

## I. Seize the Day: A Glorification of the Present

This research focuses on Saul Bellow's novel *Seize The Day*. It attempts to analyze Bellow's glorification of present by applying the spirit of *carpe diem*. The setting of the novel is in the mid twentieth century - Post World War II America. It was the time when people were leaving the modernist spirit being guided by the post modernist spirit. It was the same time when there was the fear of the atomic bomb and the enormous suspicion and insecurity caused by the cold war. This was a generation who, as children practiced hiding under their school desks in elementary school in order to try and survive a possible nuclear attack and who came to trust nobody because of the deception and lies of the cold war. In a sense the age of innocence was over, and the cultural malaise made the time ripe for the importation of existentialist attitudes. Many young Americans harbored a vague, gnawing existentialist angst and a dread of the future. To overcome the angst and dread many songs and literature were written and sung which featured hedonistic and *carpe diem* themes. With the theme of non-conformity and dedication to spontaneity, beat generation poets came to the front during the early 50's. Their approach to literature, mainly poetry, was the battle against social conformity and literary tradition. This group of poets used hallucinogenic drugs to achieve higher consciousness. The novel *Seize The Day* is also the progeny of the same era so the *carpe diem* theme pervades throughout the novel.

The novel is an account of the W. W. II explosion of violence and madness which abruptly ends modernity and ushers in the contingency and flux of post modernity. Here Bellow seems to exist between options and realities making demands on him, in some kind of liminal state. Among other things it is also a story about the end of patriarchy as

well as about other belief systems. Here fathers are no fathers and sons no sons. The novel also describes the psychological delusions of a man living after the WWII, and the Atomic Bomb. The violence and uncertainties in the world after the post war era forces Wilhelm to think about his ordered past not the uncertain present or the ungraspable future. As a result Tommy has no choice but to weep and live on one day after another. This is how he invests his future for his bygone days. This is where he misses his *carpe diem* motif and is bound to live a very painful, rig moral life.

Tommy Wilhelm, the protagonist of the novel is the product of a post modern society, who lives a fragmented life rather than an alienated life as a modern man does. Living in this impersonal world, he cannot get love and care from his family and father as a result this post modern man is unable to grasp the moment as it comes. So, he lingers between his past and future but cannot think about the present in other terms he does not live in the present. This absence of present from his life eventually leads him to his doom. The historicity that we have access to in the story lets us to create only the pastiches or the hodgepodge of his past life which is full of contradiction and confusion. There is no reliable distinction between his past and present, so in this sense the protagonist does not live a life that was to be lived in the present. The protagonist seems to have forgotten the adage 'Yesterday is a history. Future is a mystery. So live the present.' this is what is the motto of *Carpe diem* philosophy.

Tommy Wilhelm is the sign of the failure of the psycho center of the family unit as the psychologically crippled son who seeks escape in surrogate fathers. He hates his own father and considers Tamkin as his surrogate father, which concludes that Tommy

finally intuits his own oedipal tragedy. The neurotic Tommy's wished-for father is clearly the dead father who he embraces as a delusion.

Dr. Tamkin is likened to a bird. He has a "gull's nose" and his nails are "clawlike." Wilhelm actually describes him as a "rare, peculiar bird." Wilhelm later finds that Tamkin is in fact more like a bird of prey. After Tamkin disappears and Wilhelm realizes he has been cheated, he says, "Like this they ride on me with hoofs and claws. Tear me to pieces, stamp on me and break my bones" (105). He is referring to Margaret as well as Tamkin. He realizes he lives in a ruthless, animal-like world in which only the strong survive. Tamkin is not a plain hypocrite; he is a mythic character who appears in the novel from nowhere. Neither Wilhelm knows about him nor we are told about him in detail. Wilhelm's father told him not to believe on this fraudulent man but this ineffectual financial advisor and the kind of hypocrite has the power to bring astonishing metamorphosis in Wilhelm. Wilhelm is an example who trusts in myths and storytelling and is bound to find him trapped, cheated, and simultaneously pushed out from the space time continuum.

The protagonist is a man divided between the practical material world and a larger world of being. He is in a quest of being a practical man in this world but he could not adopt himself as a practical being even from his childhood. He did not obey his parents and left his studies. He could not get a role in Hollywood. Eventually, after, leaving his home, he happens to take shelter in Hotel Gloriana, which is accommodated only by the aged people. His larger world of being makes him a hyper rational being. The silences, inarticulateness, deep sadness, sudden and inexplicable violence, loss is love, almost imperceptible - yet fundamental emotional change, odd flights of imagination are some of

the characteristics which forbid him from living in the present. The ideal life that he imagines is a hyper real life in this hyper real world. The environment of this hyper real world makes him a hyper rational being and forgets about his present.

The protagonist cannot completely leave his family and wife. Although he is separated from them he has to pay money for the insurance policies and his children. As a post modern being he should have been able to live without his family attachments but he lacks this quality. He wants help from his father. He wants divorce from his wife only to keep relations with a new girl. He is the man who always longs to be in the company with others. Despite being jobless and has no more money for food in the hotel, he lives at Hotel Gloriana in New York, but the tragedy is that he lives in the hotel where he should not have lived because in the hotel only the aged people like his father lived. This nature of his - living in the postmodern world and confining himself in the labyrinth of modernity consequently draws back to the nostalgia of his past. On the other hand when he comes to his normal life he has reveries to think about. He thinks about earning a lot of money, getting divorce from his wife and marrying another girl. Most of the time, the protagonist is occupied with these surreal ideas and cannot harness the present. In contrast to him his father, Dr. Adler, a widower is living a happy life in the same hotel because he has no one to think about, he has no one to carry on his back. He neither laments over his past life nor he gets obsessed with his future, whatever he has is just the present to live. In contrary the protagonist, Wilhelm is always tangled in the labyrinth of past and future he has no time to celebrate the present moment.

Keeping him busy in the hyper real world he is attracted to a hyper rational man - Dr. Tamkin. Dr. Tamkin with all his wits lures him to invest all his money in the

commodity market, which was just a great loss. He also instructs Wilhelm how to live. Wilhelm is also ready to accept his suggestions. He finds Tamkin as a savior. In place of living in this real world and trying to live in the hyper real world without the valorization of present the protagonist suffers much in the novel. After all his sufferings then only Tamkin opens his heart and says that his intentions were only to bring people in the present as he had done it with Wilhelm. In order to cope up with this failure, he secretly keeps on taking pills in an effort to calm himself down.

Wilhelm thinks of his life as a series of setback. A good part of his youth was wasted unsuccessfully trying to make it as an actor in Hollywood his last appearance on screen, was as an extra in a scene where he had to blow the bagpipes, after which he spent several years as a salesman of children's furniture before falling out with the management and resigning. He and his wife are incompatible, but she will not give him a divorce; he feels she is turning his two children against him even as she sends him bills. And his father, from whom he expects a little sympathy and understanding if not monetary assistance, is cold to him.

The possibilities for self-creation, material success, and absolute freedom are the basis of a powerful American myth, the American Dream. Throughout the novel the protagonist is in quest of achieving this dream. In this effort he becomes a rebellion, he leaves his home, gives up studies, does not follow the suggestions from his parents and hopes for an absolutely free life but the problem is that he cannot reconstruct himself. He can not adjust himself. He cannot socialize himself. Everywhere he is a failure. His initial routine in the hotel Gloriana, describes his pretender soul where he tries to pretend himself as a wealthy and successful man by rejoicing food and drinks. His financial

troubles have more than practical implications. He feels that everyone was supposed to have money, and his conversations with Dr. Tamkin strengthen his belief that with just a modest amount of will and talent, he could rid himself of financial worry. Tamkin assures Wilhelm that it will be easy for him to make much more in the market than the fifteen thousand he needs. Just as Wilhelm believes that he will one day become the person his name represents, so he clings to the hope that easy money awaits him. He assumes that his father would accept him if he had more money. Wilhelm links his self-worth to his financial situation. Therefore, to make a huge sum of money he invests whatever he had in commodity market with the advice of Dr. Tamkin. But he could not rest from the day he invested the money because the worth of the shares that he bought started decreasing which means Wilhelm was losing, when he was in hope of amassing great wealth as it was inspired by the American Dream. This avarice is also one of his flaws that prevent him from celebrating the moment as it comes to him.

Wilhelm did not even complete his school education. Therefore he is confused when he encounters Tamkin's poem. He could not understand the poem as he could not find the differences between functionalism and mechanism. In the poem about Mechanism vs Functionalism, Tamkin stresses the valorization of present that would bring joy, beauty and ecstasy in the life. Wilhelm, is messed up with the idea in the poem, he does not understand it and thinks that Tamkin could have hit him on his head and killed him. So he makes a mind to leave Wilhelm and the money that he invested in the commodity market. He realizes, he had done a next mistake in the series of mistakes in his life. Tamkin explains the poem for Wilhelm and tells that the poem was composed for Wilhelm, and the hero of the poem is sick humanity. As Tamkin describes there are only

two options, construct or destruct, there are no options in between. He says Mechanism is destruct. Money is destruct, it is to be given to a gravedigger because we do not have confidence in nature and we cannot simply lie on the nature. Tamkin hints at Wilhelm's weakness that he does not know what he has got within which is because of his inability to grasp the moment - the *carpe diem*.

Wilhelm wants to escape from all these troubles. He does not like to pay money for his wife, anymore. He wants to forget about the commodity market. Burdened by his financial trouble, he finally concludes to divorce his wife and start a new life with Olive. He thinks to sell his car and pay the hotel bills. While he was searching Tamkin, the crowd brought him inside a chapel. In the chapel, he forgot about Tamkin. He saw a corpse there, and standing by the corpse he started crying softly at first, then from sentiment and finally from deeper feeling because he identifies himself with the corpse. This is his symbolic death which is the result of his inability to grasp the present moment.

Analyzing from these perspectives and taking an account of his life history and the sorts of problem he encounters in the novel, it is concluded that, Wilhelm's flaw existed in his inability to grasp the moment, in other words to 'Seize the Day' and make use of his energy in some creative works rather than pretending himself as a post modern man in the postmodern world.

This present work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents a brief outline of *Seize the Day*. It gives the bird's eye view of the entire work. The second chapter tries to explain briefly the theoretical modality that has been applied in this research. It briefly discusses on *Carpe Diem* motifs used in the glorification of present. The third chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length, on the basis of theoretical

modality. It takes out some extracts from the text as evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study – *Seize the Day* glorifies the present by imposing the *carpe diem* motif. This part serves as the core of this work. The Fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research on the basis of textual analysis in chapter three. It will conclude the explanations and arguments put forward in the preceding chapter and show how Saul Bellow glorifies the present moment by pervading the *carpe diem* motif throughout the novel *Seize the Day*.



## II. *Carpe Diem*

*Carpe diem* is literally about the meaning of life. It is the practical, applied expression of a secular humanist philosophy which provides a comprehensive alternative to religion, superstition and nihilism encouraging a proactive lifestyle that promotes a positive philosophical world view grounded in reason and the empowerment of human potential, rather than the helplessness and disempowerment that arises from superstition, fatalistic faith in supernatural powers and existential angst. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines *carpe diem* as; "an expression used when you want to say that some body should not wait, but should take an opportunity as soon as it happens".

*A Glossary of Literary Terms* defines *carpe diem* as:

*Carpe diem*, meaning "seize the day", is a Latin phrase from one of Horace's *Odes* (I. xi.) which has become the name for a very common literary *motif*, especially in lyric poetry. The speaker in a *carpe diem* poem emphasizes that life is short and time is fleeting in order to urge his auditor- who is often represented as a virgin reluctant to change her condition-to make the most of present pleasures. A frequent emblem of the brevity of physical beauty and the finality of death is the rose, as in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, 1590 -96 (II. xii. 74-75); "Gather therefore the Rose, whilst yet is prime"). . . . (31)

The above stated meaning of *carpe diem* is latent in the words of Jesus in *Bible* when he says; "If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." (*New Testament* 287). Here with this expression Jesus suggests us to enjoy our present maximally because we are not sure of our future.

Seventeenth century Englishman Robert Herrick was a poet who espoused *carpe diem* philosophy. He described the viewpoint in his work ‘*To Young Virgins to Make Much of Time*’

This poem expresses four principles common to *carpe diem* philosophy. The first stanza, comparing young women to flowers, establishes that people are held captive to the passage of time. This thought, along with the principle of uncertainty, forms a foundation for the advice given later in the poem.

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,  
Old Time is still a-flying:  
And this same flower that smiles today  
Tomorrow will be dying (78)

The second stanza, by comparing life to a single day, implies that death is the end of existence. People die and new people are born – the sun rises and sets – but once a single day is over, it is over indeed. Death is as final as a sunset.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the Sun,  
The higher he’s a-getting,  
The sooner will his race be run,  
And nearer he’s to setting. (78)

The third stanza presents the idea that youth is the best time of life. Young people are strong, and thus able to enjoy themselves more fully than at any other time in their lives. Because the young are better able to ‘seize the day’ than anyone else, youth is the pinnacle of existence.

That age is best which is the first,  
When youth and blood are warmer;  
But being spent, the worse, and worst  
Times still succeed the former.(79)

Herrick tells us in the last stanza that each individual should take control of his or her life. Faith in anything except for one's capacity to grasp opportunities is unfounded. Given the limited time available in which to enjoy life, people should try to 'make their dreams come true,' so to speak.

Then be not coy, but use your time;  
And while ye may, go marry:  
For having lost but once your prime,  
You may forever tarry (79)

If the basic assumptions made by proponents of *carpe diem* philosophy are correct, then there is a lot of merit to the hedonistic lifestyle urged by Robert Herrick in his poem. No one knows whether life has meaning or significance, so there is hardly any use in living as if it did. If death and taxes truly are the only certainties, living for the moment demonstrates not irresponsibility, but wisdom.

Similarly Shakespeare's version of the theme takes the following form in his drama *Twelfth Night*:

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;  
Present mirth has present laughter;  
&poemind;What's to come is still unsure.  
In delay there lies no plenty,

Then come and kiss me sweet and twenty;  
& poemind; Youth's a stuff will not endure. (67)

Shakespeare's primary concern is with the present because we are unsure about the future, so we should not delay the present gratification. So he tells his beloved to come and kiss him as he knows youth would not endure for ever. The same theme is equally echoed while *King Lear* concludes with Edgar's words:

The weight of this sad time we must obey,  
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say:  
The oldest hath borne most; we that are young  
Shall never see so much, nor live so long. (121)

*The Short Oxford History of English Literature* describes about the manifestations of *Carpe diem* in English Renaissance poetry as it describes:

Marvell's famous address *To his Coy Mistress* is perhaps the finest of the many variations on the theme of *Carpe diem* developed in English Renaissance poetry. It has a witty urgency with is both fantastic and millenarian.

Time does not redeem, it destroys its 'winged Charriot' rushes the lowers towards the prospect of 'Deserts of vast Eternity' and to a grave where the poet's song echoes in the vacancy. The last section attempts to counter these negatives with a reassertion of life and pleasure. Only here does the narrator insist that the lovers' energy can outpace or stop. . . (239)

Gloria Steinem, a leading figure of the women's movement 1960, describes the urgency of living in the present to live a successful life. In her essay *The Time Factor*, she

describes how class, caste and gender affect ones utilization of time. According to the essay males are always living in the past or future as a result they are denied the spontaneity and are always living a deferred life. She says: "In fact, to live in the present, to tolerate uncertainty, and to remain open, spontaneous, and flexible are all culturally female qualities that many men need and they have been denied" (95). Bennett Andrew and Nicholas Royle, while describing Robert Browning's poem "Two in the Campagna" in their book, *Introduction to Literature Criticism and Theory*, describe "The poem is about the impossibility of capturing the moment of desire [. . .] - analogous to what James Joyce later calls 'epiphany' and Virginia Woolf 'moments of being.'" (183).

The urgency of present is not only necessary for a successful and happy life; Derrida emphasizes its necessity in the derivation of meaning of a sentence stated. His famous concept *différance* signifies the necessity of present. According to this concept the signs represents the present when it has already been past, so the signs that we use as a medium of communication is problematic, hence we can not grasp the present as such. Therefore he coins the word *différance* to explain the presence of present. In his seminal essay *Différance* he writes: "When we cannot grasp or show the thing, state the present, the being present, when the being present cannot be presented, we signify, we go through the detour of the sign. We take or give signs. We signal. The sign, in this sense is deferred presence." (139)

German philosopher Nietzsche in his essay *Untimely Meditations On The Use and Abuse of History for Life 1873*, explains the necessity of living for the present. He explains living *unhistorically* and brings forward the examples of animals and explains why they are happier than us:

It does not know what yesterday or today is. It springs around, eats, rests, digests, jumps up again, and so from morning to night and from day to day, with its likes and dislikes closely tied to the peg of moment, and thus neither melancholy nor weary. To witness this is hard for man because he boasts to himself that his human race is better than the beast and yet looks with jealousy at its happiness. (153)

In the same essay, Nietzsche describes the importance of forgetting ones past for leaving a happy and a successful life which can be achieved through living *unhistorically*. His concept of living *unhistorically* explains the *carpe diem* motif of living in the present. He gives the importance of the present moment in the following words: “The person who cannot set himself down on the crest of the moment, forgetting everything from the past, who is not capable of standing on a single point, like a goddess of victory, without dizziness or fear, will never know what happiness is” (154).

Nietzsche divides history in three ways on its use, the monumental, antiquarian and critical. He negates both the monumental and the antiquarian history as they largely rely in the past. He says “Indeed, there are times when one cannot distinguish at all between a monumental history and a mythic fiction, because from a single world one of these impulses can be derived as easily as the other” (160). His belief “. . . the person lives most beautifully who does not reflect upon the existence” (159), focuses the *carpe diem* motif. His is a view to study history critically, neither he tells us to forget the past celebrate it but to revisit it and use it at our service so that we can live a happy life. Stressing the *carpe diem* motif he suggests “A person must have the power and from time to time use it to break a past to dissolve it, in order to be able to live.

We find the same strong *carpe diem* theme in the literature and the rock music of The Sixties. There are many plausible explanations. The most influential factors were fear of the atomic bomb and the enormous suspicion and insecurity caused by the cold war. This was a generations who, as children practiced hiding under their school desks in elementary school in order to try and survive a possible nuclear attack and who came to trust nobody (and especially no government) because of the deception and lies of the cold war. America in the early 1960s resembled, in many ways Western Europe following World War II. The age of innocence was over, and the cultural malaise made the time ripe for the importation of existentialist attitudes. Many young Americans harbored a vague, gnawing existentialist Angst and a dread of the future. To overcome these Angst and dread many songs were written and sung which featured hedonistic and *carpe diem* themes. There are many songs which confine themselves to the general theme of emphasizing the present moment and forsaking the traditional middle-class deferral of gratification. The song *But I Might Die Tonight* by Cat Stevens is a good example which uses *carpe diem* motif as the lyrics says:

Don't want to work away  
Doin' just what they all say  
Work hard boy and you'll find  
One day you'll have a job like mine  
'cause I know for sure  
Nobody should be that poor  
To say yes or sink low  
Because you happen to say so, say so, you say so

I don't want to work away  
Doing just what they all say  
Work hard boy and you'll find  
One day you'll have a job like mine, job like mine, a job like mine  
Be wise, look ahead  
Use your eyes he said  
Be straight, think right  
But I might die tonight!

In this song a young man resists the advice to "work away, doing just what they all say". He is told to "work hard" and "be wise" and "look ahead" and "be straight" and "think right" in the hope that "one day you will have a job like mine". But Cat Stevens' response to such advice is, "But I might die tonight.", so forget about tomorrow: what about today?

Security, success and "The American Dream" require a certain amount of hard work and delayed gratification. "*One day* [but not today or even tomorrow] you will have a job like mine." To such hope and planning for future happiness, Justin in his song "Never Comes the Day" writes:

Work away today, work away tomorrow.  
Never comes the day for my love and me.  
I feel her gently sighing as the evening slips away.  
If only you knew what's inside of me now  
You wouldn't want to know me somehow,  
But  
You will love me tonight,



We alone will be alright,  
In the end.  
Give just a little bit more  
Take a little bit less  
From each other tonight  
Admit what youre feeling  
And see whats in front of you,  
Its never out of your sight.  
You know its true,  
We all know that its true.  
Work away today, think about tomorrow  
Never comes the day for my love and me.  
I feel her gently sighing as the evening slips away.  
If only you knew whats inside of me now  
You wouldnt want to know me somehow,  
But  
You will love me tonight,  
We alone will be alright,  
In the end.  
Give just a little bit more  
Take a little bit less  
From each other tonight  
Admit what youre feeling

And see whats in front of you,  
Its never out of your sight.  
You know its true,  
We all know that its true. (37)

Creedence Clearwater Revival echoes the same sentiment in "Someday Never Comes" by John Fogerty, from the album *Mardi Gras* (1972). If you think that "someday" you'll finally figure out what life is all about, find some answers to life's important questions, and learn how to be happy, you're in for a real disappointment:

Listen, every mother's son  
You'd better learn it fast  
You'd better learn it young  
'Cause someday never comes. (23)

*carpe diem* is a literary motif which is manifested in different literary texts as well as in different theories. In the following pages we will try to analyze the manifestations of this motif in various literary theories like psychoanalysis, existentialism, post modernism.

*Carpe diem* motif is equally manifested in Freudian psychology. Freud understands a human mind as a series of layers, with the most superficial layers in conscious appreciation and the deeper layers containing repressed memories and remaining unavailable to conscious thoughts. To explain this he divides our drives into - *id*, *ego* and *super ego*. Freud gave the name "*id*" to unconscious drives. The *id* knows nothing of morality or reality. It seeks only to gratify the instinctual drives, and it operates solely according to the pleasure principle. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* describes: "Id consists of instincts and drives and is governed by the pleasure principle"

(346). Freud held that the biological drives of a young person are often frustrated by delays and restricted by the demands of parents and other older members of the family. As time passes, the demands of the community or society also become important obstacles to *id* gratification. In adapting to the environment, the child begins to acquire an *ego*, or set of conscious perceptions, memories, and thoughts that enable the person to deal effectively with reality. Thus, according to Freud, the *ego* obeys the reality principle. As the individual absorbs the teachings of family and society, he develops a *superego*, or conscience, that frequently conflicts with the drives of the *id*. In many cases the *ego* reduces the conflict by at least partially fulfilling the *id* impulses through socially acceptable behavior like day dreaming, dreams or tongue slips. Often, however, the conflict disappears on the conscious level as unfulfilled impulses are repressed into the unconscious mind.

In this way, Freudian psychoanalysis advocates the repressed desires in our unconscious mind are the products of our immediate inability to deal with our desires and instincts because of social constraints.

Existentialism is a philosophical tendency emphasizing individual existence, freedom and choice that influenced many writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are several philosophical positions all related to existential philosophy but the main identifiable common proposition, is that existence precedes essence. By this, existentialism states that man exists and in that existence man defines himself and the world in his own subjectivity, and wanders between choice, freedom, and existential angst. What existentialists fear is the *existential angst*. This anxiety leads to the individual's confrontation with nothingness and with the impossibility of finding ultimate

justification for the choices he or she must make. In the philosophy of Sartre, the word *nausea* is used for the individual's recognition of the pure contingency of the universe, and the word *anguish* is used for the recognition of the total freedom of choice that confronts the individual at every moment.

*Carpe diem* is very similar to existentialism but the departure is that *carpe diem* firmly believes in a carefree, enjoyable life in our own private sphere. It does not care about the future, hence emphasizes the present. There is no room for future dread or anxiety as in existential philosophy, which ultimately leads humans to nihilism. The ultimate goal of life is simple and short: in other words, seize the day.

Modernism and postmodernism both give great prominence to fragmentation as a new feature of twentieth century art and culture; however they do so in very different moods. The modernist features it in such a way as to register a deep nostalgia for an earlier age when faith was full and authority intact whereas a postmodernist features these fragmentations exhilarating, liberating phenomenon, symptomatic of our escape from the claustrophobia embrace of fixed systems of belief. In other words, modernist laments fragmentation while the postmodernist celebrates it. The modernists therefore reject the present in a pessimistic loathing and crave for the ordered past whereas post modernists celebrate the present. The postmodernists revisit the past and use it in their service to live a happy life where as a modernist keeps on longing for the past.

The post world war American people had a tumultuous history. The generation was continually threatened by the uncertainties of the future. Those Americans who had seen the aftermath of the world war were terrified to see the cold war between the then USSR and America. This generation had tested the power of atomic bombs. Modernity,

in culture, has lost its hay day and the seeds of postmodernism were already shown. Postmodernists were different from the modernists in their ways of living a life. While modernists longed for an ordered life, post modernists celebrated the life as it came to them. Most of the post modernist theories support *carpe diem* motif of living a happy life by acting now, rather than living a differed life as the modernists did. In this way *carpe diem* motif mingles with the post modernists in terms of celebrating life. When Lacan challenges the philosophical consensus of Descartes “I think therefore I am.” and reverses it to “I am where I think not”, still there remains a strong accord between both the philosophers in terms of time because both of them relate themselves with the present time (I am) to show that they do exist. This identification of one’s self with the present time is the only motif of *carpe diem*.

Fundamentally, the phrase *carpe diem* captures the part of hedonism which is concerned with making sure that we do not miss whatever pleasures are available today while we are hoping for, planning for, or working for whatever pleasures might be available at some time in the future. The theory deliberately commits to a life devoted to simply enjoying the pleasures of today and refuse to devote whatever time and energy is necessary to plan adequately for the future. In this respect it, ignores the harsh realities of the future but the most plausible and compelling reason though which might give some credence to the notion of *carpe diem* is that: It is the very nature of some pleasures, in some circumstances, that if we do not get them now, the chances are we will never get it. Situations which are dangerous such as war or disease might lead a person to think that the immediate gratification of pleasures is better and even wiser than any gratification which might come later. And it the very nature of some pleasures themselves that they

are fleeting and momentary, regardless of the circumstances. For example the pleasures of the youth; if we miss them now, we will never be able to recapture as William Butler Yeats express is the poem *The Lamentation of an Old Pensioner*. This fleeting and momentary aspect of pleasure has always been a subject of fascination for the postmodern world and it has been captured by different writers in different ways after the world war.

### **III. *Carpe Diem* Motif in *Seize The Day***

The novella centers on a failed businessman, Tommy Wilhelm, who is overwhelmed with his bygone days and tries to hide his feelings of inadequacy by presenting a good front. This longing for his immaculate past forces him to live a deferred and an unhappy life. It begins ironically with the description of the protagonist: "When it came to concealing his troubles, Tommy Wilhelm was not less capable than the next fellow. So at least he thought and there was a certain evidence to back him up. He had once been an actor – no not quite, an extra-and he knew what acting should be." (3) This expenditure of energy to conceal his troubles instead of using it in some formative works ironically helps lead to his downfall. Wilhelm is so consumed by feelings of inadequacy and his bygone days that he forgets to live in the present and becomes totally inadequate -- a failure with women, jobs, machines, and the commodities market, where he loses all his money.

The possibilities for self-creation, material success, and absolute freedom which are the basis of a powerful American myth, has played a negative role to the protagonist instead of empowering him. Money is the next factor that curbs him from living in his present. He regards money as a formative influence on the creation of identity so he is in a quest of amassing wealth. In this quest, he wants a support from his father but the father pays no attention to his son therefore Tommy, takes help of Dr. Tamkin who, persuades him to invest all his money in the commodity market, where Tommy losses all his money. "Affable! His own son and only son, could not speak his mind or ease his heart to him. I wouldn't turn to Tamkin, he thought, if I could return to him. At least

Tamkin sympathizes with me and tries to give me a hand, whereas Dad doesn't want to be disturbed" (10 - 11).

The clash between idealism and cynical "realism," persistent in the same man Tommy leads the man to be engaged in his ideal world rather than live in the present world. Whenever he wants to live in the present, his cynical nature directs his energy towards useless efforts like earning money by investing in stock exchange or going Hollywood to act in films. Although his delusions of being a successful American Hero had ended after he found himself an unsuccessful artist in the Hollywood, he still remained in California because of his pride. These seven years of persistence and defeat had unfitted him for trades and business and it was too late for him to choose on of the new professions. "He had been slow to mature, and he had lost ground and so he hadn't been able to get rid of his energy and he was convinced that his energy itself had done him the greatest harm" (7).

The psychologist Dr. Tamkin had suggested him the secret behind the commodities market is ". . . in the alertness. You have to act fast - buy it and sell it; sell it and buy it again. But quick! Get to the window and have them wire Chicago at just the right second. Strike and strike again! Then get out the same day." but Wilhelm could not take the right decision in the right time. This inability to pace with the time results his failure in the commodity market.

He has already left his home and family and has already been pushed out from his job so like his father he takes shelter at the Hotel Gloriana in New York. But while his father, a retired doctor and a widower, is living at the Gloriana in comfortable retirement, Wilhelm in midlife is a like a refugee from his home. He is staying at the hotel where he



should not be as it was the place for the elderly persons. In the Hotel he tries to maintain his past life style by waking up early, shaving his beard, drinking coke, reading the newspaper and going out as if he has some business. In this way, he directs all his energy to maintain this pretentious stature, and fails to live in the present. This nature of his has crippled his life so that when he thinks about his present he gets frightened he sees it as a huge formless trouble which he cannot overcome :

But he had realized that he could not keep this up much longer, and today he was afraid. He was aware that his routine was about to break up and he sensed that a huge trouble long presaged but till now formless was due. Before evening he'd know.

Nevertheless he followed his daily course and crossed the lobby. (4-5)

Wilhelm goes out of the hotel to the nearby newsstand, owned by a man named Rubin. During their chat, Ruben compliments Wilhelm on the shirt he is wearing, and says he is looking sharp. Wilhelm is surprised because he does not think he looks good so he sees his reflection in the glass cupboard. Seeing the cupboard filled with different cigar boxes, he reflects "I should have done hard labour all my life, he reflected. Hard honest labour that tires you out and makes you sleep. I'd have worked off my energy and felt better. Instead, I had to distinguish myself-yet" (7). Wherever and whenever Wilhelm is free he retreats back to his past and finds he is already late in his activities. This sense of loss keeps him far from his present reality and keeps on pushing him back to his back, to his school days, things at Hollywood and so on. This sense of distinguishing himself from others had once taken him to Hollywood, where he was a complete failure but because of

his pride or perhaps through his laziness he had remained in California. Although, at last he turned to other things, he could not succeed:

[...] those seven years of persistence and defeat had unfitted him for trades and business, and then it was too late to go into one of the professions, He had been slow to mature, and he had lost the ground, and so he hadn't been able to get rid of this energy and he was convinced that this energy itself had done him the greatest harm. (7)

To give a vent to this energy, he takes help of a psychologist Dr. Tamkin, in whom he identifies his father. Tamkin seems to know a lot about the market and how it works, and makes it sound as if it is a simple task to make large sums of money. By the time, Wilhelm was in a great financial problem, so he told Dr. Tamkin that he just wanted to use the market to make a little steady income. Fraudulent Dr. Tamkin persuades Wilhelm to invest his money in the commodity market and together they bought three orders of lard four days ago, but since then the price of lard has been falling steadily. Wilhelm blames Tamkin, who also lives at the Gloriana, for persuading him to invest.

Wilhelm starts thinking about his father. Dr. Adler, a retired physician, lives at the same hotel, but in an entirely different world than his son. Wilhelm resents his father's detached manner towards him. He cannot speak his mind to his own father, or unburden himself of his problems. He thinks he would not turn to Tamkin if he could turn to his father. Dr. Adler, who is still active and respected by many, has considerable money, but has made no effort to help his son financially, even when Wilhelm confessed that he needed some help. He feels that his father is ashamed of him, because he is the only member of the family not to have completed a college education. However, this does not

stop Dr. Adler boasting about his son to his friends, telling them he is a sales executive who makes a lot of money. But his father wants no part of his son's problems so that he could enjoy his life to its maximum. Greatly hurt, Wilhelm tries to be fair, although he does not undergo a change; he accepts his father's changed behavior and feels his father's change was necessitous:

Old people are bound to change, he said. They have hard things to think about. They must prepare for where they are going. They can't live by the old schedule any longer and all their perspectives change, and other people become alike, kin and acquaintances. Dad is no longer the same person, Wilhelm reflected. He was thirty-two when I was born, and now he's going on eighty. (11)

This expression of him reflects the deeply rooted unconscious desire for his own change but as he cannot come out of the circumstances that draw him backwards to his forlorn past, he is also losing his cheerful present. He admits his father cannot be the same person but he does not think the same rule equally applies to him so he should prepare himself for a change- a change for his immaculate present; living in the present.

As he stands at the edge of the newsstand with the newspaper, he thinks back to when he was about twenty, when he went to Hollywood to become an actor, against the wishes of his mother. This episode began when Wilhelm received a letter from Maurice Venice, a talent scout who had seen Wilhelm's picture in the college newspaper. Venice invited him to New York for a screen test. Venice was a shady character but Wilhelm did not see through him. Venice insisted that he knew how to spot talent, and saw Wilhelm cast in the movies as the steady, faithful type who loses the girl to the more rakish type of

character. Wilhelm was not keen on this kind of role, but Venice insisted that it would make him famous. Wilhelm quit college and went to California, quarreling with his family over the move. But Wilhelm did poorly on the screen test, and Venice dumped him. In California, Wilhelm learned that a recommendation from Venice was the kiss of death anyway. Venice was later sent to prison for running a call-girl ring. It was while he was in California that Wilhelm changed his name to Tommy Wilhelm. His father never accepted the change and still calls his son Wilky. Wilhelm now realizes that a man cannot change his past so he regrets the name change as he has never succeeded becoming Tommy Wilhelm; "Wilhelm has always had a great longing to be Tommy. He had never, however, succeeded in feeling like Tommy, and in his soul had always remained Wilky. When he was drunk he reproached himself horribly as Wilky. "You fool, you clunk, you Wilky!" he called himself." (25)

The rebellious spirit in him wants to obliterate his past and lead a new life so he casts off his father's name from his name. This is an emblem of his wish to come out of his linear history and live in the present but his efforts of changing himself by changing his name or changing his profession everything results an impasse because of his sense of the past which he cannot get rid of. However he tried, he just remained an inescapable self tangled in the matrix of history. Close to despair, he prays to God for help, asking that he be allowed to do something better with his life.

Keeping his past aside, Dr. Adler, Wilhelm's father, is very much successful in grasping the moments. Although he thinks Wilhelm's mother's death was a misfortune for them all he even forgets the date on which he became a widow. Neither he laments over his wife's death, nor does he plan to help his son by lending some money that he

deserves. Wilhelm thinks that when his mother died, his father was set free. On the other hand Wilhelm is the victim of his wife Margaret who would not give him a divorce. He had to support her and the two children. He had to pay for the boys' educational insurance policies and his He resents his wife, believing that she knows he is in financial difficulty and is trying to get as much out of him as she can.

In the dining room, at Hotel Gloriana, Dr. Adler introduces Wilhelm to Mr. Perls, another resident in the hotel. Wilhelm does not enjoy the prospect of having breakfast with a stranger. He thinks his father is using Perls to avoid having breakfast with his son alone. For his part, Dr. Adler disapproves of his son's untidy appearance. In response to his father's inquiry, Wilhelm says he has not been sleeping well. Dr. Adler tells him not to take so many pills, and Wilhelm replies that it is noisy at night so he had to take them. In fact, Wilhelm is so much obsessed with his unhappy life that he carries sedatives in his pocket wherever he goes and takes those pills telling them as vitamin pills. He is equally skillful in taking the drugs secretly but this time he could not deceive his father.

“Working in secret at the small envelopes in his pocket, he found two pills by touch. Much fingering had worn and weakened the paper. Under cover of a napkin he swallowed a Phenaphen sedative and a Unicap, but the doctor was sharp-eyed and said, “Wilky, What are you taking now?” (34).

When Dr. Adler talks about his children, he cannot mention them without boasting so he tells Mr. Pearls that Wilhelm used to be with the Rojax Corporation as a sales representative. Wilhelm explains that he was with the company for ten years, but he left because they wanted him to share his sales territory with another salesman. He starts to explain his grievances against the company, but his father interrupts him and boasts

about how much money he was making. Mr. Perls sounds impressed, and Wilhelm despises them both for the way they appear to worship money. He decides to stop talking and eat his breakfast. His father silently criticizes the way he eats. He remembers how he visited his son's room once and hated the untidiness and squalor of it.

Wilhelm goes back to talking about Rojax. He says he could go back with one of their competitors and take away the customers he had won for Rojax. His father rebukes him for wanting to start a feud, and tells him he should think about making a living and meeting his obligations. Wilhelm defends himself sharply, saying he has always met his obligations, without a penny of help from anyone. Mr. Perls offers some understanding remarks, but Wilhelm resents this discussion of his life. Mr. Perls suggests that he go to Florida to have a rest and think things over, and Wilhelm speaks vaguely of a trip to Cuba. He admits to his father that he is very tired, although what he is really thinking is that he is desperate for money.

He was tired. The spirit, the peculiar burden of his existence lay upon him like an accretion, a load, a hump. In any moment of quiet, when sheer fatigue prevented him from struggling, he was apt to feel this mysterious weight, this growth or collection of nameless things which it was the business of his life to carry about. That must be what a man was for. This large, odd, excited, fleshy, blond, abrupt personality named Wilhelm or Tommy, was here, present, in the present- Dr. Tamkin had been putting into his mind many suggestions about the present moment, the here and now-this Wilky or Tommy Wilhelm, forty-four years old, father of two

sons, at present living in the Hotel Gloriana, was assigned to be the carrier of a load which was his own self, his characteristic self. (38-39)

Tommy is worried about his financial state, rather than accepting Tamkin's suggestions to live in the present and cherish a new life. He is constantly consumed by his thoughts of earning money, but whatever he chooses to do keeps him away from earning money.

Dr. Adler, Wilhelm's father wonders if Tamkin really is a medical doctor; Wilhelm explains that he is a psychologist. Dr. Adler regards Tamkin as a bit of a mystery, and says he would not trust him because he is a liar. He cannot possibly have invented all the things he claims to have done. Wilhelm tries to defend Tamkin, but Dr. Adler is not convinced. Tamkin may be a bit crazy, he says. He and Perls mention a couple of inventions that Tamkin has proposed, such as an underwater suit that would enable a man to walk on the bed of the Hudson River in case of an atomic attack. They laugh together at this, and Wilhelm joins in but is not really amused. He is in despair because he has given Tamkin power of attorney over his last seven hundred dollars so that Tamkin can speculate with it on the commodities market. He would find out later that morning whether the price of lard had risen or fallen.

After Mr. Perls leaves the table, Dr. Adler tells Wilhelm that Perls has a very serious degenerative disease, and is to be pitied. He says he has learned to save his sympathy for real ailments, thus implying that he has no sympathy for Wilhelm's complaints. After Wilhelm finishes his breakfast, Dr. Adler continues to dwell on what he sees as Wilhelm's deficiencies. He does offer one piece of advice, that Wilhelm should visit the pool in the hotel, which is one of the finest in New York. His father believes in the therapeutic effects of massage and hydrotherapy. Wilhelm says he does not like city

life anymore, even though he was raised in New York. He prefers life in the country whereas living a retired life his father longs to live in the city.

Dad, I can't take city life any more, and I miss the country. There's too much push here for me. It works me up too much. I take things too hard. I wonder why you never retired to a quitter place."

The doctor opened his small hand on the table in a gesture so old and so typical that Wilhelm felt it like an actual touch upon the foundations of life. "I am a city boy myself, you must remember," Dr. Adler explained.

(44)

This incident also clarifies Wilhelm's inability to live in the present and take refuge to the past as he couldn't live in the city and is planning to go to the country. His father wants his son to be happy so he suggests that if he feels that way, he should get out of the city. He does not want his son to be attached to the past and use up his potential energy in lamenting the past. So he is persuading his son to live in the present and he even advises him to cut down the drugs he takes and tells him he makes too much of his problems. But Wilhelm takes them merely as medical advices and thinks that his father's suggestions are not going to cure what ails him. "You make too much of your problems," said the doctor. "They ought not to be turned into a career. Concentrate on real troubles-fatal sickness, accidents." The old man's whole manner said, Wilky, don't start this on me. I have a right to be spared" (45).

He does not care his father's suggestions because of the Oedipal Complex between him and the father. So this does not stop Wilhelm finally confiding in him, telling him about the insurance policies that he must pay. Dr. Adler says that he is giving his wife too



much money, to which Wilhelm replies that he does not want his children to lack anything. Dr. Adler then says that his daughter has been asking him for money so she can rent a gallery for an exhibition of her paintings. But he will not give her anything because he does not think she has any artistic talent. He also mentions that she is already grown up so its not his duty to bear the burden of his forty years daughter. He does not like to pamper her.

Wilhelm complains again about Margaret, saying she is trying to finish him off. His father thinks that is absurd. He believes Margaret is trying to get Wilhelm back by use of financial pressure. Wilhelm explains that four years ago, when he and his wife separated, he gave her as much as he could, trying to show goodwill. But she would not even let him have his dog, which he was very fond of. She keeps demanding more from him. He even paid for her to go back to college and earn a degree. Dr. Adler tells him to get a good lawyer, but Wilhelm says he already has one, but the situation still does not improve. He is so occupied in his mind that he has nothing to think about the present or future instead he feels she is strangling him. "Well, Dad, she hates me. I feel that she's strangling me. I can't catch my breath. She just has fixed herself on me to kill me. She can do it at a long distance. One of these days I'll be struck down by suffocation or apoplexy because of her. I just can't catch my breath." (48)

Dr. Adler becomes impatient, but Wilhelm continues. He says he was a slave from the day he met her. His father tells him it is all his own fault. Wilhelm protests but eventually tries to appease his father by pointing out that Dr. Adler was successful, whereas, he, Wilhelm has never been successful. But Dr. Adler responds angrily, saying that he succeeded because he worked hard; he was not self-indulgent and lazy. Wilhelm

refuses his father but admits that he had done a lot more mistakes in the past that has ruined his present. "I wouldn't admit for one minute that I am lazy," said Wilhelm. "If anything, I tried too hard. I admit I made many mistakes " (50). Wilhelm tells his father is being very unfair. He says he tried to make his marriage work, but he just could not live with Margaret. Finally, he took the initiative and left her.

Dr. Adler presses him on why he lost his job at Rojax. He does not believe Wilhelm left voluntarily. He thinks there may be complications involving a woman, but Wilhelm denies this. He is distressed that his attempt to win a sympathetic word from his father has resulted in an inquisition. Finally, Wilhelm admits he was involved with another woman whom he wanted to marry, but she got tired of waiting for the divorce. Dr. Adler remains unsympathetic, and Wilhelm finally expresses his frustration. He complains that his father always wants to shift the blame on to him. He asks why his father starts on a discussion at all, if he doesn't want to help his son. He is close to tears, but he holds them back. Dr. Adler asks him what he expects, and Wilhelm replies that he expects some help. He accuses his father of having no affection for him. His father admits that he does not like the way his son behaves. He even criticizes him for enlisting in the Army during World War II, when he could have had a deferment. Finally, he says outright that he cannot give Wilhelm any money because he is still alive and he has to live here. If he did, there would be no end to it. He does not want to carry anyone on his back and he also suggests his son not to carry any one in his back. This is his hint towards Margaret who has become a burden to his son. Miserable, Wilhelm tells him to keep his money and enjoy the life. This is where Wilhelm's craving for money is explicitly

expressed. But devoid of money and in his efforts of making money he has spent his present very miserably.

"I can't give you any money. There would be no end to it if I started. You and your sister would take every last buck from me. I'm still alive, not dead, I am still here. "Life isn't over yet. I am as much alive as you or anyone. And I want nobody on my back. Get off! And I give you the same advice. Carry nobody on your back."

"Just keep your money," said Wilhelm miserably. "Keep it and enjoy it yourself. That's the ticket!" (55)

Wilhelm leaves the dining room in a state of confusion and self-disgust. His feelings are hurt and he feels ashamed of his own weakness. He is still angry with his father, thinking that he is using his money to have power over his son. Wilhelm believes that if his father were poor, he would help him and show him how much he cared.

In the lobby he encounters Dr. Tamkin. Although he is uncertain what to make of the man, he realizes that he has no choice but to trust him in the financial venture they have set out upon. He thinks back to the events of the past few days involving him and Tamkin. When they had invested the money in lard, their partnership was supposed to be an equal one. But Tamkin was two hundred dollars short on his share; he promised he would make up the amount the following week. Wilhelm had misgivings about going through with the deal but he overcame them. He wrote a check for one thousand dollars, meaning that he was investing seven hundred and Tamkin only three hundred. Then he had signed a document giving Tamkin power of attorney to speculate with his money. This is one of the wrong decisions he did to earn money and live a pleasant life. After

signing the document, he was worried that this may give Tamkin power over other assets of his. This instance shows his inability to grasp the moment and live in the present, what ever he does, he does it late. On his query the he manager of the brokerage firm assures him that that is not so. "Now this is what I want to know," Wilhelm had said. "I'm no lawyer and I only gave the paper a glance. Dose this give Doctor Tamkin power of attorney over any other assets of mine- money, or property?" (59).

When, Wilhelm tells Tamkin that he had some words with his father, Tamkin replies that conflict between father and son is to be expected. He tells Wilhelm about a telephone consultation he has just had with one of his patients, a young man who is having a problem involving his father. His father does not think the man is his own son, since he has discovered that his wife has been having an affair for twenty-five years with a family friend. Wilhelm is always hearing stories like this from Tamkin, who believes that everyone in the hotel has some kind of secret history.

Wilhelm is in a hurry to get to the stock market, but Tamkin says it is too early. He reassures Wilhelm that the price of lard will go up, and overcomes his doubts with some slick talk filled with the jargon of psychology. They go to the dining room so Tamkin can have breakfast. He continues to talk about the strange and sensational case history of his patient. Wilhelm listens incredulously but it puts him in a good mood. He forgets his troubles with his father. Tamkin insists that the facts are always sensational, but people do not always realize this about their own lives. He goes on to say that he works not for the money but for spiritual compensation. He likes to try to bring people into the present moment, rather than allowing them to live in the past or the future. "The spiritual compensation is what I look for. Bringing people into the here - and -now. The

real universe. That's the present moment. The past is no good to us. The future is full of anxiety. Only the present is real-the here-and-now. Seize the day" (66).

Wilhelm is impressed by this, and asks Tamkin some questions about some of his other clients. Tamkin keeps one client in the here-and-now by teaching him Greek; then he claims to have been a psychiatrist to the Egyptian royal family. Wilhelm tries to decide how to take all of Tamkin's outlandish stories and claims. He doubts whether they are all true, but he likes to listen to Tamkin talk about the deeper things of life. Nonetheless, he becomes agitated and has to swallow a pill to calm him down. Tamkin explains another one of his theories, that within everyone are two souls, the real soul and the pretender soul. The pretender soul is egotistical and selfish, but hides behind a pretense of love and altruism. It fits in with what society expects, but it is fake. The true soul loves truth and turns against the pretender and wants to kill it.

Wilhelm listens willingly. He keeps doubting whether Tamkin is trustworthy, but this does not stop him wanting to hear the man talk more. He is awed by the description of the two souls because he knows he is in the grip of the pretender soul. He is not really himself. He is tormented by these ideas and hopes that Tamkin will give him some advice that will help him transform his life. Tamkin lets on that for some time he has been treating Wilhelm without telling him. Wilhelm is both pleased and alarmed by this news. Tamkin tells him he has a lot of guilt in him, which Wilhelm has to admit is true.

They leave the dining room, and Tamkin gives Wilhelm a copy of a poem he wrote the day before. At the hotel desk, Wilhelm leaves his hotel bill in an envelope for his father. He writes a note asking his father to pay it. As they go outside into Broadway, Wilhelm asks what happens in the market if the losses are bigger than the deposit.

Tamkin tells him not to worry; the system will not allow him to go into debt. It will take him out of the market automatically. Wilhelm reads the poem Tamkin gave him, which seems to be something about greatness, power and the true status of the soul. He thinks it is illiterate nonsense, and wonders why Tamkin gave it to him. He loses all faith in him. But he feels he must say something to Tamkin in response, and his mind races, trying to figure out what on earth the poem means. He makes a polite comment, and Tamkin asks if he understands the poem. Wilhelm asks him a question, and Tamkin explains that the hero of the poem is sick humanity, which would be great if it would only open its eyes. Tamkin also says that he wrote the poem for Wilhelm. He gives another explanation of the meaning of the poem, talking about the need to trust nature, and that there are no limits to the creativity of man.

Seek ye then that which art not there  
In thine own glory let thyself rest.  
Witness. Thy power is not bare.  
Though art King. Though art at thy best.  
Look then right before thee.  
Open thine eyes and see.  
At the foot of Mt. Serenity  
Is the cradle to eternity. (75)

Wilhelm takes no notice. He is resigned to losing his money in the market. He thinks he needs a miracle to save him. He is confused reading the poem. He longs Tamkin would have killed him hitting on his head rather than telling him the obscure ideas and stories.

Tamkin and Wilhelm go to the brokerage hall, which is crowded. They sit down. Tamkin has many acquaintances there, and he talks to everyone. Wilhelm sits between Mr. Rowland, who is elderly, and Mr. Rappaport, who is even older. Rowland has followed the market for years and makes money speculating in soy beans.

Wilhelm tells Tamkin he needs fifteen thousand dollars a year, after taxes, to meet his needs. Tamkin says that is not too much to expect, and Wilhelm can expect to make more than that figure. Wilhelm is comforted by this. Tamkin also tells him that he has invested in rye, and the price is already going up. He promises that lard will go up too. Wilhelm feels reassured, and for a moment he is at peace, thinking of his small yard out of the city. He resolves to get out of New York.

Tamkin goes off to talk to other people, and Wilhelm once more wonders about him. He wonders if Tamkin is a hypnotist, able to put people in a trance when he talks to them. He is attracted to Tamkin because he talks of things that matter, but he still does not trust him. He wonders how Tamkin has supported himself all these years, and asks himself many more questions about this mysterious figure. He thinks about how hard it is to communicate with anyone in New York, and starts to speculate about the deeper questions of life. He recalls a moment a few days ago when he had felt love for all humankind. It had not lasted for long and he quickly dismissed its importance, but now he recalls it and thinks he must get back to that state of mind, because it was a clue to the truth about life.

Old Mr. Rappaport, who is nearly blind, asks Wilhelm to read him the prices of wheat and soy beans. Wilhelm hopes the old man, who has made a lot of money in the chicken business, will give him some advice, but none is forthcoming. He tries to charm him, and

Mr. Rappaport talks a little about chickens, but does not offer Wilhelm any tips about the market, which disappoints him.

Tamkin returns and tells him that rye has jumped in price, nearly enough to cover their loss on lard. Wilhelm wants him to sell now, so they can go out with just a small loss, but Tamkin refuses, saying that if they stay in, they will make a profit. Wilhelm fears that the price of rye will soon go down as fast as it has gone up. Tamkin argues him out of it, to Wilhelm's frustration. Tamkin then gives him a lecture about living in the present. "Nature only knows one thing, and that's the present. Present, present, eternal present, like a big, huge, giant wave-colossal bright and beautiful, full of life and death, climbing into the sky, standing in the seas. You must go ahead with the actual, the Here-and-Now, the glory-". (89)

Wilhelm went on thinking about his ordered past, he recollected how Margret had nursed him. Actually he did not hear what Tamkin was suggesting him. He was confused with the words of Tamkin while Tamkin was describing him the urgency of celebrating the present moment.

“You have to pick out something that’s in the actual, immediate present moment,” said Tamkin. “And say to yourself here-and –now, here-and-now. “Where am I?” ‘Here.’ ‘When is it?’ ‘Now.’ Take an object or a person. ‘Here and now I see a person.’ ‘Here and now I see a man.’ ‘Here and now I see a man sitting on a chair.’ Take me for instance. Don’t let your mind wander. ‘Here and now I see a man in a brown suit. Here and now [ . . . ]. You have to narrow it down, one item at a time and not let your



imagination shoot ahead. Be in the present. Grasp the hour, the moment, the instant.” (90)

Wilhelm and Tamkin go to lunch in a crowded cafeteria, where Tamkin talks at length. He gives Wilhelm advice about what to do with the money he will inherit from his father, while Wilhelm says that he loves his father and does not want him to die. Tamkin talks about his own father, telling another fantastic story that Wilhelm does not really believe. He thinks about his own sons, about how he appears to them and how they think of him. He recalls the times when he takes them to baseball games. He thinks they do not know how much he cares for them, and he blames Margaret for turning them against him. He also thinks of Olive, the woman he loves and would marry if Margaret were to relent and give him a divorce.

Tamkin interrupts his thoughts, saying that Wilhelm's father is jealous of Wilhelm because he left his wife. He also says that Wilhelm's wife envies him too, because he is free and is now able to see young women. Tamkin tells of his own wife. She was an alcoholic, but he loved her. She drowned in Cape Cod, and it might have been a suicide. He says he tried to cure her, because he is a healer. Wilhelm does not believe his story, and thinks contemptuously of him. He realizes that the man is a charlatan but he has to go along with him because of their joint investments.

Tamkin tells him a story about Mr. Rappaport, that he had two wives and maintained two families in two separate homes for many years. Wilhelm thinks this is just another of Tamkin's stories. Tamkin explains that he tells the story to show that some men are able to free themselves from the guilt feelings that women try to inflict on them. Wilhelm complains again about his family situation, he is unhappy that his children are

with his wife, but Tamkin asks him why he allows his wife to make him suffer so much. He tells him not to play her game and this is the time when he wants to do some good. In fact Tamkin, suggests Wilhelm to come out off the suffering which he has been married to and live a joyous life. "Now, Wilhelm, I'm trying to do you some good. I want to tell you, don't marry suffering. Some people do. They get married to it, and sleep and eat together, just as husband and wife. If they go with joy they think it's adultery" (98). They go back to the market. As they approach the building they see Mr. Rappaport, who asks Wilhelm to help him across the road. Wilhelm does not want to, but he does. Mr. Rappaport tells him a story of how he fought in the Spanish-American war. He was on the beach shortly after the battle of San Juan Hill, and encountered Teddy Roosevelt there. Roosevelt yelled at him to get off the beach since he had no orders to be there. Rappaport is very proud of this memory.

At the market, Wilhelm discovers that lard has dropped twenty points since noon. Rye has fallen too, and so he and Tamkin have lost their chance to sell while the going was good. Wilhelm looks around for Tamkin, but he is nowhere to be seen. Wilhelm is in a panic, since he is wiped out financially. He feels like crying but tries to stay calm. He looks for Tamkin in the men's toilet, without success. He still hopes that at least he will get back from Tamkin the two hundred dollars he is owed from the original deposit. (95)

When Wilhelm lost all his money, family and his social relations he finds himself ruined and realizes that he was cheated. "I was the man beneath; Tamkin was on my back, and I

thought I was on his. He made me carry him, too, besides Margaret. Like this they ride on me with hoofs and claws. Tear me to pieces, stamp on me and break my bones” (105).

Wilhelm runs back to the hotel and goes to Tamkin's room. There is no sign of Tamkin. He calls the lobby, but Tamkin is not there. He calls his father's room, but Dr. Adler is not there. He goes down to the health club and finds his father receiving a massage. He asks him whether he received the note asking him to pay Wilhelm's rent. Dr. Adler replies that he received it, but tells Wilhelm he will have to ask someone else for the money. Under questioning from his father, Wilhelm admits that he has been cheated by Tamkin. His father says that he warned him, and Wilhelm admits that he gets burned again and again. He says he is stupid. Dr. Adler is close to losing his temper and says he does not want to listen to the details. Wilhelm does his best to wring a sympathetic word out of his father, without success. Dr. Adler tells him to leave and stresses the urgency of celebrating present moment in his words: “And people who will just wait for help –must wait for help. They have got to stop waiting” (109).

Back in the lobby, Wilhelm is given an urgent message to call his wife. He calls her, and she complains that he sent her a postdated check. Symbolically, this postdated check is a solid example how Wilhelm lags behind to walk with the present. They argue. Wilhelm protests that he has no money and is doing his best. He tells her he that the next day he is going to see a couple of men about job opportunities. Margaret tells him he should go back to Rojax, since no new company will want to hire him at his age. He says they do not need him, and why should he go back anyway, since Margaret does not lift a finger to help support herself. He tells her she will have to get a job, but she rules that out, saying that their two sons, ages fourteen and ten, need a parent at home. He begs her

to be more easy on him, asking how she can treat him like that. He is becoming very agitated and bangs his knuckles against the wall. He accuses her of committing a crime against him. She hangs up. In this row he must have realized the necessity of living in the present when he says; “[. . .] “I’ve had some bad luck. As a matter of fact, it’s been so bad that I don’t know where I am.” (111). When Margret insisted that he should go to Rojax he even suggested; “Margret, you don’t grasp the situation. You’ll have to get a job.” (113). This is how Wilhelm started advocating to grasp the moment after he realized that necessity of present moment in ones life.

Upset, Wilhelm tries to pull the telephone from the wall, then he hurries down the stairs and into the street, into the afternoon sunlight. He swears he will get a divorce if it is the last thing he does, and vows to start again with Olive.

He comes upon a funeral and thinks he sees Tamkin in the crowd of mourners, but he is mistaken. Carried along by the pressure of the crowd he finds himself in a chapel. He stands by the wall and looks toward the coffin and the slow line that is moving past it. He joins the line and gazes down at the corpse. Unable to leave, he remains beside the coffin, studying the dead man. He begins to cry and cannot stop. He is the only one in the chapel who is crying, and people assume he is a relative. He goes on crying, sinking "deeper than sorrow . . . toward the consummation of his heart's ultimate need." (118). His encounter with this funeral clarifies the brevity of life. At the end of the novel, Tommy Wilhelm has realized the necessity of living in the present. A series of psychological suggestions from Tamkin, and the events in his life, have made him realize the urgency of living the present forgetting the past as Nietzsche advocates in

In his early days of life when Tommy longed for accessible, sensible truths, Tamkin assures him there are only crooked lines. When Tommy asks him where he gets his ideas

from, Tamkin says: “I read the best of literature, science, and philosophy,” (72). In his *carpe diem* sermon, Tamkin tells Tommy to take no thought for tomorrow because the past has no value and the future is an impending nightmare. In spite of his wife’s, his employer’s, his father’s, and Tamkin’s betrayal of him, Tommy, in this reading seems naively determined to “recover the good, things, the happy things, the easy tranquil things of life [. . .].” Things were too complex, but they might be reduced to simplicity again. recovery was possible” (78). His final emotional climax is not bitterness at betrayal, but the achievement of love for all the lurid, imperfect people like himself whom he discovers in the underground subway in Chicago and in the funeral parlor.

The protagonist in the novel is a victim hero who, because of his guilt or innocence, has a responsibility for his own alienation and victimization in an ambiguous Kafkaesque manner. He is responsible for his own-destruction because of his conflict with his father, with a larger system of authority, and his inability to grasp the moment as every one in the novel suggest him. The disintegration of the protagonist is not imposed from outside, but results from the protagonist's acquiescence to the ordered life and his inability to grasp the moment. Because of the dread, anxiety and uncertainties of the future Wilhelm can not inhabit the glorious here-and-now fantasized by Tamkin, but the bleak here-and-now of his own crippled self fabricated by a series of past events.

## Conclusion

In the novel *Seize The Day*, Saul Bellow, glorifies the present by describing the monotonous life of Tommy Wilhelm, which is the product of Wilhelm's inability to follow the footprints of the present. To glorify the present that is lacking throughout the novel Saul Bellow presents a character Tommy Wilhelm who is no more than a stubborn idealist in an irrational world. He is a postmodern man in search of happiness but his idealism sets him back in time so that he can never gain the happiness that he longs for. He cannot celebrate the moment as it comes. He is always overwhelmed by his hyper rational self, so he cannot make a right dissension in right time. Whenever he had to pursue his studies, he leaves home and goes to Hollywood in the frenzy of being a successful actor. But he cannot continue his career because he had no art for this. He could act no more in Hollywood movies. According to his father, he is the only member in the family who did not complete his college education. So his father was ashamed of him although when it comes on describing his son, his father boasts a lot about him. He tells Wilhelm as a manager in a huge company although Wilhelm was forced out of his job and lived a penniless life in Hotel Gloriana.

Wilhelm is in a financial crisis so he wants help from his father, but his father does not want to carry any one on his back. This Oedipal Complex distances him from his father to a greater extent that neither Wilhelm could open his heart to his father, nor he helped his son. This cold relationship coaxes him to find Dr. Tamkin as his surrogate father. Ultimately Dr. Tamkin became his financial advisor. But Tamkin was a kind of hypocrite who does not practice his healing philosophy he teaches. On the other hand Wilhelm is a weak, self-compassionate, middle-aged man who undergoes an astonishing

metamorphosis on Tamkin's influence. Dr. Adler, Wilhelm's father tells Wilhelm not to carry any one on his back but Wilhelm is unable to carry suggestions. He wants to be separated from his wife, but she does not give him divorce so he is forced to pay money for his wife and even her family. Tommy, in effort of being a successful man, changes to Wilky but to no avail. He could not change himself, he always remained Wilky at heart. Sometimes he curses himself for this change as he could not change his activities or life style that he had longed. His father always called him Tommy. Tommy could never become Wilky a man he aspires to be.

Tamkin had a doubtful personality. Sometimes he talked about the underwater suit and other times he talked about the stock market. Wilhelm had a great longing for money and the family relation that he was deprived of, so he was easily attached to Tamkin. He easily trusted Tamkin though his father told him not to do so. Tamkin convinced Wilhelm to invest in commodities market to make money, eventually Wilhelm spent all his money in commodity market. He bought the shares, but after his investments, the prices of shares started falling down. As the loss on the shares kept going, a cold relation existed between Tommy and Tamkin. But Tommy could tell him nothing because he had given him the power to invest money. As the loss on the market went on increasing, Tamkin started giving him psychological advices, he tried to explain him the differences between the functionalism and mechanism. Tamkin told that his only desire was to bring people "here and now", ie he wants to bring Wilhelm in the present such that he could grasp the moment and live a successful life.

Though the novel is centered on a central character facing a moment of deep crisis and self-discovery, the novel is organized through the principle of a shifting center of

consciousness that is functional to the deep structure of the text, that is, to the underlying binary pattern of concealment and revelation. We are not only allowed to penetrate the true emotional roots of the protagonist's personality through his thoughts, delusions, and memories, but we can also see the impact of his appearance on the world both through his father's thoughts and the narrator's grotesque descriptions of his discordant physical traits.

As the title suggests, the novel is about the glorification of the present. It stresses the celebration of life through the celebration of the present moment. One should grasp the moment as it comes. If anyone identifies himself with Wilhelm and tries to be hyper rational in this hyper real world he can never be able to seize the moment that is necessary for a happy life. The substantial motto of the American dream – to be happy can only be achieved through the celebration of the day not waiting and trying to be more rational. If Wilhelm was able to overcome his existential angst for his identity and material success he would have certainly been a successful man, and cherish the prime days of his life. But he fails everywhere because he could not seize the day- this is which the motto of *Carpe diem*.

In nutshell, Bellow glorifies the present by using Derridian ethos - the presence of the absence and the absence of the presence. The despair and uncertainty, that pervades the novel is the out come of the inability of the protagonist to grasp the moment. His hyper rational thinking and search for an ordered life sets him back in time. He cannot make a distinction between past and present. Being a post modern hero he must have celebrated the moment as it came but he went on seeking an ordered life as a modern man. As a postmodern man he should have revisited his past and trod with the present moment but he remained nostalgic throughout the novel. This nostalgia crippled him to



see the binary opposition between past and present which ultimately forces him to live in the frenzy of his ordered past which is the only cause of his failure. In this way Saul Bellow's novel *Seize the Day* presents an analysis of human isolation in mid-twentieth-century New York through ironic play on the central *carpe diem* motif. Hence, Bellow is able to detail the manifold discordances between Wilhelm's world and the literary world evoked by the book's title. So *Seize the Day* is a sophisticated treatment of Bellow's inversions and uses of the traditional associations suggested by the *carpe diem* canon of literature for living a happy and a successful life with the help of the central character Tommy Wilhelm.

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