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American Dream with Special Reference to the Great Gatsby

*Mandeep Kaur**

ABSTRACT

In 19th century America, the American dream becomes a prominent issue in society. It is a burning issue of that time and instantly, it takes a place in literature. Many writers tried their hands on these writings. Among these writers, F. Scott. Fitzgerald is one of those whose work gained popularity from this perspective. It is an indispensable element of American identity. American literature becomes famous due to national and international literary movements which play a significant role in expanding different forms of literature. The movements such as transcendentalists, puritanism, expressionism, etc. Among these, the American dream is one that paved the way for a new generation. This concept includes the development of technology, science, etc. In general, it is a dream of a land in which their life become better and they have equal opportunities. In this paper, this work would be analyzed from the American dream perspective like how people from poor families if they do hard work, can get this dream. The protagonist of this work shows this perspective clearly.

Keywords: *American dream; Liberty; Economy; Colonialism; Experience; Economy.*

1.0 Introduction

The concept of the American Dream is related to American success, how people who belong to poor families have a dream to reach the peak of success with their hard work in a new land. The term American Dream was coined by James Truslow Adams in 1931 and he explains it in his book *The Epic of America*.

The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone with the opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. (it's not) a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. (Adams 21).

He says that the American dream is not only related to luxurious things and life, it is about capability, people will get what they deserve. Birth or prior position does not matter in which society they are born or belong to which caste or race etc. *The Great Gatsby* is the finest example of the American dream in which the protagonist belongs to

a poor family but he gets a deserved place in society. In America, it is quite often that people get the American dream with a struggle but Gatsby gets it very quickly. He wants to win Daisy's love for this he becomes the richer man of his time but his dream is not true. Gatsby is a symbol of the false American Dream which is visible throughout the novel. Nick has a different opinion about Gatsby who is the wealthiest person. He says, "Only Gatsby is the man who gives, his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction- Gatsby, who represented everything... if personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life (Fitzgerald 12).

As it is quite visible, he has no friends whether he throws parties and lot of people enjoyed but he has no desire to make friends. His dream to win the love of Daisy is remained unfulfilled. He tried many times but was not able to achieve this goal. He lived in a materialistic society, despite all the wealth he felt isolated every time. At the time of his death, there is no one for his cremation and this scene is described by a Dutch sailor who says:

"Most of the big shore places were closed now and there were hardly any lights except the shadowy,

moving glow of a ferryboat across the sound a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment" (Fitzgerald 200).

Nick is a narrator of the novel who plays a significant role in the success of this novel. He belongs to a rich family as compared to other characters and enjoys his life. Fitzgerald creates his character as a guide and pathfinder which is perfectly related to this new world. Moreover, he belongs to the American Dream which is described by his father at the beginning of the novel. His father advised him "whenever you feel like criticizing anyone" he told me, "Just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had" (Fitzgerald 11). Apart from Nick, Jordan Baker lover of Nick clarifies many things regarding Gatsby, who knows Gatsby and Daisy. She knows about their past and gives an idea about Gatsby's parties, his lavishing lifestyle. She had a wish to become like Buchanan's family who has a great life.

2.0 Review of Literature

The American Dream: A Short History of An Idea That Shaped a Nation (2003) by Jim Cullen in which he talks about a dream country, how it would be. He explains that it belongs to the fulfillment of desires and each person has a right to live life as they want. Further, he explains about puritans why people don't like them and says if anyone does hard work, definitely they reached their goals and gives examples of a good life, how we can survive it in the best way.

Behold, America: The Entangled History Of "America First" and "The American Dream (2018) by Sarah Churchwell, a prominent critic of American literature who works on the American dream when Donald Trump in 2015 declared "THE AMERICAN DREAM IS DEAD." She works on these two terms and explores politics. She says once these two were opposing visions for America, dream related to economic equality and democratic vision whereas America was first closely associated with authoritarianism and white supremacy.

Chasing the American Dream: understanding what shapes our fortunes (2014) by Mark Robert and Thomas Hirsch is divided into three parts. In the first

part, he interviewed some people who gave different views about American Dream like players and doctors. In the second part, he explores the economic realities of the dream based on income and earnings. Moreover, in the last part, he shows the realities of this dream and collects data about people's goals which they want to achieve on the land of happiness.

The American Dream: Stories from the heart of our nation (2002) by Dan Rather is a book about those people who struggle to achieve their goals and ambitions. America is a place where hard work, dedication, and vision transform dreams into reality. He gives stories of some persons who belong to this dream and shows how this dream gets together many persons those work for fame and to be successful.

The Great Gatsby and the American Dream (2007) by Sandra Kochan is a document on this subject in which she says America becomes the most powerful country after World War 2 and the American dream related to success and wealth but not limited here. She says this novel exists in a time of corruption and the characters of this novel explore this concept easily.

3.0 American Dream in the Other Characters in the Great Gatsby

Apart from Gatsby his lover Daisy belongs to this dream but she is antagonist as her husband. They both have money by their ancestors; therefore, they are not directly belonging to this. They are living luxurious life but not happy with each other because Daisy in the core of her heart loves Gatsby. Tom has a negative attitude; he always fights with Daisy by no reasons and show her a back place. He has an affair with Myrtle and she is running behind her wealth. She wants to win her love for the sake of money because her husband has an only shop in the valley of ashes. Tom and Nick go to valley of ashes where Tom wants to meet his lover. He describes "This is a valley of ashes – a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke, and finally ...through the powdery air" (Fitzgerald 34). It shows the real picture of dark side of America, how people living in poverty, and shows differences between west and east egg. People has a hope to live better life in the future. George and Martyle represents working classes of that time and at some point, it shows the failure of American dream.

4.0 Conclusion

Therefore, American dream is a desire people wants to achieve this, and do struggle and achieves it. But it is not equal everywhere, not all people get chance to live lavishing life. In this novel, dark side of the American dream is visible, how people are not getting equal opportunities and live poor life in the America also. Gatsby also related to false dream; he has a lot of money but not a happiness in his life. In this world, people have a lot of dreams but not able to achieve for different reasons.

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