

SAUL BELLOW'S SEIZE THE DAY: A STUDY OF MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: *Marxist perspective has undergone a progressive dominance over time in the globe of literature. Marxist approach has always been an impressive implement in comprehending any literary sort of pieces in case of philosophy, economy, history and sociology. This aids learners to approach the text in a distinctive way that issues reader's better sort of apprehension of literary works and serves to attain the purpose of communicative literary competence, appreciations and conventions. The research inclines to focus on one of the most appreciated and unparalleled novels of Saul Bellow, "Seize the Day (1956)". The lens of Marxist point of view has been used in this study to bring out how all the characters affected by materialism hanker after worldly success, trying to survive with the critical circumstances, and at last gaining worldly success or failure in the complexity of modern American society. Here, most of the characters' attitude and psychology are directed by longing for material wealth and financial stability. The paper critically demonstrates on how the quest for American dream, money and success triggers the actions of materialistic characters while specially concentrating on the actions of protagonist Tommy Wilhelm whose life is distorted in a capitalistic society due to the thirst for money and success.*

KEYWORDS: Marxism, American dream, Materialism, Alienation, Class Struggle.

INTRODUCTION

"Seize the day" (1956) is one of the marvelous and widely distinguished novels across the globe written by Saul Bellow, a famous noble laureate. The novel is highly regarded as "small gray masterpiece" by V. S. Pritchett, a British writer and critique (1957). In the era of 20th century, Bellow had outstanding literary influence in the field of American literature. That's why, he is described by Philip Roth as "the backbone of 20th century American literature" (1991). His literary works are unique because of perfect blending of entertainment, extreme distress, venture, realistic portrayal and different cultures with rational conversation of characters. This greatest American novelist is well known for his sincere presentation of distorted modern civilization and capitalistic society. The book was written during the post war world which reflects several factors of that time like disillusionment, depression, anxiety, chaos created by the post war situation of World War II. In this world, Bellow's protagonist Wilhelm strives to fight against all odds being alone in society. He was brought up during the great depression and his characterization seems to place his alienated protagonist against all the odds of society such as cold war, strong economic boom, use of science and technology as weapons. That's why, Marxist perspective would be the finest way to interpret the text from these contexts. The novel peruses spiritual separation, human alienation from each other, also finding a possible human incitement. Basically, the novel is concerned with the protagonist, Tommy Wilhelm who is failure in case of economy, family and individual existence in a capitalistic society, trying to survive with the critical circumstances, then disappointed and at last acquiring

consolation and salvation. The paper is mainly designed to interpret how materialistic tendency directs most of the characters' specially Wilhelm's actions and psychology.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Lately, there has been an emerging concern in the realms of Marxist literary criticisms. It has been a long years since various Marxist critics put much emphasis to analyze various literary pieces within their aspects like class struggle, capitalism, alienation, American dream and so on. Many recent studies have focused on basic Marxist perspective of "Seize the Day (1956)" In this section of the paper, I would like to discuss some major viewpoints of research scholars which are not only important but also mentionable.

"Generally the word —materialism refers to the theory or attitude that physical well-being and worldly possessions constitute and the greatest good and highest value in life (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000; 1080. qtd in Dev, 2014; 59). Joyshree Deb states that "Seize the Day is an artistic exploration of the devaluation of human relationship and its causes as well as effects in a post-war capitalist society." (Dev 2014; 60) Human degraded relationship is a result of capitalist society. But Habibullah, Jahan, and Topu mentions that "The American strategy success for life of instant fame and wealth, unparalleled success fuelled by endless optimism is called into question when Tommy weeps for his own American dreams". (Habibullah, Jahan ,Topu 2015; 255). An individual becomes spiritually dead when he fails to fulfill his American dream and then society casts him outside. Moreover, it is stated in Novelguide writers that "New York City is presented as a soulless place, in which the authenticity of people's lives is distorted in the interests of serving the materialism of society". (Novelguide, 2018) Joyshree Deb also points out that "Materialism or money causes the degradation of human relationship, concisely alienation, meanness, as well as loss of human love and passion". (Dev, 2014; 60) Furthermore, (Dr. Veeramani, A. Senthilvel) argues that "In Seize the Day, Dr. Adler personifies social pressures inherent in the urban setting while Wilhelm, the protagonist, rejects the materialistic world. (Veeramani, Senthilvel. A 2015; 4) Father and son hold completely two opposite poles where father is materialistic and son is idealist and naturalist. Here, Morshedul Alam asserts about Wilhelm's isolation that "actually the sufferings of a modern man originate in modernity that ignores the issue called human but upholds matters like money, wealth, power, status and fame". (Alom, 2016; 1) Morshedul Alam also reveals that "Tommy"s painful isolation and failure of life are actually the outcome of Capitalism that operates under the guise of modernity". (Alom, 2016; 1)

The above viewpoints seem rational in interpreting the text from Marxist perspective because every aspects of materialistic society like loneliness, class struggle and American dream are attached with each other in the novel. However, few previous researchers only took notice on exterior aspects of Marxist perspective and paid less attention to the actions and psychology of money oriented characters in their investigations. Rather in this research, the author will make an effort to trace the psychological and physical actions of the characters affected by materialism.

Marxism

Marxism, a materialist philosophy attempts to analyse class conflicts of bourgeoisie and the oppressed proletariat and social change with a logical view of social conversion. German

philosophers, Karl Marx and sociologist Friedrich Engels propounded this school of thought in their masterpiece “The German Ideology” (1846). Basically, the bourgeoisie is considered as the reigning class who directs the system of manufacture, allocation, and barter. They employ and manipulate the proletariat who actively participates in making products. Capitalism, not only an economic but also a political system advances on the exploitation as it makes the best use of the working class. The capitalists have the complete authority or control over the society and institutions. The proletariat are the victims to circumstances to hand over their labour because of poverty. Furthermore, they do not get their due wages according to their hard work for a long time. The workers are instructed only to give their manpower but they have no authority over the design or making process of products. The working class people works like a machine in a capitalist industry and forget the qualities of his own existence and humanity. The workers also become alienated from other workers during working. Capitalism thus creates sense of loneliness in the Proletariat. The capitalists seize a huge amount of surplus value from the workers which is far higher than their due wages. In fact, the capitalists thrive on the formula that they make products from the worker at very cheap rate and then they sell products at a very high rate. Capitalistic society does not pay any attention to the development of the proletariat. Such society makes the poor poorer and the rich richer because of the capitalists’ accumulating tendency. In order to show the amassing propensity of the Capitalists, Karl Marx says

“Accumulation of wealth at one pole is at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole” (Karl Marx, 2007).

As a consequence, economic imbalance creates intense class conflicts among rich, middle and poor. Marxism is against capitalism since it produces class struggle. Furthermore, Marxism does not appreciate capitalism since it fails to flourish the living grade of working class people while exploiting on their payment and benefit. However, the aim of Marxism is to bring a classless society. Marxism dreams of a society which has a common ownership. Moreover, the system of manufacture, allocation, and barter will be carried out in a systematic benevolent way for ordinary people. Marxism wants the proletariat to start revolting against the oppression of the capitalists which ultimately might gave birth to “Socialism” at one point. Adolf Hitler delivered a rebellious quote against the system of capitalism.

“We are Socialist, we are enemies of the capitalistic economic system for the exploitation of the economically weak with its unfair salaries and unseemly evaluation of a human being according to wealth and property instead of responsibility and performance and we are all determined to destroy this system under all conditions”. (Adolf Hitler, 1927)

He highly appreciates the birth of “Socialism” as it creates communistic society, overthrowing the autocracy of capitalistic society. Marxism wants the working class to run the system of manufacture, allocation, and barter so that such class struggle are abolished for ever and the capitalistic society turns into an ideal society. That’s why, Socialism is supported by a huge numbers of reputed persons like Vladimir Lenin, the leader of communist party says, “The goal of Socialism is communism” (Vladimir Lenin, 1903) Malala Yousafzai, a female education activist said, “I’m convinced that socialism is the only answer and I urge all comrades to take this struggle to a victorious conclusion. Only this will free us from the chains of Bigotry and Exploitation”.

American Dream

The title of the novel "Seize the Day" has been taken from "Carpe diem" philosophy introduced first by Roman Poet Horace in his books "The Odes" (23 BC). It means to make the best use of present time and give little concentration on future. The title represents American dream which is symbolic, reflecting the whole novel. The author's objective was to persuade the readers of post war American society in which most of the people couldn't utilize the present moment therefore waiting for future success. American dream is one of the crucial aspects of this novel which is a belief of attainment for all people in terms of equal social, political especially material prosperity, freedom and opportunity without considering any class of individual. The culture portrayed in the novel in which most of the characters live is founded on materialism and, busy mechanical city life. Such culture is alarming for socialism. Those who favor American dream believes that it is earned only by working hard, determining firmly and sacrificing sweat of life. Earning money and the possibilities of worldly success are the basis of American dream. Most of characters of the novel are inspired by the American dream of success.

Tommy Wilhelm can be referred to the representative of American dream because he craves for money and success. Wilhelm is a vanquished and wretched person in a money-adoring world, desiring to be rich and successful inspired by American dream. Everywhere he observes and understands that money is life. He wants a better future going to Hollywood to be an actor. But unfortunately Wilhelm fails to show excellence in his screen test on account of his speech difficulty. Moreover, he chooses many professions for material success. It was not an easy task for Wilhelm to shift from one occupation to another. Still he keeps on working hard to prosper in his respective profession. He has been "a patient services assistant in Los Angeles hospital", "sales representative", "a ditch-digger", "office-boy in the pacific theater", "stock market investor" and "a public relations man". (Bellow, 1996; 35, 39) He fails in each and every sector of his life. These professions symbolize Wilhelm's obsession for acquisition of money and worldly success. Wilhelm shifts from the normal style of life and adopts modern style to keep pace with Hollywood. That materialistic society gives emphasis on dress code, way of talking which are different for upper class. Similarly, he is very obsessed with his dress code, style of talking and talking food in order to walk with the modern American society. Wilhelm prefers to wear good cloths and his conversation with Rubin is the manifestation of their obsession to dress code. Rubin asked him

"That's a real knocked out shirt you got on" while Wilhelm replied "No, it's a Jack Fagman- Chicago" (Bellow, 1996; 5)

Dr. Adler calls Wilhelm by different childhood names like "Wilky". But he relinquishes the name "Adler" by choosing "Tommy Wilhelm" to pursue an acting career. In fact, Wilhelm really works hard to modify his past failures and dreams to success and reality. Though he gets success as a salesman for the Rojax Corporation in the past, now he cannot pay present month's rent and have no money to support her wife and two sons. All his attempts are nipped in the bud. Actually, all of the tasks accomplished by him is the outcome of American dream. His life is full of mistakes. Bellow says, "It would be a bad mistake to go to Hollywood and marry but still he went and got married" (Bellow, 1996; 23)

Wilhelm is encountered with the need to make money that's why he longs for father's support. He strikes a conflict between aspiration and ability in his mind. He cannot make a balance between them. He knows that Tamkin is never be trusted but he wants his heart to make

understand for acquiring quick benefit from commodity market with the help of him. But Wilhelm represents the dark side of American dream. A man can work hard to get success by sacrificing his last drop of sweat and blood. But if he unfortunately fails to succeed, his sufferings will be known no bounds. Triggered by American dream of success, Wilhelm put forth a great deal of attempt while sacrificing seven years of his life in pursuance of becoming a screen artist. Bellow says,

“Those seven years of persistence and defeat had unfitted him somehow for trades and businesses and it was too late to shift another professions” (Bellow, 1996; 7)

If Wilhelm had not wasted the valuable time, perhaps he would have been capable to start something. That’s why, people who fail to fulfill American dream suffer in the long run. He psychologically breaks down and can’t stand. He becomes mentally dead and can’t fix himself any situation. That’s why, Bellow philosophizes, “A person can become tired of looking himself over and trying to fix himself up” (Bellow, 1996; 92)

Materialism

Materialism refers to the theory or attitude that physical well-being and worldly possessions constitute and the greatest good and highest value in life (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000; 1080. qtd in Dev, 2014; 59). The novel describes a society which is materialistic. Bellow uses New York City as a setting to portray the mechanical and rootless life of people during the World War II. He describes the urban view like noisy sounds of the machines at the brokerage office. Bellow depicts wonderfully,

“New York-the end of the world, with its complexity and machinery, bricks and tubes, wires and stones, holes and heights” (Bellow, 1996; 83)

Wilhelm is a character in disorder who is encumbered by the loss of his sales man job, financial uncertainty, the separation from his wife and his relationship with his father. He reminisces the moment when he used to rent a beautiful apartment in Roxbury, having garden surrounded by sweet birds and sun light enjoyed pure morning. Wilhelm’s’ problems is different since he longs for touch of nature. But it is impossible to have such a marvelous view in a mechanical American society. He says,

“New York is like a gas. The colors are running. My head feels so tight. Dad I can’t take city life anymore and I miss the country” (Bellow, 1996; 50)

Bellow depicts that the main commercial activity of New York City is gaining money, which is given significance above the deeper attachments between human beings. Here, New York City is portrayed as a place which is far away from the vivacity of life. Wilhelm experiences that only two things prevail in New York City such as success or depression. Out of mental illness in city life, people have forgot the touch of natural sleep. Instead, city dwellers have become crazy from uncaring crowds, and their act of rushing. As a consequence, they rely on medicine with regard to forget the bitter realities of modern city life which can be fatal and poisonous. Wilhelm often looks weary, unhealthy and frustrated. Adler assumes that he is getting addicted to medicine like city people to get rid of hustle and bustle in their regular urban life. He replies,

“No, Dad, It’s not the pills. It’s that I’m not used to New York anymore”
(Bellow, 1996; 33)

In this city, people are running towards material prosperity since they come and go, do business, spend time. But most of things are in the casual and outward level. The togetherness we develop with friends, relatives, parents and partners offers a significant and extraordinary sense of meaning, purpose and human closeness. But these human emotions are disregarded in case of avaricious people. People’s genuineness of life is absolutely lost and gone as everyone is craving for material wealth of society. In that city, only money is treated as God. New York City is polluted with artificiality, capitalism and loneliness. It is a place where “the fathers were no fathers and the sons no sons” (Bellow, 1996; 83) Several characters in the novel as Dr. Adler, Dr Tamkin, An old men Mr. Rappaport and Mr. Perls having money-oriented tendency appear to grant importance to money instead of human relationships. They believe in triumph, and potentiality of worldly possessions. Everywhere, Tommy confronts a materialistic soul. He meets an old, shriveled, men who has devoted his life in making money on the commodities market. He meets another consumerist, named Mr. Rappaport who has made a lot of money by running a chicken business in New Jersey. Wilhelm can comprehend the situation how animals live in unhealthy chicken farms. Then, he observes that something is written on the notepad of Rappaport that he may not want to show anyone. Wilhelm then thinks that, “This was the way a man who had grown rich by the murder of millions of animals, little chickens, would act”. (Bellow, 1996; 86) It may be true or not actually what is written on the notepad but as Wilhelm also has money making tendency he thinks the ways a consumerist thinks. By observing people’s money making tendency, he comprehends how much importance they put in gaining money. He says

“They adore money! Holy Money! Beautiful money! If you did not have it, you were a dummy. You had to excuse yourself from the face of the earth”
(Bellow, 1996; 36)

Bellow reminds the readers Wilhelm’s failure stories through a series of flashbacks. As Wilhelm attempts cut a brilliant figure in Hollywood, he meets another materialistic soul named Maurice Venice, “a Scout for Kaskaskia Films”. She is described as “foolish”, “unlucky”, “a fall guy”, “a dupe” and a sucker”, cunningly elevates Wilhelm’s deep enthusiasm and passion for career in a Hollywood. (Bellow, 1996; 19) Wilhelm thinks once if it is correct decision to go or not. But Venice says, “He never made a mistake. His instinct for talent was infallible” (Bellow, 1996; 23).

The savage world dominated by materialism starts to gives him psychological shock. Fraudulent Venice notices Wilhelm’s good looks, attempting to convince him to bring him in Hollywood in order to swindle him. Bellow describes Wilhelm handsome enough.

“His cheeks when he laughed and puffed grew round, and he looked much younger than his years and he could charm a bird out of tree” (Bellow, 1996; 6)

Venice appears to use Wilhelm only for his own purpose. Later Wilhelm receive nothing but rejection and failure. In the American capitalist society, people are engaged in gambling to fulfil their quest for power and wealth. All they believe that money cannot buy happiness but through money one can buy things that can bring happiness. There is gambling in American society in where several characters meet in the stock market. Even Wilhelm himself is

concerned much of the time about the money invested in the commodity market. This is very ironic because he himself dislikes materialistic world but psychologically he has become money oriented like others. Marxism is highly against materialistic society as it destroys vivacity of human soul. Wilhelm feels suffocated in this materialistic society. He is detached from his father, wife, children, and from rest of the world. Two striking reasons of Wilhelm's separation from his father are quitting school and changing his name against his parents' expectation to go to Hollywood and seeking divorce from his harsh, cold-hearted, and unkind wife and for marrying a Catholic girlfriend. The estrangement between Wilhelm and his father is the result of money. Wilhelm confesses his "bad luck, weariness, weakness and failure" to his father (Bellow, 1996; 11). But Adler does not pay any heed to his son although he witnesses his "son's hardships" (Bellow, 1996; 26). Dr. Adler can be referred to the representative of materialistic world and power since his philosophical teachings are based on the concepts of money, power and success. He has no affection for his son and keeps one blaming him. Wilhelm's confession about his weary life and failure story cannot touch his heart. In fact, Adler wants him to hold the big responsibility of family like other successful sons. Adler cherishes "a young, smart and successful son" (Bellow, 1996; 45). But Wilhelm has no way backing up his family in such a time of financial disaster. Wilhelm's deep heartache is expressed for being harshly rejected from his father.

"If I had money you wouldn't drive me away. By God you have to admit it. The money makes the difference" (Bellow, 1996; 54).

So the estrangement between father and son is the result of money. Dr. Adler is one the most money-grubbing characters in the novel. His inner workings are all about his worldly possessions. Inwardly, he believes that if he starts giving financial support to his son, he will have to continue that. He knows that some elderly people keep backing their children and hold their hands in the time of distress. Adler's psychology reveals that he wants none on his back except his professional success. Rather, he gives selfish advice to Wilhelm not to carry nobody on his back. It seems visible that Wilhelm wants financial help from his father. But Wilhelm's psychology reveals that his heart craves for kindness and mercy from his father. He wanted his father to stretch his helping hand to his head. After being rejected and insulted by his father, he reveals he never asked Adler for money to back up his wife Margaret and children but he wishes for assistance and emotional support. His inward agony is expressed here.

"It isn't all a question of money- there are other things a father can give to a son. You are not a kind man. When I suffer-you aren't even sorry. That's because you have no affection for me. You don't give the little bit I beg to you" (Bellow, 1996; 109)

Tommy's confession and his father's harsh rejection is very pathetic. In the novel, father son relationship unveils the conflict of modern father and son in the typical modern American capitalistic world.

Being concerned with many aspects of the American Dream, Wilhelm, rejected by his own father, throws himself on the mercy of a fatherly figure. If Adler stands by Tommy as a guardian, mentor, and affectionate father, Tommy would not be the victim in the clutch of shrewd person, Tamkin. Bellow skillfully portrays Tamkin having "bald skull", "devious eyebrows", "aging skin", "gull's nose", "vain mustache", "conspicuous brown eyes", "stocky, rigid short in neck", "moonless, concave and claw like nails", "brown eyes having hypnotic power" (Bellow, 1996; 62) Bellow's strange descriptions specifies him as a man of prey. He

casts a spell on Wilhelm to intensify his mad pursuit of material success. Wilhelm can comprehend the actual face of Tamkin but still he relies on him to fill up the fatherly need while sympathizing himself.

“At least Tamkin sympathizes with me and tries to give me a hand, whereas Dad doesn’t want to be disturbed” (Bellow, 1996; 11)

Tamkin pretends as if he could conceive the inner anguish of Wilhelm and lacking of his life. He shows love and affection for Wilhelm to make him trustworthy. Since Wilhelm’s way of thinking does not match with his father, Tamkin’s way of thinking style attracts Wilhelm. He tactfully arouses intense and selfish desire inside Wilhelm in contemplation of investing his last means of life. He gradually hypnotizes Wilhelm to convince him for investing money. He says,

“Watch, you’ll get a big kick out of this and wonder why more people don’t go into it. We’ll take out a hundred percent profit” (Bellow, 1996; 61)

In fact, he capitalizes on Wilhelm’s gullible, free and open nature. As a consequence, he gives duplicitous Tamkin “a power of attorney over his last seven hundred dollars to speculate for him in the commodities market” (Bellow, 1996; 41) without knowing him perfectly. He becomes Wilhelm’s mentor. Eventually, Wilhelm turns as a puppet at Tamkin’s hand and he ceases every scope to dupe and exploit Wilhelm. In such a capitalist and competitive society, there is no little place for the ones who have simple heart, and passion. They can easily fall in deceiver’s eyes and lost his last survival of life. He shows false sympathy to him in order to get material success. That’s why, he gives him the last amount of accumulated dollars which Tamkin grabs for his own purpose. Sometimes in a materialistic society, disregarded and financially backward people sacrifices their last amassed money for the purpose of getting a better life which materialism sucks in payment of nothing. Wilhelm is not exception of it and Tamkin can be literally compared to the blood sucker “leech” who sucks the blood of humans. He represents materialism. By giving bribes, he systematically persuades the shrewd manager of brokerage office so that he conceals about any information regarding his plan if Wilhelm queries out of suspicion. Later, he realizes Tamkin’s duplicity when he has nothing left to loose. He comprehends,

“I was the man beneath; Tamkin was on my back

And I thought I was on his.” (Bellow, 1996; 105)

Wilhelm first thinks that Tamkin is actually assisting him to overcome his financial crisis. But it’s a cruel irony and his realization is really horrible. He understands how he become a puppet and abused by Tamkin. But he is not only fraudulent but also mysterious because his speeches reveal both truths and lies. It’s a different kind of strategy to make someone hypnotized by philosophizing some truths. He says,

“You can’t march in a straight line to victory. You fluctuate toward it. From Euclid to Newton, there were straight lines. The modern age analyzes the wavers” (Bellow, 1996; 64)

He philosophizes that success and truth cannot be earned in a strict way and overcoming frustration and failure is part and parcel of it. Success in modern American society requires

different and alternative paths rather than the strict one. Tamkin's realization develops gradually because he is accustomed to living in the society lead by materialism. However, Wilhelm and Tamkin relationship manifests deteriorated humanity in the typical American mercantile world.

Class struggle and Alienation

Adler who is rich, aged and professionally successful possess "considerable amount of fortune" (Bellow, 1996; 11) which makes a class distinction between father and son. Economic conflict produces classes like upper, middle and lower. Wilhelm is alienated from his father because of this class distinction. His father feels shame about Wilhelm's present position. He is so materialistic that he longs for vain glory in order to keep pace with the modern society. With a view to maintain his vain status, he doesn't disclose the real status of Wilhelm. Rather he says, "My son was an alumnus of pen state. He is a sales executive with the Rojax Corporation and his income is up in the five figures somewhere" (Bellow, 1996; 13) Wilhelm here is the mouthpiece of Bellow and becomes wonder at this confession. This is also ironic how people in a modern society like to stay nice in the eyes of the world. Wilhelm's own revelation unfolds father and son class discrimination.

"Neither can you and I be compared because you, Dad, were a success. And a success – is a success. I never made a success" (Bellow, 1996; 50)

Adler's professional success represents his elegant upper class while Wilhelm's failure symbolizes his lower class. Marxism believes capitalism lives on the exploitation of the working class resulting sense of loneliness, the most terrible effects of American materialism. Moreover, when one person of society become money oriented, he does not consider persons who have lower class or position than him. Wilhelm is miserably alienated and alone in a society where people worship money as their God. It's really paradoxical that in the post-world war II situation, humans feel lonely inside the family members. Bellow has used "Hotel Gloriana" as a setting to imply the alienation and degraded human relationship of New York city. Bellow says,

"People crowd the shops and cafeterias, the dime stores, the tea rooms, the bakeries, the beauty parlors, the reading rooms and club rooms and old people at Gloriana but Wilhelm felt out of place". (Bellow, 1996; 4)

In the hotel, people's manner and way of living is closely attached with the capitalist society. Lots of people of different professions like "the clerks", "the elevator operators", "the girls and waitresses", "chambermaids", "retirements persons" "businessman", and "doctors" come, live and go in the hotel but these people seems to base their relationship on money. (Bellow, 1996; 99) Most of the relationships are maintained in superficial level which makes him more alienated. When he talks with his well-known Rubin, they talk by maintaining surface ways to communicate with another. Adler rejects to become involved in his son's miserable alienation. Rather, he condemns him reminding his past failures and present disgrace. So he is isolated from his father though both of them live in the same hotel. Wilhelm's family members are also responsible for his loneliness. More than money, Wilhelm needs emotional support that his father does not give. He says, "Dad, I just can't breathe. My chest is all fill up. I feel choked" (Bellow, 1996; 109) Wilhelm finds no support from his wife Margaret and other people from society like Mr. Pearls, Mr Rappaport, and Maurice Venice. Though he is separated from his wife, he yearns for marrying his girlfriend, Olive so that he can get rid of her cruel wife. But

Margaret does not grant him divorce and keeps on tormenting and victimizing her by setting “new and more difficult conditions” (Bellow, 1996; 29). From the very beginning, both they have a sweet romantic relationship. But later Margaret’s psychology changes since she gradually becomes egocentric, malicious, unkind and money grubbing. She starts demanding more and more money from his husband but he fails to provide. William appreciated when she intended to have one more degree from college, thinking a better future for her. But still there is no end of his demand. Now, she wants another degree PhD with a view to earn more money. She is totally opposite of her husband and even Wilhelm changes his personality to save their relationship. But she is not willing to compromise rather keeps on ruining her husband both mentally and economically. Wilhelm feels strangled, suffocated and slave in her torments. On the contrary, Olive is also insisting her to leave his wife. Here, the husband wife relationship indicates the degradation of conjugal life in the contemporary American capitalistic world. Margaret’s deep proclivity for wealth devours their healthy relation. Moreover, he becomes ruined when Tamkin passes out of sight with his money. He falls in the ocean of despair and loneliness. Out of agony and torments given by Tamkin and Margaret, he replies,

“They ride on me with hoofs and claws. Tear me to pieces, stamp on me and break my bones” (Bellow, 1996; 105)

When Wilhelm had a job in Roxbury, he used to provide “everything-goods, furniture, and savings” to her wife and children. But at the present situation his wife does not acknowledge his past contribution. Rather she is raising her children against their father and does not let her children feel how much sympathetic their father is to them. Bellow has used animalistic reference in this novel such as “bear”, “ass”, and “wolf”. Wilhelm is referred to as “lone wolf”. It may serve to interpret the conflict between Wilhelm’s inner authentic emotions and mechanical worldly life. Furthermore, lone wolf symbolizes loneliness since it leads a solitary life, excluding from their pack. So Wilhelm’s extrication happens from the mechanical society because of his failures in case of worldly success. His alienation is the result of American materialism. His isolation conveys the isolation of every failure man in the culture oriented society that believes in capitalism

At the end of this paper, it is apprehended that other characters such as Dr. Adler, Margaret, Dr. Tamkin, An old men, Mr. Rappaport, and Mr. Perls remains the same materialistic. The following diagram deals with the characters according to their materialistic tendency. On the contrary, Wilhelm is less materialistic than any other characters of the novel as his heart not only aspires for success and money but also for spiritual connection with humanity. It is evident that he feels fervent love when his eyes are filled with “happy oblivion of tears” for the unfamiliar dead stranger at the funeral in Times Square. Here “happy oblivion of tears” symbolizes his spiritual revival of dead soul from modern mechanized capitalistic world. At that moment, he loses his burden of disillusionment, depression, and isolation. He refuses to accept the mechanical and money-grubbing world rather accepts platonic relationships with human community.

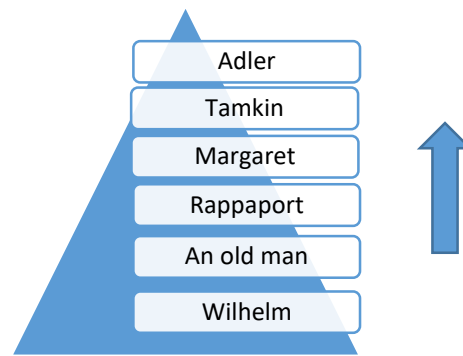


Figure: Sketch of money oriented characters chronologically

CONCLUSION

In the light of above discussion, it can be surely understood that Marxist subject matter dominates throughout the novel as well as in the thinking process of most of the characters. Obsession of material wealth and professional success affect all the actions of characters. Readers see how an alienated character Tommy suffers from the adverse situation created by capitalism. Capitalistic society creates some sort of psychological trauma which smashes all the desires of him. Despite all circumstances of exploitation, and alienation, Wilhelm keeps on fighting against all the odds of society which make him both a hero and antihero (because of over emotional, indecisive, less-strong, existential crisis). Marxist critics are well aware of the disadvantages of capitalism. That is why, Marxist critics talk about a classless society. That society will be based on the common ownership of the means of manufacture, allocation, and barter.

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