, Herzog says, "she was extremely attractive, slightly foreign, well-educated" (23). Aharoni writes about her, "she combines the characteristics of the conventional Jewish wife—warm, gentle, loving, an excellent cook with genuine family feelings..." (Aharoni, 105).

Ramona has fallen in love with Herzog because his ideas attract her. But Ramona also embodies sexuality. From the very beginning of their meeting, she tries to draw Herzog's attention to the importance of sex in life. Always theorizing about sex, she becomes a proponent of sex and sensibility.

Like Herzog, Ramona is divorced. Once she meets Herzog, she feels that both she and Herzog need to be diverted from the agonies of their past experiences. Gradually, she became serious about her love for Herzog. When Herzog's doctor advises him to go on a holiday, she offers him her cottage in an island. She decides instantaneously to stay for a whole month with him.

In many ways, Ramona is caring and stimulating. She encourages Herzog to be careful about his dress and appreciates his look. But Herzog does not always accept what Ramona tells him. Sometimes he becomes bored with her lectures; he writes mentally, "Dear Ramona – very dear Ramona. I like you very much – dear to me, a true friend. It might even go farther. But why is it that I, a lecturer, can't bear to be lectured?" (25). In fact, Herzog has a fear that Ramona's wisdom can overpower him. He likes her but hesitates to surrender himself to her will.

Although Herzog enjoys everything about Ramona and appreciates her approach, style and attitude, sometimes he expresses his dislike of her indulgence in sex and feels that Ramona has made herself 'a sort of sexual professional'(26). Herzog demands more than mere sexual pleasure; he wants moral and philosophical support from her while she is busy convincing him that sexual pleasure is a sort of therapy for any disease. Thus Ramona appears as an advocate for men's biological drives as well as an object of such activities.

Herzog is wary of her views. He reckons that her aim is to get a husband. He feels that Ramona gets involved in amorous adventures "in confusion, and at times probably with a sinking heart, in brutal and often alien embraces" (27). Now she is resolved to settle down. Though Herzog loves her company, he sometimes is in a dilemma about her: "To accept too many favors from Ramona was dangerous. He might have to pay with freedom" (27). This shows us that though Herzog has many intimate moments with Ramona, he still feels confused and shaky about her. He feels that he needs some time off from her and that what he could do with was freedom.

Nevertheless, despite his uncertainty about her, Herzog keeps in touch with Ramona. After his problems with Madeleine, he certainly gets relief from Ramona. Ramona insists on his going back to scholarly work. She entertains him with love, care and passion. She cooks for him and helps him recover from previous setbacks: "She felt for him. She knew he was in pain, and what the pain was, and she offered the consolation he had evidently come for" (243). She also helps Herzog recover the dignity he had lost after the break-up of his relationship with Madeleine. For Herzog, Ramona is a rescuer. Though her theory of sex is not a remedy, her loving company helps Herzog transcend pain and regain confidence in a sound relationship with someone from the opposite sex.

Although Ramona is a source of strength for Herzog, underneath her attractiveness he discovers a tired, struggled and disappointed woman who too suffers. She sees Herzog as a family type and wants him to marry her. We find her gradually trying to prepare Herzog to accept her proposal of marriage. She is very eager to get him as her husband and would like him to concentrate wholly on her. In this context, we find that Ramona has successfully overpowered Herzog.

In an intimate moment, we see Herzog asking Ramona about a person called George Hoberly who is supposed to be her ex-lover. When Herzog is in her embrace, George Hoberly is in the street before Ramona's flat. This makes Herzog suspicious of Ramona's relationship with the man. Though Ramona reassures him about her fidelity, it is clear from this episode that Ramona is also shifty in nature. Since Herzog is a good prospect for her, she has given up another man for him. Although Herzog understands her fickleness, he justifies her action: "And who had more right than a woman who gave him asylum, shrimp, wine, music,...and finally the embrace of her body? We must help one another" (246). Thus Herzog identifies both his and Ramona's crisis and resolves to be helpful to her.

Despite Ramona's tendency to theorize about sex, Herzog is drawn to her. Ramona offers him all sorts of comforts, and he accepts them. This shows that Herzog also wants a stable relationship. Hence he has become more tolerant. He does not mind when Ramona tells him about her past, about "a terrible marriage, and a whole series of bad relationships" (246). Here we find a similarity between these two persons. Both Herzog and Ramona have gone through ups and downs in their relationships with the opposite sex. Both understand each other's problems and have attained maturity after going through similar experiences. Thus it is quite natural that both should have empathy for each other.

Although at the beginning of their relationship, Herzog's responses to Ramona were a bit cool, we find him later attracted to everything Ramona does. Ramona's activities reflect her education. She quotes Catullus and the great love poets of all times to amuse Herzog. She discusses the classics of psychology. She is even dramatic in her love-making: "joyously preparing, stripping, perfuming. She wanted to please. He had only to be pleased and to let her know it, and then she would grow simpler" (249). But Ramona's actions have raised her merely to the status of a woman who works to satisfy a man's physical need. She is adept at all sorts of tricks to lure men. Her education shapes her personality in a way that does not give her much dignity. She is fully obsessed with her sexuality and uses it heedlessly as a mean to win a man's heart.

Perhaps Herzog succumbs to Ramona's guiles. Undoubtedly, Herzog here represents men in general, especially those men who succumb to the overtures of women. This aspect of men-women relationship reminds us of de Beauvoir's observations in *The Second Sex*:

Man encourages these allurements by demanding to be lured: afterwards he is annoyed and reproachful...He finds seductive only the girl who spreads these snares; though herself on offer, she is lying in wait for prey; her passivity serves an enterprise, and she makes her weakness the instrumentality of her power (381).

de Beauvoir's observation can be applied to Herzog, who is amused by Ramona and at times starts to think about the prospect of their marriage. He believes that Ramona's instincts are good, that she is practical, capable, and on the whole not

willing to injure him. As a result of Ramona's complete submission of herself to Herzog, he is willing to believe her completely.

Comparing Ramona with Madeleine, Herzog finds the latter to be a wretched, 'masculine' woman, 'a pitiful bluestockings'(249). Herzog is relieved when he sees that "Ramona was keen about scholarship, his books and encyclopedia articles, Ph.D., University of Chicago, and would want to be Frau Professor Herzog" (249). This proves him to be patriarchal, as he merely wants a woman who can be supportive of his career and aspirations. He would not have a situation when a woman asserts her individuality. Ramona has shown that she would make a compliant wife. Herzog accepts Ramona since she is eager to support him. She simply wants to be the wife of the scholar Herzog. He gets pleasure to think that after their marriage they would attend parties where Ramona would feel proud to say, "This is my husband, professor Herzog" (250).

Ramona brings a tremendous change in Herzog's life. After she had come to Herzog's life, he felt that he could start life anew by becoming a florist, "He saw himself in striped trousers, suede shoes. He'd have to get used to odors of soil and flowers" (250). In Ramona's apartment, he wants to wash dishes after dinner and feels good in doing so. At the end of the novel, he invites Ramona to dinner in his house and cooks meal for her. Thus with Ramona, Herzog becomes a completely different man. We also see him picking flowers for Ramona; something he had never done for any other woman.

But even after he had weighed his relationship with Ramona from various angles, we see him in dilemma. On the one hand, he had passed nights in her embrace and had appreciated her beauty as "sexually fragrant"(252), on the other, he had argued with himself about Ramona's intention to make him believe that

“body is a spiritual fact” (256). He trusts Ramona in “the role of prophetess”(256) as she is well-read but fails to accept her approach to sex since he believes that such attitude “can only lead to more high minded mistakes”(257). This contradictory condition of Herzog’s mind had put him in a chaotic mood for a while. But once he is able to judge her realistically he comes to a resolution. He learns to love her for her struggle to lead an independent life. He thinks, “She needed extraordinary courage to hold this poise. In this world, to be a woman who took matters into her own hands! And this courage of hers was unsteady” (410). For the first time in his life he feels for a woman who has helped him overcome his crisis and restore his peace of mind, but is able to be herself at the same time.

However, Ramona is unique in her belief and perception. She has come in Herzog’s life with a mission. Since she loves Herzog, she is ready to do anything for him. In her outlook towards life, she is analytical and practical. On the whole, Ramona is a contrast to women like Madeleine. While Madeleine is cold, rigid and rebellious, Ramona is warm, flexible and affectionate.

In *Herzog*, Bellow has presented women in vivid detail. He analyzes them and their social positions, struggles, dreams, passions, failures and achievements. Here Bellow has depicted women characters who all are unique. In his depiction of women such as Daisy and Ramona we come into contact with the lives and views of distinctive women. *Herzog* is Bellow’s masterpiece not only for its outstanding presentation of modern human crises but also for the writer’s depiction of modern women as well as men.

Although Herzog had gone through a series of disastrous relationship with women, we cannot say that Bellow intended to portray endless antagonism between the two sexes. What Bellow has stressed is that both men and women

should take the responsibility to maintain a balanced, stable, and harmonious relationship. However, it is not a writer's task to prescribe rules for human relationship. Bellow has, therefore, not suggested any solution to the problems of men-women relationship. As an onlooker, he has simply drawn the characters of modern women in relation to men. Nonetheless, in this novel Bellow has successfully drawn women characters who are lively and realistic. They unfold their visions of life from a modern social perspective. Bellow, in fact, offers in *Herzog*, a large canvas drawing of women in modern America.

CHAPTER FOUR

HUMBOLDT'S GIFT

In *Humboldt's Gift*(1973), Bellow introduces us to women characters who are related to the two major male characters, Von Humboldt Fleisher and Charlie Citrine. Although these women have less important roles to play in this novel than the men, they represent women in modern America. Women like Renata, Demmie Vonghel, Kathleen and Denise are at times fighting, struggling, domineering, ambitious and at times meek, passive and submissive. As in other novels of Bellow, here too we see women through the perceptions of male protagonists. But they are more than mere projections of the male-psyche.

Kathleen is paired with Humboldt, a literary genius of his time. She is presented as a gentle, meek, and obliging character. Humboldt marries her when he is in his late forties. Like Herzog, Humboldt too moves to a remote country cottage after his marriage. At this time, Humboldt, a "manic depressive" (6), is "at the height of his reputation though not of his power"(16). He has started asserting his power over Kathleen whom he treats as his sole possession.

We first meet Kathleen when Charlie gives us a vivid description of her features. On his visit to Humboldt's house in the New Jersey country, Charlie describes Kathleen as a large, fair-skinned, beautiful, but pale woman. We find her living a solitary life. She seldom goes outside and passes most of her time reading books in the house. By taking her to a remote rural area Humboldt has almost buried her from the rest of the world. As Charlie notes, "I saw the position into which Humboldt had placed Kathleen and I put it into words: Lie there. Hold still.

Don't wiggle. My happiness may be peculiar, but once happy I will make you happy, happier than you ever dreamed" (21-22). Humboldt's attitude is quite despotic. But as long as she stays with Humboldt, she obliges him. But why she accepts this position is not clear to us although Charlie tries to explain it as 'secret feminine reasons' (22) that might have caused her to go along with a crazy tyrant like Humboldt.

In fact, Kathleen's life is fully dominated by Humboldt. She spends most of her time reading books even though reading does not satisfy her personal desires and only helps her 'to catch up'(22) with what her husband likes to talk about. She seems to be a pet whom he trains. She even learns to pass the ball accurately when they play football. We see Kathleen remaining silent most of the time, bearing 'kindly smiles' (24) to both Humboldt and Charlie when they are chatting with each other in the evening. Charlie remarks on Kathleen's passivity, especially her complete submission to Humboldt's will: "Wonderful things are done by women for their husbands. She loved a poet-king and allowed him to hold her captive in the country" (24). Thus Kathleen is a woman who has sacrificed herself for the sake of her highly talented husband. She suppresses herself and accepts everything imposed upon her.

Humboldt, however, is domineering only out of jealousy and fear of losing Kathleen. Once before their marriage, Kathleen's father had tried to get her away from Humboldt. She had been "sold" (25) by her father to "one of the Rockefellers" (25). At that time, Humboldt employed a detective to rescue her from that man. After getting her back, he becomes ever more protective. Since he finds that Kathleen is very pliant, 'a sort of dove'(25), fully obedient to her father, he restricts her movement. It is amusing to see that Kathleen has no control over herself. She is controlled by either her father or her husband. Humboldt explains

her deference to her father as “masochism” (25) on her part. It is ironical that he does not see how this is also true about her attitude to him. When we note that Kathleen is not allowed to go outside alone and is kept “in purdah” (25) we are amazed to see her plight.

Humboldt is also apprehensive about their relationship since he is an oriental Jew and Kathleen is a Christian woman. He is afraid that he might be attacked by Christians. He keeps Kathleen under his control, because he fears assault from outside. He always remains alert and keeps a constant watch on Kathleen. He does not let her go out of his sight: “she had to tell him where she was going...Even to go to the bathroom, she needed permission”(143). His paranoid behavior makes her bitter. But Humboldt is frantic and tightens his grip on her fiercely: “...like a bailiff escorting a prisoner from one jail to another” (143).

Moreover, out of sheer craziness and suspicion that Kathleen might go out of his reach, Humboldt starts inventing stories that she has affairs with another man. He declares that she is ‘nymphomaniac’(143) and is having an affair with a fellow named Magnasco. He accuses Kathleen falsely in his frenzy. Despite these wild and possessive moves, he cannot keep Kathleen in his grip for long. At one point she revolts and decides to depart from Humboldt secretly. Later she disappears. Her disappearance makes Humboldt wild. He then hires a private detective to find her out. But this time, Kathleen goes to Nevada to file divorce. At the end, then, she is able to successfully overcome the barrier imposed upon her by Humboldt.

Although Kathleen is submissive and meek while staying with Humboldt, she proves finally that she can come out of such a suffocating situation. She loves

freedom and does not let others dominate her for long. Undoubtedly, she had suffered a lot when Humboldt had confiscated her driving license, hid the car keys, and hit her in a party when she had unmindfully searched for a match by putting her hand into an unknown guest's pocket. He did not allow her "to keep a garden because, he said, gardening expressed the philistine-improving impulse of city people when they bought a dream house in the country" (356). Observing her life with Humboldt, we can say that for Kathleen life was a prison because of him and she has been treated as if she is an object, a play-thing in the hands of a tyrant. From Charlie's observation of Kathleen we can visualize her condition: "Twice now she had been a sleeping maiden under the spell of demon lovers" (356). By saying that he is sympathized with her because 'she was a sleeper' (356) Charlie wants to suggest her naivety and lack of awareness about the demands made in practical life. In fact, Kathleen is a woman who always remains in dark. Charlie poses this question about her, "Was she born to be kept in the dark?" (356). Her nature is one that has developed in an age when women mostly used to live underdeveloped lives. As a result, Humboldt's 'frenzied dictatorship' (357) can hold her 'still' (357), at least he does so for a certain period.

Nevertheless, after leaving Humboldt, she confesses that she was still crazy about him. Her fascination for Humboldt had once made her feel that she could even go to the Arctic to live with him. At one point, Kathleen tells us that she had a "college girl's thrill at getting into the literary life" (358). This shows that she is somewhat immature. She accepts everything about Humboldt because she is infatuated by him. This infatuation ultimately leads her to be captive to his literary genius. Being the wife of a great writer like Humboldt, she forgets herself. No doubt, her readiness to do things for Humboldt makes her submissive to his whims. After their divorce, Kathleen explains how she saw Humboldt as a

“wizard”(359) who made her “feel so slow, slow, slow!”(359). In Humboldt’s literary world she has become a victim of his ‘ingenious’ ‘personal arrangements’ (359). As his wife, Kathleen simply “had to suffer the consequences” (359). Her explanation proves that she still thinks that whimsy is normal for a great genius like him. She does not have anything to say against Humboldt, although she had suffered because of him. She is aware of Humboldt’s extreme possessiveness about her but since she loves him for his genius, she idealizes everything about him.

Ultimately, Kathleen accepts a life of isolation in Nevada by marrying a nondescript man called Tigler. With this man she passes twelve happy years. But when Tigler dies in an accident and Humboldt too has died, Kathleen is left alone as a widow inheriting things from Humboldt as well as Tigler. Humboldt leaves behind a script for her which she will make into a movie according to his directions. She offers Charlie money that will come from selling Humboldt’s movie script. This is when Charlie recognizes for the first time a strong ‘substantiality’(231) in her character that has never been revealed because of her ‘quiet’(231) nature. Thus Kathleen proves her integrity and her deep feeling for Humboldt. Since she could not bear Humboldt’s domineering attitude for long, she had left him but she continues to be devoted to the memory of the man whom she once loved.

Throughout the novel, Kathleen remains a soft, humble and obliging character. Through her Bellow presents a timid and passive woman under the spell of a dominating and patriarchal man. Most of the time in the novel, she seems to be sleep walking. Her ‘sleepiness’ (356) suggests her intentional withdrawal from the surrounding world. But she lacks the independence of an individual. Only when she successfully breaks out of the ‘spell’ (358) cast on her

by Humboldt, does she come out of her deep sleep. In presenting her character, Bellow is realistic, for there are many women even now who are overwhelmed by the 'spell' cast by men's greatness. Kathleen's character is also significant for it brings into light an important aspect of Bellow's observation of women: he not only sees his male protagonists suffering at the hands of women, but also sees how women are treated badly because of men's personal whims.

Denise, Charlie Citrine's ex-wife, is, in contrast, a domineering woman. To describe her Charlie uses coinages such as 'intensely martial' (38). She is haughty and class-conscious. She is rude in jealousy or hatred. Denise hates common people and uses terms like 'common clay' (38) and 'vulgar company' (38) to express her indignation at their company. She loves to assert power; only high-class and powerful people attract her attention. As the daughter of a federal judge, she had got a good college education and had grown up in an upper class area of Chicago. Charlie met her in a theatre when she was accompanying her actor boyfriend, and helping him in memorizing scripts. Though she was another man's girlfriend, her 'glaring bristling beauty' (54) attracted Charlie. After ten years of that meeting they became husband and wife. But Denise proves to be a wrong match for Charlie once they start their married life.

While Denise is overwhelmed by power, Charlie stays away from it. His nostalgia for Chicago and decision to live in the city makes her furious. She is happy when after their marriage Charlie arrives at the summit of success. She always loves to remind him of those days when he was a successful author of many books. Charlie had been honored by the President and was made a Knight of the Legion of Honor, got grants and fellowships, and had lectured at the great eastern universities. But since he is no more in that position, she becomes frustrated. She quarrels over the fact that Charlie is no longer close to important

persons and now hangs around with his “old Chicago school chums, with freaks” (39). She is disappointed to see that instead of “London or Paris or New York” (39) Charlie chooses the life of Chicago. Harshly, she observes: “...you had to come back to this – this deadly, ugly, vulgar, dangerous place. Because at heart you’re a kid from the slums. Your heart belongs to the old Westside gutters. I wore myself out being a hostess...” (39). Here Denise echoes Madeleine in *Herzog*, who also rebukes Herzog for his habit of holding on to the past. It is also interesting to note that while Kathleen submits herself to Humboldt’s decision to live in the remote country side, Denise strongly protests her husband’s wish to live in Chicago. Through her protest, Denise establishes her assertive and domineering personality.

It is noteworthy that we find Denise very enthusiastic when she prepares to visit the White House. Her love for high-profiled event is obvious when she is invited with her husband by the President and Mrs. Kennedy for a cultural evening. “Denise consulted twenty or thirty women about dresses, shoes, gloves. Very intelligent, she always read up on national and world problems at the beauty parlor” (54). Obviously, she intends to endear herself to celebrities showing them how much she knows about the world. Ironically, Charlie talks about her ambition to become “Secretary of State” (55). But at the same time, he cannot help reminding us of her limitations: “She’d have made him [the President] an excellent Secretary of State, if some way could be found to wake her before 11 a.m. For she’s quite marvelous. And a real beauty” (55). To Charlie, Denise is noteworthy for her beauty and not for her talent.

Denise has many grievances against her husband. One of her complaints is he has never allowed her to lead the elegant life she always dreamt of. For example, she invites important persons in her house “to discuss politics and

economics, race, psychology, sex, crime" (57) but Charlie shows indifference to such company. She gets pleasure in such gatherings but Charlie does not indulge in these matters. He is disinclined to entertain such guests and treats them as vague, hollow and unworthy. Seeing Charlie's attitude to them, she becomes angry and calls him 'a snob' (57). Both Charlie and Denise hold contradictory views about these people; Charlie hates them as "phonies" while Denise considers them as important, "superior persons". Thus we see Denise loves superficial greatness whereas Charlie discards it.

While Charlie loves the common company of childhood friends such as George Swiebel Denise hates them. She looks down upon George Swiebel and treats him harshly. She is high-browed and even she appears rude in talking about them. She even denies him any share of their dinner the night Charlie brings him home. At this time, George expresses his disgust of Denise. He regards Charlie's marriage with her as a suffocating one. In many ways, Denise proves that she lacks respect and compassion for what Charlie does. She expects to shape Charlie her own way. Her domination makes the relationship worse. As a result of his suffering at the hands of Denise, Charlie regards suffering as a common phenomenon in every American's life. He feels, "Real Americans are supposed to suffer with their wives, and wives with husbands... It's the classic US grief..." (41).

Denise is very materialistic. She loves money, property, and all sorts of material goods. She is more interested in Charlie's fame, name, and worldly assets than Charlie himself. Without discussing with Charlie, she has bought 'Kanheim House' (110), a mansion. She expresses her desire to live in an aristocratic area of "Georgetown, or in Rome, or in London SW3" (110). However, she is afraid that Charlie can pass away any moment without making a

will. When they were husband and wife and living under the same roof, everyday at breakfast table she used to remind him to make his will. After their divorce, we find her making irrational legal claims to Charlie's property. Her madness finds expression in Charlie's rumination after their divorce: "As for Denise, that marvelous lunatic with the great violet eyes...suppose I were to offer her all of my money? It would make no difference whatever, she would want to get more..." (224).

Nonetheless, Denise's attitude proves her extreme greed. She not only vexes Charlie but also readers. She is mechanical in her married life with Charlie. While he is busy in philosophical reflections, she cares only about having sex. She ignores his melancholy over death or his meditations on the emptiness of modern mechanical civilization. She has little time for such philosophizing. She avoids sharing any of Charlie's grief or mental burdens, and fails to provide him with any sort of emotional support. We find her sharp-tongued on such matters. Denise's unfriendly behavior is surely one reason for Charlie's indifferent attitude towards her. She fails to arouse him even when she is nude. They fail to hold onto each other. As a consequence, Charlie diverts his attention to another woman called Renata.

Comparing Denise with Renata, Charlie says, "despite her[Denise's] intelligence, she had been bad for my idea. From that stand point, Renata was the better woman – better for me" (42). He values Denise only for her beauty. Beneath her hostile, fighting nature, he discovers 'a burdened woman'(216). He assumes that she has to do many things to maintain her life-style but feels that these things burden her. Charlie cynically notes that her weaknesses makes her fierce in their fights.

Even when Denise has lost hold of Charlie, she is jealous of Renata. She indignantly predicts what will ultimately happen to him because of his relationship with a woman like Renata. She tells him, "your mental life is going to dry out. You're sacrificing it to your erotic needs...After sex, what can you two talk about...?" (41). She also assumes that since Charlie could not sustain a serious relationship, he would get rid of her and their children. However, we see later that although Charlie leads a disordered life, he takes her daughters for outing, to a Christmas pageant.

Despite their numerous problems, she feels that without her Charlie's life will collapse. She tries to make up with him, "I understand the mistakes we both made...Look, Charlie, why don't you marry me again? For starters we could stop the legal fight. We should become reunited" (220). She shows sympathy for what she thinks is Charlie's present disordered life and feels that she is risking hers for him. But in reality, she had been increasing her monetary demands every time she faced him in court. Through litigation, she keeps him in constant psychological pressure. Seeing his condition, particularly in their legal battles, a lawyer rebukes him sharply, "How could you marry such a vile bitch!...And if a woman like that decides to bug you to death what do you expect a couple of lawyers to do?" (228).

Denise, in other words, is a woman who possesses an intelligent head but lacks a loving heart. We find her interested in money, status, and power but negligent about love, care and mutual respect. She is jealous of Charlie's girlfriend Renata. She thinks highly of herself and believes that only she can save him from being ruined. She worships Charlie's talent and shows false sympathy, insinuating that all his potentialities might be ruined because of his affair with Renata. But she never tries to understand what type of support Charlie may need. In fact, Denise is a harsh, aggressive and selfish woman. She is interested only in herself. In a

moment of piques, Charlie had once classified the modern American women as “petty bourgeois, husband-killers, social climbers, hysterics, etcetera”(12); she certainly shows some similarity with such women.

Unlike Denise, Demmie Vonghel appears to be an affectionate, loving and caring companion to Charlie Citrine. Though they have lived together for a very short while, Charlie never fails to appreciate the way Demmie takes care of him even after they separate. Because of his humiliation at the hands of Denise, he seems to treasure Demmie’s concern for his appearance and physical well-being even more: “Demmie had taken charge of my appearance...and brushed flat the dark hair I still had then” (19). Demmie’s full name is Anna Dempster Vonghel. A teacher of Latin at the Washington Irving School, she also studied the classics. Like Mimi Villar in *The Adventures of Augie March*, she has been a ‘juvenile delinquent’(18) . Her sincerity is observed when she tells Charlie everything about her past life. She feels that since they love each other, he has every right to know all about herself. Including a record of “hubcap-stealing, marijuana, sex offenses, hot cars, chased by cops, crashing, hospital, probation officers, the whole works...”(18) paradoxically, she also knows “about three thousand Bible verses” (18). In fact, she has been “Brought up on hellfire and damnation” (18).

When Charlie first meets her in a cocktail party, he identifies Demmie as a “perfect country girl, the farmer’s daughter” (19). A devout Christian, Demmie is apprehensive that because of the sins she has committed, she might be thrown into hell. She even has nightmares and wakes up at the dead of the night: “Her Christianity was the delirious kind. She had unclean spirits to cast out. She feared hell” (19). Though she is smart, well-read, and the companion of a free thinker like Charlie, she still lives under the spell of religious superstitions. Ironically, she

keeps herself awake by watching horror movies just to avoid the nightmares she has.

Although Demmie is not an insomniac, she has to take sedatives regularly. Charlie notes that like Humboldt, “she too was an unauthorized pill-taker” (20). She has many things in common with Humboldt. Perhaps for this reason, Humboldt once expresses his desire to become “Demmie’s protector”(27). He also romanticizes Demmie’s juvenile delinquency and appreciates her ways by declaring, “If life is not intoxicating, it’s nothing” (27). When they meet, both Humboldt and Demmie express interest in “old movies and new pills” (27). We also find that Demmie admires Humboldt as ‘a grand man’(27) while he praises her as ‘an exceptional girl’ (27). Thus we find a similarity between their eccentric ways of looking at things and in their life-styles.

Above all, Demmie Vonghel evokes our sympathy because of her suffering. Through her Bellow has presented the picture of a woman who despite a rough life is at heart a soft and humble person. She cannot help living an adventurous life, but at the same time she cries “passionately, as only a woman who believes in sin can cry”(286). Charlie shows respect to this particular side of her character. As he puts it: “when she cried you not only pitied her, you respected her strength of soul” (28). Charlie’s observation regarding Demmie’s worries about her sins proves that he loves her because of her tenderness.

Demmie is a lovable woman in many respects. She is the only woman in the novel who supports Charlie’s ideas and helps him in many ways. When he prepares for an interview Demmie ‘coached’ (127) him. She checks to make sure Charlie is correctly dressed. She encourages him saying, “you’ll do great, Charlie. Just great”(130). As a result, Charlie also loves Demmie. He discovers a simple

'farmer's daughter'(141) in her beneath the important 'American'(140), 'Society girl'(141) façade which she displays in social parties. He loves Demmie's simplicity. We find Demmie to be a very dynamic character, attending parties, and chatting spontaneously on "Plautus, about Latin translation and New Testament Greek" (140).

But for Charlie, Demmie is at times only a sex symbol. Her beautiful long legs attract him most. For example, when she sits cross-legged filing her nails, he looks at her as a woman releasing "the salt female odor, the bacterial background of deep love" (141). Even Demmie, we realize, cannot be anything else except the object of a man's biological urge. Moreover, she often supports patriarchal ideas. When she says that Kathleen should not have put her hand into a man's pocket in search of matches, she almost thinks like a man. Surprisingly enough, she even does not blame Humboldt for his aggressive reaction to Kathleen. Though she herself is a woman, she speaks from a male's point of view. Knowing all about Kathleen and Humboldt's life, how come she thinks in such a way? Her views makes her a woman absorbed in male prejudices. She should have thought deeply over Kathleen's approach. She is biased since she supports Humboldt, although knowing how unfair he always was in his treatment to Kathleen. Thus Demmie shows her short-sightedness while giving an opinion on such a matter.

Despite taking sleeping pills Demmie talks a lot till late into the night. Being scared of "sickness, murder, suicide, eternal punishment and hellfire" (141) she is obsessed by such 'exciting topics'(141). Perhaps to drive away her fear, she discusses them endlessly. Like most religious women, she is constantly worrying about the existence of such things.

Demmie's worries make her stammer and moan in her sleep. Describing her sufferings as she goes through nightmares and struggles to come out of it, Charlie discloses the feature of a 'primordial'(142) woman who 'beneath the farmer's daughter beneath the teacher' (142), beneath the elegant 'Main line horse-woman' (142), 'Latinist and accomplished cocktail-sipper in black Chiffon...' (142) is the figure of universal human suffering. When she tries to hold on to Charlie to overcome this fear, we find a picture of utter helplessness in her. Her fears are representative of the neurosis common to some women. In grabbing Charlie tightly she also represents a universal feminine need. This is the need of women to depend on their male counter-parts, particularly when they are in trouble. When Charlie says, "I think she never actually woke up"(142), he might be suggesting that like Kathleen, Demmie remains unconscious about many aspects of life and never comes out of this stage. Despite her modern upbringing and social stature, she fails to discard some of the beliefs which have shaped her till her death.

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On the other hand, Charlie describes Demmie as a "most practical person, a supervisor and programmer of genius" (146). She takes charge of a disordered person like Charlie. To guide him, she has become 'domineering' and 'protecting'(146). In doing so, she declares herself "a tiger-mother and a regular fury" (146). Unlike Denise, Demmie proves to be life-giving and caring. Every morning, when Charlie wakes up 'already worn out'(147), Demmie gives him several cups of coffee. At breakfast, she counsels him "about the theater, and Humboldt and the conduct of life" (147). Here we see a similarity between her and Ramona in *Herzog*, who also takes care of her lover Herzog. But while Ramona tries to satisfy Herzog sexually, Demmie nurtures Charlie in every way. Thus



'Night-moaning, hell-fearing, pill-addicted'(145) Demmie proves her strength when supporting a man whom she loves.

Demmie cannot transcend the conventional feelings of women in general. Like any other woman she shows her consciousness about physical beauty. We find her lamenting over her figure because of the distortions caused by hormone injections and pills that she had taken to lose weight. At the age of fourteen, she had been an obese girl. In reducing, she had inevitably become 'disfigured by the rapid weight loss'(147). Thus Demmie represents women who are usually saddened by the loss of their physical attractiveness.

Commenting on Demmie, Charlie mentions that she was a 'dynamic sufferer'(148). All her qualities prove that she is a woman of diverse personality. On the one hand, she is good, and sincere in finishing her academic lessons. She is also keen in keeping her house clean and tidy. On the other hand, she drinks whisky, becomes hysterical, 'takes up with thieves and desperadoes'(148). Sometimes she appears 'like a fairy princess'(148) to Charlie and sometimes she punches him in the ribs 'like a cow hand'(148). She is also found to be eccentric when she sun-bathes on her roof and burns herself so badly that she becomes 'delirious'(148).

However, Demmie is also shown to be very humane. In November, 1976, in an interview with Jo Brans, a famous Bellovian critic, Bellow himself describes Demmie as "an awfully nice woman" (*Critical Essays on Saul Bellow*, 70). He also mentions that Demmie is "a real sort of American... young lady".⁹ We discover a child in her when we see her relishing 'Vanilla Castard'(148). Though conscious of over weight, she relishes 'the dessert at the tip of her tongue'(148). At the same time, she gets intensely involved in deep philosophical discussions. She spends

time with Charlie discussing anything from Lucretius to Plato. Thus Demmie is a complex woman full of life. We find many aspects in her; she can be melancholic, exuberant, intelligent, educated, religious, juvenile or mature!

For Charlie, Demmie is a coach, a trainer, a manager, a cook, a lover and his 'straw-boss' (158). She is seriously concerned about Charlie in every way. We even see her sending Charlie to a psychiatrist to solve his mental crises. After living together with him for a long time, we find Demmie serious about getting married to Charlie. She plans their wedding ceremony and dreams of a big church wedding, "Wedding dress and veil...photographs, engraved announcements, morning coats" (159).

Demmie does not have the common female weakness for jewelry. It is true that she takes Charlie to an 'antique-jewelry shop'(161) to buy a ring for herself. But she is not interested in gold itself; she simply wants a ring as a love-token, as a symbol of her bonding with Charlie. But just when she is ready to get married to Charlie, she dies in a plane crash. Her sudden death leaves Charlie in a world which becomes a void, a world where for the rest of his life he will be searching vainly for a real, loving, caring partner like her.

In fact, when Charlie reflects that "The miraculous survival of goodness was the theme of her life" (159) we can visualize a Demmie living amidst the chaos of modern life with her goodness intact. Although she faces adversity, she remains strong because of her inner purity of heart. Her love for Charlie is such that she easily resists the temptations of other men. She tells Charlie, "I love you with my heart. No other man better try and touch me" (159). This proves her strong belief in the integrity of mind and body. Thus Demmie represents the mingling of body and soul. Through her Bellow shows that a combination of both

mental and physical purity can accentuate the actual goodness of human characters.

Though many people try their best either to seduce or intimidate her into having sex, she avoids them. As Charlie observes, "Sexual ideas had distorted the minds of people who were under oath, who were virtually priests...[but] Demmie by her innocence, by beauty and virtue"(160) stayed pure in spirit. In Demmie, we thus come to know about a woman who preserves her dignity even in a promiscuous society. Because she loves a particular man, she feels committed to him in all respects. We can agree with Charlie that her "goodness was genuine and deep" (160). Through Demmie, Bellow has shown a complete woman.

Demmie Vonghel proves that Bellow can find in a woman a composite character. Through her Bellow seems to show his trust in the basic goodness of humanity. Demmie is not merely a projection of woman in general but an embodiment of a pure, honest and innocent soul who undoubtedly wins the readers' hearts by convincing us that goodness can exist even in a hostile, impure and violent society.

Unlike Demmie, Renata lacks commitment, though for a time we find her deeply in love with Charlie. The woman with whom we first see Charlie is Renata. But she appears mostly as means of satisfying Charlie's biological urge. Like Ramona in *Herzog*, we find Renata obsessed with sex.

Renata is beautiful and unscrupulously uses her beauty to attract men. She is also very materialistic. She loves Charlie mainly for his fame and money. She compels him to buy an expensive car, a Mercedes 280-SL. She criticizes him for thinking that a famous man could drive a simple Dodge Compact.

Moreover, Renata rebukes him for saying that he does not know how to spend money. Like Denise, Renata always tries to convince Charlie that he neglects himself and perhaps is afraid of success since he “shirked the potentialities” (35). But as Charlie is enchanted by Renata, he is ready to do everything possible for her. He fantasizes their relationship as another “Antony and Cleopatra” (35) episode. He feels, “Let Rome in Tiber melt. Let the world know that such a mutual pair could wheel through Chicago in a silver Mercedes,...” (35).

Renata is an interior decorator by trade. She is keen about business and auctions. She is careful in her business dealings and has the ability to convince other people. Above all, she has the ability to satisfy Charlie’s physical desires. But she can also be inconsiderate and self-centered as when she leaves her only child in charge of another person and pays him to entertain the “little boy in the Receiving Room” (43) while she goes to bed with Charlie. Charlie describes her as “an obliging and beautiful woman” (53). He mainly adores her for her sex appeal and views her as an instrument for his gratification.

Although her love for Charlie is not that deep, she is furious whenever she sees his interest in any other woman. For example, once we find her terribly jealous of Doris, the daughter of an anthroposophist. Out of intense jealousy she even decides to teach Charlie a lesson once by shutting him out. Though she wants to possess Charlie wholly, we cannot say that Renata has been loyal to him. Thus when Charlie visits her on one occasion, to his utter despair he discovers that she has shut herself up with another man. Indeed, she has an affair with a man called Flonzaley while sleeping with Charlie. But the most interesting aspect of the Charlie-Renata relationship is that Charlie responds to her call anytime and fails to resist the temptation of meeting her even though he knows that Renata is lying.

We find him confessing his fascination for other girls but since Renata is a 'gorgeous' (184) woman in his eyes, he prefers her most. Thus Renata proves her power over men who otherwise disapproves of her.

It is also interesting to note that Renata herself feels that she is 'a dumb broad'(184). Charlie likes her as his "Kama Sutra dream girl" (184). But from Charlie's accounts of Renata we also come to know that "she was by no means fully at ease in sex. There were times when she was sad and quiet and spoke of her 'hang-ups' " (184). We see her sometimes as a frustrated woman who abuses herself, often becoming quiet and indifferent to physical pleasure. Though she talks of sex a lot, she often feels bored by it, and at times reflects negatively on the life she is living.

Renata is divorced and thirty years old and has a little son. Like Ramona, Renata has had many relationships before meeting Charlie. But once she meets him, she wants to settle down by marrying him. George Swiebel, a close friend of Charlie, thinks Charlie needs a lively, warm and sexually attractive mate like Renata.

On the one hand, Charlie feels that "as a carnal artist"(186) Renata was "disheartening as well as thrilling" (186) for him. Sometimes he is frustrated seeing that the life he has with Renata makes him "entertain vain and undignified ideas" (187). He seems to be confused about his relationship with her. He holds onto a passionate relationship with Renata notwithstanding he disapproves it as vague. He feels this relationship as an universal incident that naturally happens between opposite sexes. He fails to resist his attraction for Renata and justifies it thus: "History had decreed that men and women had to become acquainted in these embraces" (203). Charlie's feelings about men-women relationship show

that he wants to view his meeting with Renata as natural. But he is baffled by her too. For him, the relationship sometimes becomes meaningless. We find him asking himself more than once if Renata was really his fate.

From the first meeting with Renata, Charlie feels that she had started “sending messages of love and depravity” (197) to him. Indeed, Charlie runs after a woman like Renata because of her sexual attractiveness. He even feels “The pleasure of sleeping with her went far beyond the ordinary pleasure of sharing a bed. Even to lie unconscious beside her was a distinct event” (316). Thus mere physical attraction makes Renata worthy in Charlie’s eyes.

Renata has a deep desire to become Mrs. Charlie Citrine. Thus once when they stay in a hotel, and a receptionist calls her ‘Mrs. Citrine’(316), she feels happy at this. Charlie argues with himself then that ‘to increase her happiness’ (316) he could almost have said, “You’d make a wonderful Mrs. Citrine” (316). But he remains silent since Charlie, almost like Herzog, feels that once he marries Renata, he will lose his freedom.

Moreover, he finds Renata completely materialistic. He does not mind spending a lot of money on a woman like her but at the same time he has a feeling that he will not be able to satisfy her insatiable needs. For example, when Charlie takes her to a room of a five star hotel, she expresses her disappointment about the room. Charlie describes her reaction and her love for showiness thus: “By the movement of her eyes, however, I saw that money thoughts were on her mind” (308).

We see a wide gulf between Charlie and Renata’s ideals. While Renata desires to be the wife of an important and rich person, Charlie pursues ideals like

'Freedom' and 'Love' (316). He feels that he should be loved for his self alone, not for his money, fame and power. But despite the differences of outlooks, they stay together for a while. Charlie appreciates her because "she understands style... and she's connected with the Rich" (308). Renata has also tried to convince Charlie that she will really make him a good wife. In an intimate moment, we find her telling Charlie that he does not understand real women. In addition, she says that whenever Denise had tried to knock him 'out of action' (317) she has saved him: "It's all me -I've kept your sex powers alive" (317). Thus we see Renata as a woman who tries to hold on to a man through sex. But though she swears that she will be beside him till his last day of life, we find her leaving him ultimately for another man.

But we cannot blame her wholly for leaving Charlie, since she also suffers from an identity crisis. She always thinks of a man as someone who will provide her security. She longs for her rights, "the right to an identity-problem, the right to a father, a husband" (366). She thinks of herself as 'phony'(391), since she feels that she does not belong to anybody she loves.

It is also noteworthy that when he loves her Charlie tries to overlook 'certain trifles'(399). For example, once she had provoked him by locking him out. On another occasion she had upset him by "the conspicuous display of her birth-control device at the top of her open bag" (399) at Heathrow Airport. Once he has lost hold of Renata, he becomes obsessed with the idea of getting her back at any cost. Thus when Renata shows interest in marrying him, he is reluctant to do so; but after losing her, he is ready to do anything for her. He now tries to rationalize Renata's previous actions, arguing that she has done everything only to get him. He feels now that "Renata did gross things, to be sure. But perhaps these were war measures. She was campaigning to get me and would be different when

we were settled down as husband and wife" (400). Though it seems almost masochistic on Charlie's part, he is now ready to compromise with Renata. After losing Renata, he is a troubled man with a 'swelling heart'(401) and 'an unidentified need'(401). For this he needs Renata. He starts feeling jealous of Flonzaley when she marries him. But the way Renata has dumped Charlie with her little boy in a hotel in Spain and married Flonzaley reveals her deviousness. As Herzog remembers Madeleine after being rejected by her, Charlie reminisces about the good times he has had with Renata afterwards.

Interestingly, Renata is guided by her mother. Señora, Renata's mother, in fact, makes plans for Renata's life since she feels that she had already invested a lot for her upbringing. In other words, Renata has become a sort of capital in the hands of her mother who schemes to get her married. Not surprisingly, then, at the end of the novel we find Renata fulfilling her mother's goal.

But while Renata displays her weakness for Charlie, her mother fails to stop her from mixing with him. Being thwarted, then, she urges Charlie to marry Renata soon. Like Aunt Tamara in *Herzog*, who encourages Ramona to marry Herzog, Señora prompts her daughter. Both Aunt Tamara and Señora lead a single life. Perhaps because of bitter experiences, both dream of a settled, happy married life for their children. However, Bellow is realistic in sketching such old women figures. Their single life suggests that they have been defeated by life and perhaps deceived by the opposite sex. No wonder they scheme to ensure a happy and comfortable life for their descendants.

When Renata marries Flonzaley, her mother appears as a scheming woman desperate 'to achieve respectability for her daughter'(409). She has provided all sorts of supports to Renata for her 'erotic development'(409). Renata remains

grateful to her mother. It is obvious that following her mother's advice she marries a rich undertaker. Once the mother is successful in marrying her daughter off to a rich man, she feels happy. When Charlie looks for Renata, her mother informs him that she is now with the undertaker. At this moment, Charlie discovers a 'youthful'(409) happiness in the old woman. Perhaps she has become rude and revengeful towards all men because of the anguish caused by Renata's father who never married her. She now relishes a sort of satisfaction seeing that her daughter can also dump men. Thus through Señora, Bellow has successfully depicted the inner-self of an old female character.

The way Renata has ditched Charlie hurts him badly. He feels that Renata has ruined his 'personal dignity'(413). In the end, Charlie feels utterly embittered by Renata's desertion. Anticipating his anger and bitterness, she writes to thank and express to him her gratefulness. She asserts that she did not deny anything to him whereas he had denied her plenty. Her letter proves that she is shrewd in presenting her case. She does not forget to mention the way Charlie treated their relationship earlier. She writes, "I believed you when you said that a peculiar foot needed a peculiar shoe and that we were shoe and foot, foot and shoe together" (415). The critic Judie Newman seems to support Renata's actions when she observes: "Citrine fails to marry Renata largely because she does not meet up to his impossibly high moral demands" (*Saul Bellow and History*,163). Newman pinpoints the reason that has caused the failure of Charlie-Renata relationship by citing Renata's letter to Charlie where she declares:

Now you can write your big essay on boredom, and may be the human race will be grateful... When it comes to men, my judgments are completely female-human, regardless of race, creed, or previous condition of servitude, as Lincoln said...I don't want to get involved

in all this spiritual, intellectual, universal stuff. As a beautiful woman and still young, I prefer to take things as billions of people have done throughout history" (416).

It seems that through Renata Bellow shows how an individual accepts the life he or she prefers. Through his depiction of a character like Renata he perhaps is throwing a challenge to a male-dominated society where even intellectuals want to fit the life of women in structures designed by themselves and do not care about what a woman expects from life. They want to determine how a woman should behave. But through Renata, Bellow seems to support a woman who has finally become assertive.

Although Renata works to please Charlie or any other man's demands throughout the novel, she finally chooses the life she prefers. She does not want to shape herself according to a man's version of reality. She is not afraid to reveal her ideas about the life she wants to live. She believes that she lives in nature, denounces spiritual and intellectual idealism, and puts much more value in what Flonzaley does. Charlie finally realizes that a woman can be happy in a life she chooses herself. It is not necessary that she has to follow the ideas propagated by male intellectuals.

Above all, Renata is unconventional. She does not submit to the ideas and values established by patriarchal society. She stands out against a society that treats a girl as a commodity for sexual gratification. It is clear that she has a mind of her own and expects respect from the society. The respect she had once lost in the hands of a man who had abused her mother, she now attempts to repair. Once she frantically urges Charlie to marry her saying, "Change my status. That's what I need. I'll make you a wonderful wife" (342). But at that moment Charlie

deceives her by false assurances of marriage and dillydallies in taking a decision of marrying her.

Charlie's treatment of Renata is not always fair. If he is right to see her as a materialistic woman, it is also true that Charlie never treats her as more than mere a commodity he buys with his money and valuable time. Were he a truly passionate lover, he would never mention that he has to invest in her: "The more facts I put into her the more I needed her, and the more I needed her the more her price increased. In the life to come there will be no such personal or erotic bondage" (344). Therefore, Charlie's conviction about his relationship with Renata supports the idea that though he gives value to highly moral ideas, he has become a sort of capitalist who feels attached to the commodities he has invested in.

Moreover, Renata's voice throws a challenge to a male-dominated society where men are free to change women and free to make love to anyone but disapproves of women who go for several relationships at a time. For Charlie, she wishes that if there were an 'after life' (415), he should be reincarnated as a woman just to see and learn a lot about women's lives. She states a fact about the real nature of the human minds when she says, "Many a woman would admit, if she was honest, that what she'd really adore is a man made up of many men, a composite lover or husband. She loves this in X and that in Y and something else again in Z..." (415). She seems to be saying here that one may fall in love with diverse qualities and personalities of various types of persons at a time, but society always demands commitment, devotion and loyalty from a woman.

Though in *Humboldt's Gift*, Bellow presents his ideas and values from male perspectives and shows his women as sometimes sufferers and sometimes the

causes of sufferings, he is realistic in depicting the actual situation of his world. Bellow has not presented his women as major characters in this novel but his observations of their lives are realistic. We find him balanced in delineating his men and women. We cannot say that Bellow supports the rights and causes of one sex while ignoring that of the other. In this novel we see him sketching the characters of both Charlie and Renata as reckless in their relationships with the opposite sex. Bellow's impartial observation is especially evident in Charlie's words: "Now I was flooded with sexual associations. Take Renata, there was never violence with Renata... The most charming thing about Miss Scheldt was her lighthearted bursting into laughter during the conclusion of the sexual act" (426). Regarding this aspect of human life we remember, how Bellow makes one of his characters, the lawyer, Sandor Himmelstein in *Herzog* observe: "We're all whores in this world, and don't you forget it" (*Herzog*, 109). Unconventional in his outlook on human nature, Bellow successfully erases distinctions between men and women. To his eyes, both sexes have the same sort of potentialities and drawbacks.

In *Humboldt's Gift* we see Kathleen, Denise, Demmie and Renata who are major women characters of the novel. Through these characters we observe a gradual development of Bellow's skill in delineating women. If we compare this early 80s novel of the Bellow canon with his first novel *Dangling Man* (1944), we see a noteworthy difference in Bellow's outlook to women in these two novels. In his first novel, the central woman, Iva gets less attention than Joseph, the male protagonist of the novel. But in *Humboldt's Gift* (1973), beside the two major male protagonists, Charlie and Humboldt, we have a clear account of the four major women's lives. Bellow has delved down into their lives. Hence he has been able to show the readers a wide variety of women. These women are unique. For

example, when Kathleen represents meek, fragile and submissive type of women, Denise embodies haughty and domineering category. Beside the interesting contrast between these two women, we see another contrasting pair; they are Demmie and Renata. Demmie is the emblem of love, devotion and peace when Renata stands for depravity. Thus among the four novels discussed in this work, undoubtedly, in *Humboldt's Gift* (1973) we find Bellow's women in their full bloom. They represent mature Bellow women. In other words, this early 80s novel of Bellow is the hall-mark in the Bellow canon in depicting women of various types. In this novel, Bellow has looked at all his female characters thoroughly. He presents each of them as convincing and real. Though we encounter them in their relationships with men, they too play significant roles in determining manifold aspects of the novel.

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN IN SAUL BELLOW'S STORIES

Although portrayed in a small canvas in the stories, Bellow's women here are representatives of his major observations about women in general. In fact, Bellow has presented a woman as the protagonist of his story "Leaving the Yellow House", something he has never done before in his novels. So in this study of Bellow's women in his fictions, it would be worth our while to see his skills in depicting women from a new perspective in his shorter tales.

Our study will encompass four stories as they appeared in time. Among these four stories, the first three, "The Gonzaga Manuscripts" (first published in *Discovery No. 4* in 1954), "A Father-To-Be" (first published in *The New Yorker* in 1955) and "Leaving the Yellow House" (first published in *Esquire* in 1957) are collected from Bellow's *Mosby's Memoirs and Other Stories* (1969), "What kind of Day Did You Have?" is a long story published in another collection, *Him With His Foot in His Mouth and Other stories* (1974). Since criticisms of these stories were not available, our study of women in these stories are based on a first-hand study of the texts. Hence it presents women without the benefit of having major critics' reviews on them.

“The Gonzaga Manuscripts”

“The Gonzaga Manuscripts” was first published in *Discovery* No.4 in 1954. It was then reprinted in Mosby’s *Memoirs and Other Stories* (1969). Here Bellow’s main theme is a young man’s quest for some manuscripts of poems by a Spanish poet, Gonzaga. Though women do not play an important role in the quest, they are not wholly ignored by Bellow in his narrative.

In this story Clarence Feiler, a young American student of Spanish literature, arrives in Madrid with the purpose of finding out the whereabouts of Gonzaga’s manuscripts. He is so much impressed by Gonzaga’s poems that he feels this anonymous poet’s manuscripts should be recovered and preserved. He comes to know that the manuscripts he wants to restore had been written for a woman, Countess del Camino, who had died during a war. Gonzaga was in love with the Countess. He had written many love poems addressed to her. This Countess had no family. She had distributed her property among her cousins but left instruction so that the love poems written by Manuel Gonzaga was buried with her. Though the Countess had no affair with Gonzaga, her deep love and respect for his poems had been established through her desire to keep them in her grave. She passed a lonely life and died with the things she loved.

Thus Countess del Camino attracts our attention for her passionate desire of burying the love poems with herself. Such a desire of the Countess presents her as a woman who glorifies love. Though she is not the major focus of the writer she gets importance through her relation to the manuscripts. Both this Countess and the poet Gonzaga are dead but the history of the manuscripts suggests a crucial side of their relationship, that is, their silent love for each other.

Beside the story of the dead Countess, Bellow presents two other women whom Clarence meets for a short while. One appears hostile while the other becomes friendly with him. One is Miss Walsh, an English woman who is rude to him. At the very first meeting, she acts abrasively: "He knew he must expect to have trouble with her. She was in a bad way. Her face was heavily made up; she thought she was a person of charm, and she did have a certain charm, but her eyes were burning" (*Mosby's Memoirs and Other Stories*, 115). Such a rude feature is enough to convince us that she is antagonized by Clarence. She is cynical about Madrid's charms. She tries to indicate to Clarence that Madrid was no place for fun. She finds the place boring. She tells him that she had been visiting the place for twenty years but had never found anything of interest there. She offends him by declaring: "I can't understand why so many Americans want to come here. They're all over the place" (116). She expresses her hatred against Americans also when she blames them for damaging the climate and life on earth through the atom bomb. She also adds: "You Americans are filling the air with Carbon Fourteen, which is very dangerous" (117). She takes Clarence as the representative of all Americans and tries hard to embarrass him by making offensive remarks about Americans.

However, when Clarence tries to tell her that he is not all American nor she all English, and neither was responsible for what is happening in the world, she becomes frantic. She calls him a 'fanatic' (118). Her attitude enrages him so that he suddenly leaves her, calling her 'a nasty old dog!' (118). However, after a while, she realizes that she has wronged him and apologizes to him and resolves to become his friend. A minor character, Miss Walsh is simply someone Clarence meets in the course of his quest whose actions only provoke him to rethink his

attitude towards his life. After his encounter with her, he starts rethinking his purpose and concentrates on finding out the manuscripts.

Unlike Miss Walsh, Miss Faith Ungar is Clarence's friend. He buys pesetas from this woman. She is an art student, or rather a student of art history. She is involved in black-marketing foreign currency. However, Clarence finds her young and attractive; he 'was greatly taken with her' (119). To him she appears genuine. When he discovers that she is a talented student who won an award for her study in history, he asks with surprise why she had been involved in illegal business. She answers plainly that both her fiancée and she want to buy a house. Besides, she finds it an interesting way of 'meeting a lot of people' (120). Her simple explanation impresses Clarence. He invites her to lunch and she accepts his invitation gladly.

Miss Ungar's liveliness moves Clarence so much that he starts feeling disturbed by the thought that soon her fiancée would arrive. He thinks: "What a lot of life she had! Her white face gave off a pleasant heat" (121). Clarence gradually falls in love with this woman. He watches her carefully. He is amused to see that she shows her consciousness about not being considered as a common woman by putting on a pair of net gloves: "Women without gloves were considered common in Madrid" (120). Thus we see that Miss Ungar's simplicity makes her uncommon in Clarence's eyes.

As he starts to trust her Clarence tells Miss Unger about the details of his mission. He explains to her who Gonzaga was and how his poems had impressed him. Miss Ungar listens to him attentively and encourages him to pursue his goal and cautions him to be careful about troubles that might come his way. Thus they become closer. Clarence likes sharing everything with this woman. He starts

depending on her immediately. But after a short while, he becomes disappointed with her. He realizes that because her fiancée has returned, she no longer would invite him to her place. Though he is hurt because of her cold behavior, he consoles himself with the thought that "Perhaps she was not really in love with her fiancée" (134). He also believes: "that the black-marketing was not her idea but the pilot's. It embarrassed her. But she was loyal." (134). This thought consoles him as he finds that reality hindered his desire.

It is interesting to note that though Miss Ungar is not a major character of the story, her presence helps focus a young man's mind who has fallen in love with her even after knowing that she is engaged to some other man. Her presence arouses the romantic in Clarence since after seeing her, he starts feeling differently about his quest: "He should have a woman like that. It passed dimly over his mind that a live woman would make a better quest than a dead poet" (135). Thus we see that a woman can easily change a man's mission. Though Clarence does not get Miss Ungar as his lover, in her company he finds relief for a while.

Interestingly, regarding Bellow's treatment of women we observe some similarities between his first novel, *Dangling Man* (1944) and this early 60s story "The Gonzaga Manuscripts". Like Etta, the hostile niece of Joseph, the protagonist of *Dangling Man*, here Miss Walsh provokes antagonism between Clarence and herself. In a hostile encounter they exchange bitter words. The relationship between Clarence and Miss Walsh is a violent one. Miss Walsh is a snob English woman who resembles the class-conscious Etta of *Dangling Man*. Both are harsh in their attitude to men. In *Dangling Man* kitty Daumler gives Joseph a momentary relief. Likewise, Miss Faith Unger supports Clarence for a very short while. Thus we see that in early stage of his writings, Bellow's women characters are almost

similar. In this phase, women play minor roles but their contributions to the overall development of the plot are important.

Although in "The Gonzaga Manuscripts", Clarence's quest for the manuscripts is the major theme of the story, Bellow presents women here in many aspects. Countess del Camino is a woman for whom Gonzaga wrote his love poems and whose action of burying the poems into her grave ultimately prevents Clarence from carrying out his mission of restoring the manuscripts. She is also the embodiment of a silent beloved who pays tribute to her poet-lover by burying the love poems attributive of his love for her. Though dead, we can visualize a lonely, aristocratic woman in her. While Miss Walsh embitters him, Miss Ungar comforts Clarence. Thus though women are minor characters in this story, Bellow shows them in diverse roles. Sometimes they appear as loving, sometimes hostile and irritating, and sometimes as charming and friendly. In other words, the story reveals that Bellow wants to reveal women in their great variety in his fictions.

“A Father-To-Be”

In “A Father-To-Be” first published in *The New Yorker* in 1955, Bellow presents the predicament of a young research chemist, Rogin. This story reveals the complex psychological condition of a man. This is also a short story collected from *Mosby's Memoirs and Other Stories* (1969). At the outset of the story, we find him embittered by his fiancée, Joan. We find Rogin extremely annoyed when Joan orders him to buy some roast beef and shampoo for her. It becomes clear to us that though he supports Joan financially, mentally she can be a burden for him.

In fact, Joan can be quite inconsiderate and extravagant. From Rogin's accounts, we learn that Joan is beautiful, well-educated, and aristocratic. She does not work because she counts herself too good for any ordinary clerical job. Rogin supports her and does not mind that she is not working. Though Rogin loves Joan, he feels the strain of having to support her. He does everything according to her wish but cannot help thinking how hard a time she gives him by her extravagance. Nevertheless, “He loved her too much to show his suffering” (144). He loves her so much that sometimes he tries to justify her by thinking that she is far better than he. Because she does not worry about money, he tells himself that she is always cheerful and actually a marvelous character.

It is interesting to note that though Rogin is annoyed by Joan's demands, when he goes shopping for her, he buys more for her than what she wants from him. He imagines how happy she will be after getting everything he buys for her. Rogin's feeling is proof of his satisfaction in his affair with Joan though he feels the pressure of the financial burden she puts on him. Nevertheless, he consoles himself by thinking: “There was really nothing to compare her sweet, small, daring, shapely, timid, defiant, loving face to. How difficult she was, and how

beautiful!" (147). Thus Rogin is quite split about his relationship with Joan. She is both the cause of his sufferings and a source of satisfaction for him.

Rogin's mother is another woman in the story who becomes a burden for him. She too needs money and expects his support. In his anxious moment he remembers that "in these days of inflation and high taxes, [she] needed money too" (144). However, on a Friday night, he discovers that his mother refuses to do things for him: "She had sat at the table motionless, with her long-suffering face, severe, and let him cut his own meat, a thing she almost never did" (148). He is shocked when he finds his mother, who once loved him so much that she had made his brother jealous, is now treating him harshly because she does not get adequate financial support from him. Thus, although Rogin loves his mother as well as Joan, they cause him stress because of money. To him they appear such a terrible burden that even in his nightmares women haunt him. At night, he dreams that he is carrying a woman on his head. He thinks that this woman whom he dreams about may be either his mother or his fiancée. Thus for Rogin, women are nightmarish figures.

Rogin is so hurt by women that he even dismisses the idea of becoming a father. He is disgusted with the thought that Joan would give birth to a child daughter who would resemble her. On his way to Joan's home in the subway, he watches a man whose appearance resembles Joan. Because he reminds him of Joan, he even starts hating this stranger. He feels disturbed at the idea of having sex with her. Thus, when he arrives at Joan's home, he seems indifferent to her, disturbed by the thought of the financial pressure imposed on him by Joan. When she offers to wash his hair with the shampoo he bought for her, he refuses. But Joan is a fun-loving, shallow woman and remains unconcerned about his grave mood. She cares little for what may happen to a man suffering because of a

financial load. She forces him to wash his hair telling him that it will be of some relief.

In the end, Rogin complies with the situation by accepting her wish. At this moment, we find him almost ready to express his anger at what he is undergoing. He is tempted to speak out his heart: "...that I alone was made to carry the burden of the whole world on me? Do you think I was born to be taken advantage of and sacrificed?...Remember, that I'm a man is no reason why I should be loaded down. I have a soul in me no bigger or stronger than yours" (154). Thus, in Rogin's feelings Joan has been depicted as the type of women who appear ruthless and take advantage on men.

On the whole, this story presents men-women relationship from an angle that is striking. Here Bellow draws a realistic picture of the type of women who exploit men. When Rogin wonders, "A pair of spirits, practically alike. So why shouldn't there also be equality? I can't always be the strong one" (154) it seems as if he has become a voice of suffering men who desire equal sacrifice from women. Here Rogin's voice has become an invitation to women to shoulder all responsibilities along with men. Bellow might be suggesting that to establish a harmonious and balanced relationship, women too ought to share responsibilities. Since money is a major factor of life, women must earn money to support the family along with men.

However, after experiencing a lot of 'troubled emotions' (154) Rogin accepts the reality that he is still in love with Joan. He feels comforted when Joan washes his scalp. He praises her thus, "You always have such wonderful ideas, Joan. You know? You have a kind instinct, a regular gift" (155). Thus instead of

expressing all his secret grudges against her, he expresses his love for what she does.

Joan plays a vital role in "A Father-To-Be" (1955). Although like many other Bellocian women her presence in the story is not direct, Bellow focuses on her in the major part of the narrative. Her role is important since she initiates the readers with the knowledge of how a man can go through ups and downs in his emotional life only because of a woman. We know mostly of Rogin's sufferings and Joan appears time and again in his thoughts because she is the main cause of his sufferings. Joan proves to be unscrupulous in causing troubles to Rogin. Like Madeleine in *Herzog* (1964) and Denise in *Humboldt's Gift* (1973), Joan is educated, beautiful and aristocratic but inconsiderate and extravagant. However, Rogin does not give up the relationship with her for what she is. Rather as he feels that she is a source of satisfaction for him as well, he continues to bear the burden caused by her. Even at the end of the story, the writer gives a hint of Rogin's acceptance of all afflictions caused by Joan. We also find a similarity between Joan and Ramona, the mistress of *Herzog*. Like Ramona, Joan comforts Rogin by taking care of him. Although in comparison to many other Bellocian women Joan is a low-profile character, Rogin feels attracted to her for her "wonderful ideas" (155). As a woman Joan is not that convincing since we just get glimpses of her personality from Rogin's account. At the same time, we can feel her strong presence in the story as she has a formidable control on Rogin's personality. She not only determines the movement and the outcome of the plot but also proves to be psychologically strong woman. Though we find Rogin as a sufferer, we are convinced of Joan's potentiality as she successfully overpowers the man.

“Leaving the Yellow House”

“Leaving the Yellow House” first published in 1957, in *Esquire*, has a woman as its protagonist. This story is also collected from *Mosby's Memoirs and Other Stories* (1969). It is an outstanding story for its vivid description of a lonely old woman's life. Unlike almost all of Bellow's fictions, it tells the story from a woman's perspective. At its beginning we see that this woman called Hattie is central to Bellow's narrative. Bellow describes her as “big and cheerful, puffy, comic, boastful...”(3). This gives us the impression that she is a very lively personality.

However, Hattie is a seventy-two year old woman who was once married to a man called James John Waggoner IV. But this marriage did not last for long. We do not have any clear idea of why her marriage broke up. Perhaps, her husband did not like the way she was. Though she is divorced by her husband, she loves him so much that she never marries again out of fear that she will have to give up “the name of Waggoner” (34) if she does so.

Moreover, Hattie is unconventional in many ways. Though she is discarded by her husband, she does not hold any grudges against him. She cherishes her memories of the good times with the man. She knows well that her husband has no extraordinary charm; nevertheless she continues to love him. But Hattie is never lonely; for a while, her love for her husband prevents her from feeling forlorn. After her divorce, she starts living with a cowboy named Wicks. When she is with Wicks, she really seems to be enjoying a carefree life. But the relationship with Wicks also ends eventually. Since one day she cannot bear Wicks' domineering attitude, she reacts violently and makes him leave. Later she reflects on the incident thus: “I couldn't bear to fall so low, she thought, to be

slave to a shiftless cowboy" (40). Hattie's reaction proves that her self-esteem is so high that she is ready to lose a close friend but not her dignity. After this incident both Hattie and Wicks are parted forever.

Hattie's story is a depiction of an individual old woman's longing for a life of her own. Though she had a husband and a boy-friend, the story does not emphasize her relationship with men. Rather it tells about her aspiration to live an independent life. Though old and lonely, she prefers to live alone in her yellow house.

"Hattie's yellow house" (5) is one of the three good houses at Sego Desert Lake. As far as we know, she got the house from another lonely woman named India whom she had once served for many years. Before coming to live in the yellow house, Hattie used to live "in an Indian wickiup on the shore"(5). Hattie had been living in that barren place by the lake for more than twenty years. But she never got a good shelter from anyone before India, the other lonely woman, provided her one. Moreover, Hattie used to think herself "as a rough, experienced woman of the West"(6). Perhaps her unstable life and rough experiences made her rough. Except some friends and neighbors, she has no relative to support her. But an accident makes her fear the unknown future although it is also clear that she does not like to go back to her past.

Hattie is an alcoholic. One evening, on the way back home from a friend's house, she lost control of her car because she was drinking. This accident creates a pathetic situation. When she is injured and becomes anxious that her car might be ruined, she goes to seek help from a friend named Darly. Darly, however, treats her roughly and is unwilling to help her. Desperate, she goes back to The Rolfes, the friendly couple she had been visiting before the accident. They come to help

her and take her to a hospital. Rolfe arranges for her treatment as he knows that Hattie is a penniless woman. Hattie, in other words, is a wretched woman who has to depend on others in her crises. But no one comes beside her in her distress, except the Rolfes.

Although Hattie recovers from her injury, she has to worry constantly over the money she ought to pay. When she finds that she does not have anything valuable except the house, she plans to sell it to make some money. But her friend Rolfe disappoints her by telling her that the yellow house is not as expensive as she thought it to be. She is at a loss when she does not get money from any of her friends either. But even at this crucial moment of her life, she does not lose her hope. She remains calm: "She was not one to be miserable for long; she had the expression of a perennial survivor"(15). Thus Hattie becomes the symbol of a lonely old woman who fights hard to overcome all odds. Perhaps, by the phrase 'perennial survivor' the writer wants to indicate how hard she has been fighting from a very early life.

Nonetheless, Hattie's loneliness is miserable. She thinks, "How long must I go on taking care of myself?" (16). She consoles herself by thinking that everyone around loves her. She also thinks they will never let her die. But she is left all alone in her struggle to survive.

She is annoyed by the thought that her old friend India used to treat her as a servant. But Hattie herself admired India for her education and breeding. To many of her friends, she boastfully mentioned her connections to India. She admired India since "She is a lady" (Implying that they made a pair)' (18). Hattie's feeling proves that though she had been treated harshly by India and though 'she

left many scars'(18) on Hattie's pride, Hattie respects her. Moreover, she is grateful to India for leaving the yellow house to her when she died.

Hattie is animated at the thought that she will be able to either sell the yellow house or rent it. However, her hopes fade when she thinks that her lawyer Claiborne might not be able to manage selling or renting the house. This thought bothers her a lot and increases her worry that she might become a 'burden on anybody' (22). She does not want to lose her dignity by being a burden for others. Despite her helplessness, Hattie wants to be all alone by herself.

It is noteworthy that at one point, Hattie becomes jealous of Helen's fortune. She compares herself with Helen, the wife of her friend Rolfe. Helen has money, age, husband, child and everything to make her life pass idly, whereas Hattie has to pass a lonely life. She does not have money, youth, husband, child or anything. She even thinks: "I would know what to do with Helen's advantages" (24). But Hattie loves to be on her own. Although it occurs to her that she could live with her brother Angus, she soon dismisses the idea for then she would lose her freedom. Besides, since she has her own house, she would not leave it. In fact, she does not want to live on others' mercy.

Moreover, Hattie never owned a thing before the Yellow house. She thus cherishes it. She feels that this is the only place in the world where she can live with her rights. She feels that Darly did not help her in the accident because, "He envied her the house, and her woman's peaceful life"(28). When her friend, Pace, advises her to sell the house to him she bursts into anger. Though she knows well that she is ageing and may die at anytime, she does not want to part with her only possession, the yellow house. The most interesting scene of the story shows Hattie making a will. In it she writes: "I leave this property, land, house, garden, and

water rights, to Hattie Simmons Waggoner. Me!"(42). Hattie's statement proves that she is more haunted by the thought of her helpless condition and her insecurity than her death. In the final scene, her wailing over the fact that she is being cast off and lonely though she has done no harm to others is very moving.

Hattie is a memorable creation. Although written in a small canvas, "Leaving the Yellow House" is a suggestive portrayal of a woman's life. Through Hattie's life, Bellow displays his skill in delineating women. Hattie is more self-reliant and courageous than any other Bellovian woman. Her loneliness and suffering have taught her to fight against all odds. By sketching the character of Hattie, Bellow might have wanted to suggest that he has seen women not only in relation to men but also in their individual spheres where they struggle to assert themselves. Hattie is the representative of cast off, wretched, lonely, old women who struggle for their existences but do not give up hope; who despite their terrible fight against hostile surroundings preserve their freedom as individual human beings.

“What Kind of Day Did You Have?”

“What Kind of Day Did You Have?” is a long story published in 1974 in Bellow’s collection, *Him with His Foot in His Mouth and Other Stories*(1974). It is the story of a woman called Katrina Goliger. The story begins with Katrina’s debate with herself about taking a trip with her lover, Victor Wulpy. From her debate, we learn why she took such a trip reluctantly only to accompany Victor. In fact, Katrina’s one day short trip with her lover Victor, “a world-class intellectual, big in the art world”(63) depicts many interesting sides of her life.

Katrina divorced Alfred Goliger after having two children. Goliger was angry and vengeful at the break-up and took most of their assets except the house which he could not keep since the custody of the children was with Katrina. The break-up decision on Katrina’s part reveals the strength in her character. She wants something more than money out of a relationship but that Goliger never gave her; she never got from him the care, respect and things she craved. Before the break-up she was not even careful about her ornaments of her marriage and therefore her husband was able to keep them. Her extra-marital affair with Victor, a celebrity, ‘a major figure’(63) was perhaps the main cause of her divorce. But she is not repentant for what happened in her life. Rather, to some extent, she struggles hard to preserve her relationship with Victor.

Although Victor is a famous man, Katrina’s affair with him does not raise her status to anything above a mistress. In her eyes Victor is ‘King’(65), ‘a sovereign’(65) whereas Victor looks at her as a ‘suburban broad’(75), “...Voluptuary, luxurious beauty, confused sex pot, carnal idiot with piano legs...meaning everything or nothing”(75). Katrina thus resembles other Bellovian women like Ramona in *Herzog* and Renata in *Humboldt’s Gift* who mainly play

the role of mere instruments to satisfy men's biological needs. Here another aspect is also interesting to note, that is, whereas Katrina respects Victor's greatness and looks at him highly, he lacks such feelings for her.

Dorothea, another woman in this story is unlike Katrina in that she leads an independent life and runs a business of her own. Dorothea is Katrina's sister but she is quite opposite to her in nature. She does not approve of Katrina's affair with Victor. She is merciless in her sharp comments on Katrina's affair. She says, "You dumped your husband to have this unusual affair. Sexual excitement and social ambition went together. You aimed to break into high cultural circles"(65). Dorothea's harsh criticism would suggest that Katrina is a superficial woman who counts on shallow achievements in life. But Katrina does not bother much about what people think about her relationship with Victor. We find her rather relishing her personal connection with a great figure like Victor. She thinks: "Victor was a real big shot, and that she was proud of- well, of their special intimacy. He confided in her. She knew his true opinions"(94). Katrina's feeling reveals how much she counts on Victor. Dorothea calls her 'Madame Bovary'(94). But we cannot say that Katrina is like Madame Bovary since she does not waver from her relationship with Victor. She also ignores Dorothea even though she treats her so harshly. She thinks that since Dorothea is deprived of the many pleasures she enjoys, she can act mean. At this time, Katrina is very satisfied with Victor. She strongly protests any abusive remark that may hamper their relationship.

But Katrina is not treated as an equal by Victor. She merely obeys what Victor demands from her: "With Victor refusal was not one of her options. It was almost impossible, nowadays, to say no to him"(64). This inability to say 'no' to Victor is a sign of weakness on Katrina's part. Moreover, when Victor shares his ideas with her, he treats her as 'his only pupil'(94). Katrina appears as a passive

student who 'paid her tuition with joy'(94). Though Victor lives 'for ideas', he does not 'count on Katrina's comprehension'(77). In fact, she does everything according to Victor's will, even suppressing her own likes and dislikes to please him. For example, she does not like to get up early, but for Victor she has to prepare herself early in the morning by putting on dress and 'applying the Cabochard, his favorite perfume'(73) to go out with him. Though she is worried about who will look after her children, she does not dare to oppose his plan for such a hasty outing. She even works for him as his secretary by typing important notes for his lectures. Thus in this unequal relationship, Katrina is depicted as a passive woman.

However, though Katrina acts as a passive lover of a great man, she too seeks her independence and an individual career. She plans to "write a children's story about an elephant. She hoped to make some money by it, and to establish her independence"(86). Katrina's hopes prove that she would like to do worthwhile something on her own. Victor's success cannot give her complete satisfaction. Hence, she tries to establish herself as a successful woman. She 'had always tried to widen her horizons'(85). She once took flying lessons, studied music, learned Latin, and even planned to study law. Moreover, despite all the charms that Victor possesses, at one moment of their trip, Katrina is found to be judging Victor:

Trina for a moment considered telling him what a difference an independent success would make to her. He looked now, despite his own success and celebrity, like a man who had had very bad times, ugly defeats, choking disappointments, and so she was tempted to talk openly to him (131).

Thus Katrina comes to the ultimate realization that there is little difference between her and Victor as human beings. At this point, she comes to realize that she too can achieve success by pursuing her own career. She also realizes that a successful man like Victor can also have setbacks in life. Therefore, Victor and she are in the same position. This realization provokes her to ask Victor a critical question: did they love each other? When Victor answers: "We got here because you're a woman and I'm a man..."(157), she starts feeling degraded. From Victor's answer, she can tell that he does not love her the way she loves him. At this moment, she appears to be repentant for what she had done for him, "My God! What a lot of ground I lost..." (158). This awakening makes Katrina understand that for a long time she has been in an one-sided love affair with Victor.

At the same time, Katrina discovers the vagueness of her mother's lesson: "The way girls were indoctrinated: Don't worry, dear, love will solve your problems. Make yourself deserving, and you'll be loved" (158). She feels cheated and comes to the conclusion that her mother was stupid since her teaching led her into a relationship devoid of love. Finally, Katrina parts with Victor with the thought that "...he might have obliged her, might have spoken the words she wanted to hear. He didn't need to worry that she might make use of them later, against him" (159). Thus she comes to believe that Victor cared little for what she wanted. She is immediately shaken by the thought that Victor would never care if she broke the relationship. This thought sinks deep into Katrina's mind. After a memorable trip, she concludes that she has been treated badly even by a great man like Victor Wulpy. She now knows that she has had the least impact on Victor's life. With this realization she comes to the end of her relationship with Victor. As her one-sided love comes to an end, she comes back home and tries to

set herself up as a good mother. She now feels that she has been unjust to her children. The story ends with Katrina's refusal to respond to overtures made by her loyal friend Krieggstein. Krieggstein is a family friend and confidante who maintains good ties with divorcees and middle-aged women. He claims to be in love with Katrina and at this opportune moment expresses his feeling. As he explains it, his is a feeling not motivated by self-interest. Katrina is not moved by his declaration of love; rather, she urges him to leave her alone saying, "I'll go to pieces under your very eyes" (163). Through her reaction we can assume that she has lost faith in men forever.

In short, in "What Kind of Day Did You Have?" Bellow presents Katrina as a woman who acts for too long as an object of a man's desire but finally asserts herself. Bellow appears to be more concerned about women's problems in a male-dominated society in this story. He is superb in drawing a character like Katrina who represents women easily fooled by men when they themselves are sincerely in love. At the same time, he presents Katrina as a woman who finally discovers the truth. Once she is able to see clearly, she can break free. Unlike many other Bellovian women, she discards men as her fate. She remains obliging as long as she is confused about Victor's feeling for her. But as soon as she understands his real feeling, she walks on him. Her feeling for Victor proves her to be a devoted lover who can do everything for her love but not at the cost of her dignity. Though at the beginning we are not impressed by her passivity, she becomes an assertive character at last. Undoubtedly, despite her drawbacks Katrina is a unique creation in Bellow's oeuvre.

Conclusion

Bellow is successful in presenting 'women' as people. In her conclusion to *Women in Movement: Feminism and Social Action*, Rowbotham declares: "Instead of presenting 'women' as an abstract category, it is better to see 'women' as people, who within particular historical situations are continually making choices about how they see and align themselves" (313). Interestingly, Bellow's women are the records of the types Rowbotham expects to see. No doubt, both in his novels and stories women are "continually making choices" (*Women in Movement*, 313) independently. Although Bellow's women are from different personalities, classes, educations and cultures and come from different backgrounds, and although his women do not play prominent roles in his fictions, they do have assigned distinctive roles in the novels and stories. Certainly, they have important roles to play in the plot. Since his protagonists are male, we have to agree with Aharoni when she comments, "He[Bellow] has built a world of women, mostly as seen by men and it illuminates a whole region of the relationship between men and women" (*Saul Bellow in the 1980s*, 110). True, in one recent work he has depicted a woman as the protagonist, but this is quite untypical of him. In November, 1976, in an interview with Jo Brans, a famous Bellovian critic, Bellow himself answered the question why he had not used a modern woman as his protagonist till then. He responds to the question thus:

Well, I sometimes think of doing it; I just never got around to it. I was working out problems that couldn't be worked out that way. The only thing I ever wrote about a woman directly was a story called "Leaving the Yellow House". About Hattie. I loved her...She's an old lady (*Critical Essays on Saul Bellow*, 70).

Bellow's answer is a proof of his spontaneous portrayal of women as he had seen them in real life. When Brans asked him why he had not ever written from the point of view of a woman and why he always had to depict Madeleine as interpreted by Herzog, and Renata as interpreted by Citrine, he answered that he probably had certain prejudices (*Critical Essays on Saul Bellow*, 71). It is interesting to note that Bellow himself is not able to identify his actual prejudice against doing so, if there were any. When Ada Aharoni asked Bellow at the International Conference on Saul Bellow's work in Haifa (April, 1987) if there was a possibility that his next protagonist would be a woman, he answered, "May be. Women also wear trousers now; it's easier for me to understand someone who wears trousers" (*Saul Bellow in The 1980s*, 111). Thus Bellow's answer shows his readiness to consider women as protagonists once they have moved closer to his orbit.

Bellow's men and women often have disastrous relationships, but we cannot say that Bellow intends to portray a basic antagonism between the two sexes. What Bellow emphasizes is that both men and women should take the responsibility to maintain a balanced, stable and harmonious relationship. However, as a writer he does not want to prescribe rules for human relationship. Therefore, Bellow has not suggested any solution to the problems of men-women relationship. He simply shows his women in complex, diverse relationships with men. Many of Bellow's observations of human life coheres with the idea of Rowbotham as she states in *Women in Movement: Feminism and Social action*:

Human desires are frequently contradictory and consciousness shifts and moves elusively. Moreover, when people act on their assumptions and beliefs, there are always many variables affecting the consequences that can be far from what they intended. So it is

The only argument
on a frequent allusion?

never an easy matter to determine how and why people take the courses they choose. This is one of the great quests in history, as relevant and problematic for women as for men(314).

Rowbotham's observation suggests that both men and women are driven by desires that are contingent. Bellow's women too experience this contingency of life. As a result, we must say that Bellow's women are drawn from a perspective completely human and realistic.

Bellow's women are noteworthy for their liveliness. They are flesh and blood creatures who have not only human shortcomings but also many positive sides. They are proof that Bellow's fiction presents convincing pictures of everyday human life. Neither a misogynist nor a feminist Bellow's fiction demonstrate that he is a writer who depicts various types of women from real life. Saul Bellow, thus, contributes to the exploration of women's lives in America in the second half of the 20th century. His artistry in delineating women from various perspectives is praiseworthy. Even in depicting women he has proved that he is a "humanist" (*Saul Bellow in the 1908s*,1). We are therefore thankful to Bellow for his memorable presentations of women in his fictions.

Notes:

¹ Alice Schwarzer, "After The Second Sex": *Conversation with Simone de Beauvoir*, (New York: Pantheon, 1984) 103.

² Irving Malin, *Saul Bellow's Fiction*, (Southern Illinois UP, 1969) 71.

³ Ada Aharoni, "Women in Saul Bellow's Novels", *Saul Bellow in The 1980s: A Collection of Critical Essays*, (Michigan State UP, 1989) 96.

⁴ Montherlant viewed women negatively as is obvious from Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. Simone de Beauvoir, "The Myth of Woman in Five Authors", *The Second Sex*, (Ed. Picador, Pan Books LTD, London: Cavaye Place, 1988) 234.

⁵ Jonathan Wilson, *On Bellow's Planet: Reading from The Dark Side*, (Associated UP, Inc. Cranbury, London, Canada. Printed in the USA. 1985) 24.

⁶ Robert. R. Dutton, *Saul Bellow*, (University of the Pacific, Twayne Publishers, Inc. 1971) 66.

⁷ Judie Newman, *Saul Bellow and History*, (London and Basingstake companies and representatives, The MacMillan Press LTD, 1984) 17.

⁸ Forrest Read, "Herzog: A Review", Ed. Irving Malin, *Saul Bellow and The Critics*, (New York UP, New York, 1967) 187.

⁹ Jo Brans, "Common Needs, Common Preoccupations: An Interview with Saul Bellow", Ed. Stanley Trachtenberg, *Critical Essays on Saul Bellow*, (G.K. Hall & Co. Boston, Massachusetts, 1979) 70.

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