

Rethinking the American Dream: A Postmodernist Reading of Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

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Abstract:

The American society is the cradle of self-fulfillment and success. One of its main ideologies is the American Dream which carries an everlasting equivocal meaning. Owing to its successful results, many people from various directions of the world migrate to the United States of America in search for freedom, better life and job opportunities. Since its origin, the American society has been a land of opportunity and a referential society that appeals many migrants from the universe. In fact, the American Dream is an ideology according to which, no matter who you are, regardless of your origin, your social class, your race, your family background, you can succeed if you work hard. However, some individuals are struggling day and night with the hardworking devotion, they still fail to achieve the American Dream. With the same hard work, some people succeed whereas others fail to achieve their goals of success. This contradictory remark brings this study into critical and deep worries about whether hard work is actually sufficient to achieve the American Dream. To successfully carry out this research work, the postmodernist critical approach will be used to scrutinize the corpus under study. Through this critical theory, this article intends to show what impedes some people from fulfilling themselves and suggests a new understanding of the American Dream.

Keywords: American Dream; material wealth; failure; identity.

Résumé :

La société américaine est le berceau de l'épanouissement personnel et de la réussite. L'une de ses principales idéologies est le rêve américain, porteur d'une signification éternellement ambiguë. En raison de ses succès, de nombreuses personnes venues du monde entier migrent vers les États-Unis en quête de liberté, d'une vie meilleure et d'opportunités professionnelles. Depuis son origine, la société américaine est une terre d'opportunités et de référence qui attire de nombreux migrants du monde entier. En réalité, le rêve américain est une idéologie selon laquelle, quelle que soit votre identité, vos origines, votre classe sociale, votre origine ethnique ou votre milieu familial, vous pouvez réussir en travaillant dur. Cependant, certains individus luttent nuit et jour avec un dévouement acharné sans parvenir à réaliser le rêve américain. Malgré le même effort, certains réussissent, tandis que d'autres échouent. Cette remarque contradictoire soulève une profonde interrogation quant à la capacité du travail acharné à réaliser le rêve américain. Pour mener à fond cette recherche, une approche critique postmoderniste sera utilisée pour explorer le corpus étudié. A travers cette théorie critique, cet article montre ce qui empêche certaines personnes de s'épanouir et propose une nouvelle compréhension du rêve américain.

Mots-clés : Rêve américain ; richesse matérielle ; échec ; identité.

Introduction

Human progress is achieved through daily and successive efforts. The American society has been the role model for other societies from all over the world. Every human being, especially African young people dream of going to the United States of America to get better life conditions and succeed in their life. According to the national philosophy of the United States of America, hard work is what is expected from human beings in order to attain survival and self-

fulfillment. Most of the people are aware that hard work is a fuel that engines life essence and human existence in this world. However, it is often noticed that some people perfectly shine and progress naturally whereas others hardly find their daily bread, though they work hard. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the American Dream as "the ideal that every citizen of the United States should have an equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, determination, and initiative."¹ It means that one has to work hard before changing their living conditions and enjoying freedom.

Each individual has a life plan and personal objectives together with adequate actions to achieve. The same target that someone is struggling to attain, the other person will fail to achieve it with the same hardworking endeavors. From this angle, one wonders if luck does not matter sometimes for one's fulfillment. If some people fail to succeed whereas others do, it means that luck may be sometimes in favor of some and in disfavor of others. Nevertheless, some individuals get material wealth, but they fail to be happy and die without enjoying the fruits of their efforts. Then, are material wealth and hard work sufficient enough to achieve the American Dream? One can say that it is the capitalist and aristocratic system, which hinder the American Dream's achievement. Besides, the fact of venturing into corruption is a deviation from the actual expectation or principles of the American Dream. These corruptive strategies are what impede some people from fulfilling themselves. Additionally, excessive accumulation does not necessarily lead to the

¹ *A Brief History of the American Dream*. Retrieved from www.bushcenter.org on 13-1-2025 at 1pm.

achievement of the American Dream. Visibly, if most people fail to fulfill the American Dream, it is because of their unluckiness. The fulfillment of the American Dream with the non-respect of social norms is impossible, because one always has to respect the social principles of their society so that this can make easier their success and earning life.

Theories are very important in the generation of a literary meaning,

because our reactions to any text have theoretical bases, all readers must have a literary theory. The methods we use to frame our personal interpretations of any text directly involve us in the process of literary criticism and theory, automatically making us practicing literary critics. (C. E. Bressler, 2011, p.17).

Actually, readers of literary productions get meaning or make interpretation from theoretical lenses. Accordingly, the postmodernist critical theory is suitable to this study in order to carry out the analysis of *The Great Gatsby*. In fact, postmodernist theory focuses on the pluralistic meanings. For postmodernists, meaning is neither universal nor focused, but it is rather interpreted through various perspectives and angles of view. In this regard, J. F. Lyotard (1984, p. XXV) points it that: "postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it redefines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert's homology, but the inventor's paralogy." It means that these postmodernists adhere to the variety and the relativity of

truth. Furthermore, the essence of life is the theorists' constant and dynamic progress. Therefore, truth and interpretation undergo some mutations of life, which change over time, and constantly vary. In the same line of thought, J. Darryl (1998, p. 95) makes it clear that "The postmodernist movement can only be described as a diverse collection of followers who are neither united in intent, similar in focus or method, nor canonized in terms of theoretical precision." From this perspective, the postmodernist theory will be used here to show that the American Dream is not solely based on hard work. Besides, this theory will be applied to this study, because there is neither the universal meaning nor the static understanding of the American Dream.

To come out with reliable results, we will collect data from the primary source that is Francis Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and the secondary source which consists of dictionaries, critical books, online resources and articles.

In the light of the postmodernist theory, this article intends to explain the reasons why most people fail to achieve the American Dream and show if material wealth systematically equals self-fulfillment. This study is structured into three main parts, namely, the origin and the early perception of the American Dream; the problem of identity and the redefinition of the American Dream.

1. The Origin and the Early Perception of the American Dream

Since the birth of the American Dream, its fruits have been flowing like water throughout the spring in the American

society and these fruits are the main reasons that always push people to migrate to the American territory. This article will lay more emphasis on the required conditions to achieve the American Dream and demonstrate why material wealth does not necessary equal American Dream and happiness.

1.1 The Required Principles of the American Dream's Achievement

The main and necessary quality that prompts to the American Dream's achievement is hard work. That is to say, anyone on the American soil can succeed in changing their social conditions if only they actually work hard. Any activity, which is in contrast to hard work leads to the downfall of the dreamers. Naturally, when one works hard, they succeed in changing their life conditions and grant a new social rank. All the efforts are also conditioned by the daily intention with the hope of achieving the desired goal. But one cannot get engaged into a work by violating the social norms of their society. More precisely, the narrator in *The Great Gatsby* maintains that "nothing is gained without hard battles."² In this statement, "hard battles" confirms the required attitude for the fulfillment of the American Dream in an ethical way, which is hard work.

In addition, anyone who is endowed with determination and hard work while abiding by the different principles and the required law can achieve the American

²Francis Scott Fitzgerald. *The Great Gatsby*. New Delhi: Prakash Books India Pvt. Ltd. Reprint 2022, 1925, p. 187. All subsequent references to this book will be parenthetically marked TGG followed by the page number and put in the main text.

Dream without failure. The reward of efforts with the legal activities brings about success and the achievement of our goal. For example, Abraham Lincoln's dream of a united nation whereas Martin Luther King's dream for racial equality. Therefore, both scholars center on the American Dream but with different visions. Martin Luther King's famous speech *I have a Dream* (1963) states, "I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. ... I have a dream that one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers." Moreover, Thomas Jefferson's draft of *The Declaration of the Independence* (1774) states that "We hold these Truths to be self-evident that all Men are created equal." Thus, Jefferson's confirmation of equality and Martin Luther King's advocating of togetherness incorporate the American Dream as M. Jayachandra. (2016, p. 35) makes it clear that "The American Dream is ingrained in the Declaration of Independence."

1.2 Consumerism versus the American Dream

Many scholars are passionately interested in the discussion of the American Dream and are achievement-oriented. For example, James Truslow Adams (1931, p.11) explores this concept of the American Dream in his *The Epic of America*. Owing to its failure, people consider this Dream as a myth. In addition, Adams maintains his point regarding the American Dream as follows:

That dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man. It is

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 in which they are innately capable, and be recognized by the others for what they are regardless for the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.

According to James Truslow Adams, the material wealth does not equal the American Dream and people who overvalue material possession are far from the fulfillment of the American Dream. Adams corroborates that the American Dream "is not a dream of cars and high wages merely" (Ibid.). "Cars and "high wages" refer to material wealth and Adams does not define the American Dream in the light of materialism. Thus, "Adams concluded that America had lost its way by prizing material success above all other values. Indeed, it had started to treat money as a value, instead of merely as a means to produce or measure value"³. Jay Gatsby makes of material wealth his dream since he "had traded on his phantom millions" (*TGG*, p.153). The American Dream for Jay Gatsby refers to the struggle to get materially equipped; hence M. Martynuska confirms that: "*The American Dream* was based purely on materialistic things" (2008, p.181). To sum up, any dream is not the American Dream and the American Dream cannot be limited to material possession.

James Truslow Adams (1931, p.30) speculates in the following lines "The opportunities of the new world were

³A Brief History of the American Dream. Retrieved from www.bushcenter.org on 13-1-2025 at 1 pm.

painted in glowing colors, and economic scales in England began to look toward it as a land of hope." From this abstract, the American society is, according to Adams, a golden house that receives all individuals who are suffering from poverty all over the world. In addition, the United States of America is a solving problem cradle for all vulnerable individuals from anywhere. This land attracts more and more folks who aim at changing their life conditions and contribute to the evolution of their societies. Thus, the narrator presents Jay Gatsby who "had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night. (TGG, p.184). From this extract, it is clear that Jay Gatsby, having a strong desire to fulfill himself, unfortunately finds himself in a utopic idea. In fact, the life conditions in the American society prevent him from attaining his target. Mostly, individuals get satisfied with their dream only in their mind. However, when they want to make it true, it becomes hard for them. Likewise, other individuals with the same purpose hardly attain their objective of achieving life success. In this regard, "the American Dream is becoming a mirage for most people." (2015, p.7). Nevertheless, some people succeeded in achieving the American Dream and this is the example of Abraham Lincoln's dream of a United Nation and Martin Luther King's dream of racial equality which are quite different from Gatsby's dream. Therefore, this corroborates that what Jay Gatsby thinks of the American Dream differs from the actual meaning of the American

Dream especially in the American society. In this perspective, the narrator evidences that "Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter - tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther and one fine morning---"(TGG, p.184). The green light, in this case, refers to the strong hope of Jay Gatsby throughout his endeavors for the achievement of the American Dream. This hope constitutes his power that motivates Jay Gatsby to come out with the result of his burned and firmed desires of the fulfillment of the American Dream. In a nutshell, Fitzgerald calls for the engagement of everyone to venture into the legal activities in the fulfillment of their desires and dreams. He draws other American citizens to consider all that leads Gatsby to failure and learn from his misbehavior in order to fulfill their dreams. Therefore, all that is done illegally will never reach to success whatever the struggles implicated in these fights.

2. The Problem of Identity

Identity is all about the moral and physical characteristics of an individual. It is what distinguishes an individual from others or their society in general. For instance, one's identity is defined in the light of the attitude and the behavior of their surrounding in general. Therefore, identity is the particular aspects of a person and all that they have as unique. In this case, it refers to uniqueness. In this section, great attention will be paid on the issue of identity and how some characters deny their identity in favor of the achievement of the American Dream.

2.1 The Aristocratic System and the Capitalist System Failing the American Dream

I'll tell you God's truth. His right hand suddenly ordered divine retribution to stand by. I am the son of some wealthy people in the middle - West all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford, because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It is a family tradition. (*TGG*, p.73).

From this extract, Jay Gatsby is introducing himself by taking his parents as wealthy people. However, this statement is quite false. His audience will take him for a wealthy person because he gives them his fake identity. For instance, throughout the story, Gatsby changes his family background by telling lies that his family is dead, and by changing his name from "James Gatz" to "Jay Gatsby." The main reason of Jay Gatsby's denial of his identity is to keep space with his society's expectation, which will allow him to achieve the American Dream. His dream is to conquer Daisy's heart who is from the aristocratic social class. Jay Gatsby tells lies about his actual personality so that he could bring people to take him for a person who belongs to a significant high social rank. This belief of Jay's society will constitute a green light for him to get engaged with Daisy Buchanan, his devoted hankering. In so doing, he aims at entering in the upper class. The social status of Daisy is described as follow: "The largest of the banners and the largest of the lawns belonged to Daisy Fay's house. She was just eighteen, two years older than me, and by far the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville." (*TGG*, p.82). This shows the social

class of Daisy and her youth in Louisville. In addition, J.T Adams affirms (1931, p.30), "the opportunities of the new world were painted in glowing colors, and economic scales in England began to look toward it as a land of hope." He (J T Adams, 1931, p.31) goes on to add: "In the mind of those who took part in the great migration, was the hope of better life, a life in which a man might think as he would develop as he willed." The aforementioned statement of Adams is the main reasons that explain the migration of people from different corners of the world to the United States of America. In addition, the Great Migration pushed some people to have a firm hope that elsewhere is better. In fact, the Great Migration in the American context brought desperation, which justifies the impossibility and the doubt of the American Dream, because some people were thinking that American land is full of many job opportunities, which will constitute a relief to their sufferance. Unfortunately, they fail to find what they were expecting as good life conditions. Therefore, this disappointment decreases their hope and consequently put them in a great doubt concerning the American Dream's fulfillment. Unlike, the Great Migration, some people from all the corners of the world much rely on the freedom and other opportunities, which fuel their desire to move in the American society so as to improve their life conditions.

The failure of Jay's dream is due to the fact that he denies his past, which is the pillar of one's identity. This is clearly seen in the following statement: "A person's identity is not defined through his economic or material achievements but rather through his past." (J. T. Adams, 1931, p.52). Admitting the above statement is like

encouraging and motivating people to be stick to their past life condition. One has to improve their standard of living through hard work in order to acquire success as the American Dream requests. One's identity must rather be based on their current life situation instead of focusing on the past. Therefore, the past has gone, it has nothing to do with the present, we must go ahead without turning back.

2.2 The Corruptive American Dream

The consumer era of the 1920s in the American society has influenced the achievement of the American Dream. People make of the excessive accumulation of material items a scope of their desires and the definition of the American Dream. The narrator in Fitzgerald's masterpiece corroborates:

He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them, one by one, before us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel which lost their folds as they fell and covered the table in many colored disarray. Suddenly, with a strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily. "They're such beautiful shirts," she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. "It makes me sad because I've never seen such - such beautiful shirts before. (TGG, p.100).

The aforementioned extract shows that the cries of Daisy are due to the materials. One wonders how the mere shirts can make her cry? During the Jazz Age or the Roaring

Twenties, materialism was in vogue. This is quite visible in Daisy's amazing cry. Even the new shirts appeal her. From this angle, Daisy has a materialistic mind. It is clear that she is more interested by Gatsby's shirts than his actual personality and character.

Jay Gatsby, being aware of this consumer era, tries to gather his new clothes so as to impress Daisy. In addition, Gatsby is a very complex man who flies in his Dream with his target of impressing his surroundings. This is clear in *The Great Gatsby* through the narrator's words: "He organizes big parties, not any party, as Jordan Baker confirms, "anyhow, he gives large parties." (TGG, p.59). Every Saturday, he throws parties with the intension of conquering Daisy's heart. She continues in the following terms, "I adore it," exclaimed Daisy. "The pompadour! You never told me you had a pompadour- or a yacht." (TGG, p.101). We see clearly that people are more interested in material possessions than anything else. Jay Gatsby is so happy when Daisy appreciates him, because he aims at flattering her with his shirts. Thus, Daisy is the main American Dream Jay Gatsby is endeavoring to conquer. Daisy is his desired heart, his formal lover.

The fact that people get engaged into consumerism leads to the non-respect and violation of moral values, which are the soul of the fulfillment of the American Dream. In other way round, when people get equipped with an excessive material possession, they despise those who do not have excessive means. It is because for them, a powerful person is the one in possession of material wealth. Else, human dignity and values are not defined in the light of materials, but rather in one's good relationships and attitudes with

their surroundings. Material wealth is perishable whereas human values are forever unperishable.

Most people are in the way of achieving the American Dream without minding the moral values of the American society and the individuals. They never mind whatever the work they do to achieve the American Dream provided it brings about material wealth. Even though it is through a corruptive way, they will venture. However, this attitude is quite different from the actual requirements of the American Dream, which is to work hard in conformity with the respect of social norms and legal activities. In this regard, this case is portrayed in the narrator's words "If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away." (TGG, p.14). From this extract, Jay Gatsby is victim of the result of life behavior, which was quite different from his expectation. In this case, it is obvious that life plays with Gatsby's desire and his successful gestures to obtain the fruits of his daily endeavors. Gatsby's personality epitomizes the remaining of the American individuals who expect life to give them faithfully their expectations and achieve their Dream. However, Jay Gatsby, as anyone in the American society, would like to define the American Dream in the light of their power. In another way round, those who are struggling to achieve the American Dream, necessarily want it as if they were the ones to manufacture the result. In this case, it is clear that throughout his life, Jay Gatsby hopes that his material success will result in his devoted desire, which is to

conquer Daisy's heart. Nonetheless, some individuals are very selfish in such a way that they look down the moral and cultural aspects of their society to the detriment of their own interest.

Jay Gatsby in the story is armed with self-reliance and determination in order to break the traditional aristocratic regulations. He is therefore like an intrusion to the upper class though he is not allowed to be part of it. To attain his Dream of gaining Daisy's Heart, he takes the risk to deny his identity, parents and even become a bootlegger. This is obvious in Gatsby's following words, "That's my affair," before he realized it wasn't the appropriate reply. "Oh, I've been in several things, he corrected himself. "I was in the drug business and then I was in the oil business. But I'm not in either one now." (TGG, p.98). In the same vein of pursuing material success, Jay Gatsby tells Nick Carraway: "I want you and Daisy to come over to my house," he said, "I'd like to show her around." He continues: "My house looks well, doesn't it? He demanded. See how the whole front of it catches the light." (TGG, p.97). He is a rebellion to the aristocratic society's norms. Jay Gatsby fails to get self-fulfilled. Gatsby in the story is pursuing his goal by violating the American principles. For example, during the 1920s in the American society, the sale of the alcohol was forbidden. However, Gatsby ventures in this sale of drug in order to become wealthy. With this attitude, his dream unfortunately becomes unreachable. From this perspective, M. Martynuska (2008, p.181) confirms that "*The Great Gatsby* is a misconception of the American Dream."

This action represents a disobedience to the American social norms. For Jay Gatsby, his wealth will make

easier his marriage with Daisy Buchanan. It is in this perspective that some scholars clearly maintain that "jazz became to get a reputation as being immoral, and many members of the older generations saw it as threatening the old cultural values and promoting the new decadent values of the Roaring twenties."⁴ In this regard, the American Dream's principles and norms differ from Jay Gatsby's strategies to achieve it. Therefore, Gatsby's action quite explains his failure in his achievement of the American Dream. As M. Djagri Temoukale (2016, p.25) puts it, "The definition of greatness and happiness is money - orientated." It means that one's value is based on the material gains and this is what pushed Jay Gatsby during the Jazz Age to venture into corruption in order to achieve the American Dream and keep space with the era. In the same vein, Brandon King (2012, p.573) states: "The real sign of success in our society used to be owing expensive items, namely cars and homes, and acquiring more material wealth." People put much importance on the material possessions to value individuals and ignore their human attitudes and other vices. Citing Lena, L. Linberg (2014, p.8) states: "money earned without labor was an invitation to corruption." Therefore, any wealth earned without any work is an illegal activity. Hence, the seed of corruptive desire comes into being. It is also true that "Material accumulation over time will not necessarily lead to an increased level of happiness." (Ibid., p.11). In the same sense, Schwatz argues that "wealth fills our bellies, but leaves us spiritually hungry." (Ibid.) From this extract, it is clear that Gatsby gets more interested in

⁴ Retrieved from <https://phdessay.com/comparison-between-1920s-and-1930s> accessed on 19/12/2023 at 5:56 pm.

material wealth than spiritual life. For him, wealth has control on human life, and money also governs the world. However, apart from money, we need other elements to spend a happy life and achieve our Dream.

3. Redefinition of the American Dream

This section intends to show how the American Dream can be defined through various angles of view rather than reducing it to hard work. It will also show how the American Dream is defined through a postmodernist view in our contemporary life and how people are involved in the achievement of that Dream in our daily lives without their awareness.

3.1 A Post-modernist View of the American Dream

The American Dream which has been perceived for so long a time as working hard before changing one's living conditions, is then differently achieved nowadays. Postmodernists argue that it is impossible to understand the world and knowledge, and facts are always relative to particular situations. Some postmodernist thinkers are Jacques Derrida and Jean Francois Lyotard. Postmodernist writers advocate the pluralistic, multiple or various meanings of life. For them, there is no universal truth; that is the reason why the American Dream cannot be reduced in its definition to hard work. From this angle, the fulfillment of the American Dream depends much on many other factors such as luck, the respect of human values and social norms. People may work hard, but in case they fail to abide by their social norms, they may easily fail to achieve the American Dream.

Likewise, an individual without luck and grace on their life, no matter how hard they work, they will always have the same life predicament without any positive change. This is quite seen through the example of Jay Gatsby who has been working hard but only venturing in selling the forbidden alcohol and in committing adultery by dating Daisy who is already married with Tom Buchanan. From this angle, it is obvious that Jay Gatsby's violation of social norms is all that prevents him from achieving freely the American Dream. In this regard, Martynuska (2008, p.183) speculates:

The concept of the American Dream seems to have dwindled from its position in the past few generations. It has veered away from success, freedom, having lots of money and the nicest possessions. It is no longer just about money. The new American Dream is to maintain a reasonable living standard while doing work that people enjoy. Besides, it is no longer the American Dream but your own dream and your own thoughts based on your standard of living.

3.2 Exploring Moral Implications in The Great Gatsby through the Postmodernist View

The narrator at the beginning of the story in *TGG*, says: "My father gave me some pieces of advice that have been turning over into my mind ever since. 'Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone, he says, just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had.'" (*TGG*, p.13). This advice calls for the narrator's awareness on human values. Contrary to the life of some

aristocrats who despise the people from their fellow human beings. For instance, Tom Buchanan calls Jay Gatsby as follows: "Mr Nobody from Nowhere" (TGG, p135). The narrator gainsays that one must not criticize others without any foundation, or manners. The American society has been for so long considered as a land of opportunity and solution to poverty and vulnerable beings. Many people are still migrating to the American country and other societies for self-fulfillment and the quest of better living conditions. Unlike the American society, anyone who disobeys to the rules of their society will face difficulties before they succeed. Ethics and morality and the respect of human values are very important in matter of one's self-achievement. To underpin the aforementioned passage, Bennett (2017, p.1) corroborates that "ethics is sometimes seen as directed to the true moral laws or rational precepts of conduct, and sometimes as an inquiry into the ultimate end of reasonable human action." This quotation clearly condemns Jay Gatsby who fulfills the American Dream through an unethical way. Therefore, all individuals should abide by their social restrictions for the successful achievement and for their own welfare. In addition, power holders in any society especially in the American society have to see to it that vulnerable and weak people enjoy the privileges of their society and the fruits of their endeavors. In the same vein, "Barack Obama, in a highly acclaimed speech on race and opportunity delivered during his presidential campaign argues "For the importance often ensuring the continued existence of the American Dream for all despite differences in race, class, and education." (G. Graff et al., 2012, p.563). According to Barack Obama, the

fulfillment of the American Dream does take into account social differences that individuals create among themselves. So, all individuals should internalize such principles for the welfare of the young generation and the American society. To achieve this target, "The US needs to develop a full employment economy that provides jobs for all who want to work at pay that enables the workers and their families to enjoy the decent standard of living" (ibid., p.565). The aforementioned quotations bear a social sensitization and advocate the action of government so as to enable young men and vulnerable individuals to achieve the American Dream.

Conclusion

The American Dream has been the focus of most American writers. This theme is so ambiguous that every writer brings something particular. This work discussed the equivocation of the American Dream. It has come out with facts that the American Dream is not only reduced to hard work or the material wealth as the postmodernist critical theory puts it clear that truth is not universal. Going in the same sense, it is obvious that the American Dream cannot always be defined in the light of hard work. The article also revealed that an individual will hardly achieve the American Dream if they fail to live in good harmony with their society; for instance, violating the social norms and laws. This work also revealed that apart from hard work, there are also some innate qualities and values among which luck, that will surely prompt the fulfillment of the American Dream. It has also raised the capitalist system and the American aristocracy, which by one way or the other are responsible for the failure

of the American Dream. The government must see to it that employers and workers are well-treated to allow them climb the social ladder. In addition, leaders and decision-makers should do their best to balance the social economy in favor of vulnerable beings so as to build a strong and peaceful society. A reconsideration of human value must be taken into account. Through *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald calls for people's attention to avoid the behavior of Jay Gatsby in order to fulfill themselves in relation to the harmony of their societies. Individuals must define a human being in the light of their human values rather than material wealth. The material items are not available forever; however, human values are forever within them. We have to stop giving importance to material wealth as the sole basis of happiness. Human behavior and attitude are more precious than material items. Therefore, the American Dream is not necessarily limited to the material wealth, because one can be materially well settled, but still be in the pursuit of the American Dream.

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