

## Cultural Prosaic Present in Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day*

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### Abstract:

The current article investigates the various cultural items utilized to underline the theme of the novel *Seize the Day*. A notable Nobel Laureate, Saul Bellow, uses a variation Approach that closely fits present literature. Using the story to convey content, we can discover new ways of thinking about and interpreting what we've already learned. This study offers a novel literacy theory that has the potential to expand the repertoire of literary criticism. Saul Bellow is an American author whose work focuses on the themes of family, race, gender injustice, and the challenges surrounding them. In his attempt to cope with his anxieties, Wilhelm's protagonist becomes embroiled in a triangle in the analysis of the novel *Seize the Day*. Tommy Wilhelm, the fading charmer, has reached his day of reckoning and is terrified. Even though he is in his forties, he is estranged from his wife and children, has a contentious relationship with his arrogant and successful father, has been unsuccessful in his acting career, and is in many financial problems. On one critical day, he reflects on his previous sins and spiritual malaise until a strange philosophizing con guy delivers him a wonderful, enlightening moment of truth and insight and offers him one last hope. Triangle is evident in the protagonist's fear of several sources. The study emphasizes outstanding writer Saul Bellow's narrative method, arguing that family systems theory is suited for critically examining literary works dealing with family issues.

**Key Words:** Protagonist, Gender inequality, Race, Interpretation, Illumination,

### Introduction:

People from all walks of life had a variety of challenges. They encounter numerous social, psychological, interpersonal, technological, natural, supernatural, behavioral, and human relational challenges. This paper focuses on Cultural Prosaic as it appears in American Literature. People from various countries traveled to America, encountered several obstacles, worked to overcome them, and eventually established in America. This group includes Canadians, African Americans, and Jews in the United States [1]. An internal or external conflict can exist. Literature is one vehicle for efficiently presenting these tensions and providing resolutions. These characteristics are typically found in works of American literature. With the advent of English-speaking Europeans in the United States of America, the world became aware of American literature.

This literature was first written in English during the time of the colonies, and these authors laid the foundation for American literature. In his book "A genuine relation to the history of American Literature," for instance, John Smith demonstrates to Englishmen the possibility of colonization in the Americas. There aren't many pieces of writing that praise the United States of America as a land of economic opportunity. The relationship between church and state was called into question by several authors who were active during this period.

Most literature is published in English in the United States of America and its predecessor colonies. Jewish American literature is an essential part of the literary history of the United States. Numerous crises and upheavals in the United States of America had an impact on Jewish Americans. In their works, American writers such as Warren Adler, Isaac Asimov, Paul Auster, Saul Bellow, Shmuley Boteach, and Joshua Braff emphasized identity, social, psychological, inter and intrapersonal, and behavioral, and human connection issues. This research aims to examine the numerous themes covered in Saul Bellow's works. This study thoroughly examines Saul Bellow's methods of conflict resolution and resolution through illustrations and tactics.

All 17th-century American writings were identical to 17th-century British writings. Some of the writers of this period wrote drama and fiction, as well as biographies, treatises, journey narratives, and sermons. Cotton Mather, a writer from the 18th century, continued the previous traditions. The rise of the American Revolution highlighted the developing disparities between American and British political views. Political writers like Samuel Adams and John Dickinson supported the colonists during this time. During this time, poetry rose to prominence [2]. In the beginning, Philip Freneau's poetry satirized the Revolutionary War but gradually switched to diverse facets of the American scene. Drama and novels rose to prominence around the close of the 18th century. Royall Tyler's *Contrast* was the first American comedy staged by a theatre ensemble (1787). After the American Revolution and the War of 1812, writers in the United States began to produce their own works of literature. William Cullen Bryant, Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and Edgar Allan Poe were the

authors of the time who helped pave the way for the growth of literature. Writers such as Herman Melville and Walt Whitman gained notoriety in the 1830s for their new writing spirit and continued to publish their works until the end of the Civil War [3].

Significant technical breakthroughs have affected people's attitudes, resulting in the transformation of the entire civilization. Americans considered the twentieth century to be the American century. Naturalism predominated early in the century, with traces of expressionism thrown in for good measure. Many significant changes occurred in the second decade of the twentieth century. Many people and writers feel that World War I precipitated the collapse of civilization. The minds of Americans were influenced by cultural confusion and disarray [4].

#### **About Author:**

Saul Bellow was an American novelist awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1976 for his portrayals of a modern urban man who was dissatisfied with society but not crushed in spirit. Bellow was born on June 10, 1915, in Lachine, located near Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He passed away on April 5, 2005, in Brookline, Massachusetts, United States. He was one of the Jewish American authors. He was born into a Jewish household and was proficient in Yiddish. His fluency in Yiddish influenced his vibrant English style. Their writings were essential to developing post-World War II American literature [5].

Saul Bellow's writings are primarily concerned with Jewish American immigrants in general. In 1976, he received the Pulitzer Prize, the National Medal of Arts, and the Nobel Prize in Literature for his literary work [6]. In American literature, Saul Bellow is a singular voice for humanitarian ideas and goals. His writing represents an optimistic attitude, which eventually defines the answer to various problems. Saul Bellow has authored over 20 books, the most well-known of which are *Dangling Man*, *The Adventures of Augie March*, *Seize the Day*, *Herzog*, *Humboldt's Gift*, and *The Actual, Ravelstein*, and others [7].

Saul Bellow is often regarded as one of the most successful Jewish novelists to emerge from the United States. The moral worldview that is an essential component of Jewish thought is reflected in his writings. Saul Bellow's work demonstrates several themes, including the disorientation of modern society, the quest for identity, urban settings, and the meaning of the ego in a world of uncertainty and changeable magnitude [8]. As an intellectual writer, Bellow attempted to depict and construct a picture that was as true as possible of Jewish America. He has feelings of inadequacy, love, and envy that consume his thoughts constantly. His subject matter applies to everyone and concentrates mainly on the disadvantaged. In addition to focusing on day-to-day living and Jewish heritage, Saul Bellow's novels feature a range of emotions, including happiness and misery, hope and despair, love and hatred. The Jewish tradition and the Bolivian diaspora represent the Jewish literary movement. It calls attention to the specific Jewish stains present within the conundrum of "self" and "identity." [9] Bellow, one of the most erudite and cerebral writers of the second half of the twentieth century, is a singular voice in the canon of American literature for the promotion of humanitarian concepts and objectives.

Bellow can articulate the ambiguities, complexity, and paradoxes characteristic of American culture. The first thing that Bellow does is take a stand against the artistic nihilism of the twentieth century. He is against Dada, against the Wasteland, and against the devaluation of human life in modern civilization. Second, in opposition to the contemporary literary tradition of alienation, Bellow's fiction emphasizes the importance of brotherhood and community [10], even though all of Bellow's primary characters are masochists who feel isolated from society. Third, Bellow is especially critical of how modern literature devalues the "different ego." He values uniqueness almost as much as Emerson did. However, he is forced to give up his identity in every single one of the stories and novels. That he reads because the individual is meaningless in the face of unexplained forces, and individuality is undesirable because it is a burden that prevents the human being from being able to love [11]. Even though the condition of grace that his heroes strive toward is an anonymous state that is diametrically opposed to the individuality that Bellow values and seeks to protect. It is a state that enables Bellow to maintain trust in the human being and the possibility of his union with other people [12].

#### ***Seize the Day:***

American novelist Saul Bellow's novella *Seize the Day* was released in 1956. This short story tackles various problems, including racism, gender discrimination, and social and cultural issues. Tommy Wilhelm, the protagonist, is living a terrible existence, plummeting from minor middle-management respectability to unemployment, divorce, and despair. Like many of Bellow's other books, *Seize the Day* has an ambivalent attitude toward worldly prosperity and follows its sensitive, naive protagonist's search for meaning in a chaotic and hostile environment [13].

Tommy Wilhelm is a guy in his forties staying at the Hotel Gloriana on New York City's Upper West Side, where his father has been waiting for several years [14]. From the start, he is out of place, living at a hotel full of older retirees and remaining an isolated figure amid crowds throughout the story. The novella follows Tommy Wilhelm on one of his most critical days: his "day of reckoning," as it were.

Tommy is descending in the hotel elevator as the novella begins, on his way to meet his father for breakfast, as he does every morning [15]. However, this morning feels different for Tommy; he feels a sense of foreboding and fear for something that lays ahead of him and has been developing for quite some time [16].

The reader finds out that Tommy was fired from his job as a salesperson not too long ago through both Tommy's internal monologue and a series of flashbacks. He never finished college, is a father of two and is on the point of financial ruin [17]. In addition, Tommy recently divorced his wife and is struggling to provide for his family. Tommy has given all of his remaining savings to the dishonest Dr. Tamkin, who assured him that he will invest them wisely in the commodities market. In everything that's going on, it seems as though he's fallen in love with a woman named Olive, but he can't marry her since his wife won't let him get a divorce. Tommy is suffering from misery and requires assistance on both an emotional and economic level.

The reader follows Tommy as he has a conversation with his father, Dr. Adler, who considers his son to be a disappointment in every aspect [18]. Tommy is not given any monetary assistance from his father or any emotional or other help. These early chapters are also where the flashbacks get started. The flashbacks focus on Tommy's encounter with the dishonest talent scout Maurice Venice, who at first shows interest in a younger version of Tommy because of his good appearance. Conversely, Wilhelm is turned down for a role by the same talent scout after an unsuccessful screen test, but he continues to pursue a career as an actor in Hollywood [19]. In defiance of his parents' wishes and warnings, he decides not to continue his education and moves to California [20].

The subsequent chapters centre on Tommy's interactions and conversations with a "psychologist" named Dr. Tamkin, who appears to be a fraud and raises questions about his credibility. Dr. Tamkin provides Tommy with limitless advice and gives him the support he was looking for from his father. We are frequently questioned as to whether or not Tamkin is a fraud, a liar, a dishonest psychotherapist, and or not he is a questionable professional. On the other hand, Tamkin is excellent, and this quality attracts Tommy's attention. Dr. Tamkin asserts that he fulfills various roles and titles, including those of a poet, a healer, and a member of the Detroit Purple Gang [21]. Despite his flaws, he teaches Tommy realities that are crucial to both the novel's plot and to Tommy himself [22]. In addition, because Tamkin is so knowledgeable about the stock market, Tommy is willing to entrust the last of his funds to Tamkin so that they might be invested in the commodities market.

The remaining portions of the novella focus on Tommy and Dr. Tamkin as they make their way to and from the stock market, during which time they come into contact with a wide range of characters. In the final part of the story, Tommy is shown to have suffered a significant financial loss due to Tamkin's investments in various commodities. Tommy has used up all of his savings, yet he is still responsible for meeting the monetary demands of his family. In the meantime, Tamkin has disappeared. After the protagonist attempts to find Tamkin in his hotel room, the story comes to a close with three climaxes: two smaller ones and one larger, more significant one [23].

The climactic encounter with his father takes place in the massage room of the hotel, and during it, Tommy is told for the last time that he cannot receive aid as he stands naked before his own father. After, Tommy gets into a heated and almost yelling conversation with his wife over the phone, and he claims he is "suffocating" and unable to "breathe." He charges onto Broadway, where he is sure that he will run into Dr. Tamkin at a funeral that is taking place nearby. He tries to get in touch with Tamkin but does not receive a response. Suddenly, he is brought into the chapel where the funeral is being held [24], and he is engulfed by a flood of people carrying flowers. The moment that marks the dramatic high point of the story is when Tommy discovers that he is unable to escape the presence of the body of a stranger who has died and begins to lament and cry. He sobs uncontrollably and says he is calling "with all his heart." This is the last section of the book. Others at the burial are mystified about who he is and how close of a friend he was to the person who passed away. Tommy is left in this "beautiful oblivion of weeping," but the identity of the person who passed away remains unclear.

## CONCLUSION

The current study has thus far attempted to demonstrate that family systems therapy gives fresh insight into the psychological reading of literary works. Because, as Kerr and Bowen explain, "Family systems theory radically departed from previous theories of human emotion functioning by its conceptualization of the family as an emotional unit," it can answer questions about and beyond the self, which has always been treated as a closed entity in psychoanalysis (pp.81). As the study's findings show, emotion and identity are inextricably linked. Wilhelm's uneasiness stems from his fight with himself, his father, his mother, and everyone else in his emotional unit. If there is an identity matrix, there will also be an emotion matrix, where one's feeling is correlated to the emotion of the other family members, especially in the family as an emotional unit. As a result, analysing a single character is inextricably linked to analysing their interactions with other characters or the dynamics of interrelationships within the passionate team. In other words, a reading of literary works already

out of date inside the internal psychological realm is reframed and expanded into an intrapsychic task. In conclusion, given that this relatively fresh approach to literary criticism is anticipated to broaden the repertoire of literary criticism in Indonesia, it is strongly encouraged that future researchers apply the insights provided by this theory to the reading of literary works from Indonesia that deal with the subject matter of families.

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