

Tribhuvan University

Failure of American Materialistic Culture in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*

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Letter of recommendation

Renu Mukhiya has completed thesis entitled "Failure of American Materialistic Culture" in the movie *Psycho* under my supervision. She carried out this thesis from March, 2015 to February 2016. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

Sharma

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Abstract

This research is based on *Psycho*, a movie directed and produced by the American director Alfred Hitchcock. The work has explored how Hitchcock has represented the concept of the failure of the American materialistic culture in his movie. In this movie Hitchcock uses thrill and suspense to project the reality of American dream and the consequences of failure of the American dream. Hitchcock's combination of the story, character, music and sound, cinematography and many other symbols of the movie represent the failure of American dream. Materiality and one's own happiness is given importance in the movie. America in one hand is getting material success but on the other it is losing its moral and traditional values. The main mottoes of the American dream suggested by Thomas Jefferson are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Americans believe in material gain which they are getting but at the same time they are running away from their social life, responsibility and morality. Murder, voyeurism, illicit relationship, victimization and crime are the result of running behind the material prosperity keeping all the moral values and responsibility aside. The act of stealing money and the murder of the main character, Marion in the movie before reaching her destination corresponds to the degradation of the American social life; lose of emotional, sentimental and moral value and the failure of the American dream behind which American people are really crazy.

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I. American Psycho and Materialism

This research explores the theme of failure of American dream in the movie “*Psycho*”, produced and directed by Alfred Hitchcock. American dream in brief is a dream of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. It is the dream of material prosperity, focuses on the economic progress and physical satisfaction. It is a belief that material possessions improve one's personal and social well being. It explores the theme of failure of the materialistic culture inherent in the world of America. It explores not only the failure of the dream but also the consequences of the failure American dream through the characters like Marion, Norman Bates, Mrs. Bates, Tom Cassidy etc.

The basic purpose of the study is to show the failure of American dream or American materialistic culture. It portrays how the people are moving towards materialism forgetting all the old tradition and culture. This movie tries to show the dark side of the American materialistic culture. The illicit relationship between Sam and Marion, Marion’s act of fleeing away with the stolen money, Bates’ killing customers like Marion Crane due to the lack of mother’s love manifest the underbelly of the materialistic American culture.

Psycho, the movie was released in 1960 tells the story of Marion Crane, Phoenix Secretary who commits the crime of stealing money and flees towards California. She represents those people who run behind the material prosperity. Another character Norman Bates, the owner of the Bates Motel is a patient of schizophrenia murder Marion due to his mental imbalance which represents the consequences of failure of American dream. Tom Cassidy is very proud of his wealth and talks about his money only. Marion, the protagonist of the movie wants to live a happy and conjugal life with her lover and for that purpose she steals money from one of her employer's clients and run away. Being an earning woman, she is not happy

and satisfied with her life. Finally she is murdered while running away with the stolen money. She fails to live the life that she wished for. She happens to lose her life while running after material prosperity and her personal happiness. Her murder before reaching the destination symbolizes the death or failure of American dream. Marion even after having a heavy amount of money could not achieve her dream which disproves the belief that material possessions improve one's personal and social well being.

American dream is a national ethos of the United States in which freedom includes a promise of possibility and success. American dream defines “Life should be better, richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability, class or circumstances of birth” (7).

The idea of American dream is rooted in Thomas Jefferson’s proclamation that “all men are created equal” and they “endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights” (13). But it fails due to the lack of proper understanding.

All the characters presented in the movie are in the trap of American dream in different ways. Mainly, Marion who is much obsessed with the dream of happy, prosperous and prestigious life and who thought it can be achieved by converting her illicit love relationship into legal relationship, marriage. And to do the same she has to marry Sam but he is not ready for that at the current situation. Sam is also in need of money to settle down his problems. He is already burdened by his father's debt and alimony that he has to pay to his former wife so he does not want more burdens by marrying Marion. Both, Marion and Sam are not happy and satisfied with their lives because they do not have the enough money that they require to settle down their problems. Sam says Marion to wait for couple of years so he that he could pay off his

debt and if his former wife gets married then they could get married. To this Marion reply- "I haven't even been married once yet."

Marion in this dialogue expresses her frustration for not being married till the age of 30. She is still asked to wait for few more years which is unbearable for her. After the lunch hour, at the office her boss, Mr. Lowery and his client, Mr. Cassidy enters with heavy amount of cash. The cash tempted Marion so much she brought it to her residence. She, in a moment of impulse brings it home and flees away with it assuming that the stolen money could fulfill her desire.

We find characters running behind money and personal happiness only keeping aside their moral values and sentimental relationship. Above all Mrs. Bates even forgets her motherhood while finding her personal happiness. Mrs. Bates after the death of her husband instead of taking care of her son finds a lover and starts enjoying her life with him. She in search of her personal happiness neglects her son in his childhood which the son, Norman could not tolerate and poisoned his mother and her lover. This destroyed three lives; Mrs. Bates, her lover and Norman himself. Norman after this incident lost his mental balance which forced him to murder some other people including Marion.

In this movie, there are two main characters Marion and Norman Bates who are trapped in their problems. Marion choosing an illegal way tries to run away from the trap but falls under another while running away towards California with the stolen money she happens to stay at the Bates motel. The owner of the Bates Motel, Norman Bates is a patient of multiple personality disorder. He loses his mental balance after committing matricide. Matricide is not only the crime but a great sin too, so to get rid of the guilt he started living his mother's life too. The mother part of his brain slowly captures his brain and he loses mental balance. He murders Marion out of his mental

imbalance. Marion and Norman both represent the failure of American dream and its consequences. No one in the movie achieves the American dream about which they were crazy.

Both, Marion and Norman are trapped in their private traps. Marion anyhow chooses a way to run out of it though it is illegal. And in the conversation with Norman, she suggests him to find a way for him to be free from his trap. Norman expresses his view and says-

Norman: people never run away from anything. (Changing the subject)

The rain didn't last long, did it? **You know what I think? I think that we're all in our private traps, clamped in them, and none of us can ever get out. We scratch, and claw, but only at the air, only at each other. And for all of it, we never budge an inch.**

Marion: Sometimes, we deliberately step into those traps.

Norman: I was born in mine. I don't mind it anymore.

Marion: Oh but you should. You should mind it.

Norman: Oh I do. (Laughs and Shrug) But I say I don't.

Norman is pessimistic about running out of the trap. He says people cannot get out of the trap that they are in even they try a lot. He says he does not mind being in trap but he does. His statement proves that he wants to run out but he sees no way so he has made the habit of it. He explains Marion why his mother behaves in that manner and how he feels when she talks to him very rudely. Marion hearing the way his mother talked to him says-

Marion: You know, if anyone ever talked to me the way I heard the way she spoke to you....

Norman: (Positioned in front of his stuffed owl) Sometimes, when she talks to me like that, I feel I'd like to go up there curse her and, and leave her forever. Or at least defy her. (He sits back passively like a little boy.) But I know I can't. She is ill.

Norman also feels very bad when his mother speaks rudely and wants to leave her forever cursing her but he again thinks that there no one to take care of her. She would be all alone with her illness. He says after his father's death that mother alone brought him up and now it's his time to take care of her in her illness. Listening to Norman, Marion suggests him to s leave that place run away to find his freedom. She focuses on Norman's freedom and his personal happiness and says-

Marion: why don't you go away?

Norman: To a private island, like you?

Marion: No not like me.

Marion, herself running away from her city Phoenix to Fairvale, California suggests Norman also to run away leaving his duty and responsibilities. But Norman denies the idea and asks as if Marion did. As she ran away from her city by stealing money of her boss so that she could sort out her problems and start a new a happy, prosperous, conjugal and prestigious life with her lover.

Hitchcock's *Psycho* exposes the American dream as the dream, that everyone chases to achieve but no one could achieve it, neither by hard work nor by illegal way. Sam is working hard to pay back all the debts and alimony but he is not able to pay back. Marion is also earning woman but she needs more than she earns so she steals \$40,000 from one of her employer's clients to achieve her dream but she is killed before reaching her destination. Mrs. Bates, a widow and the mother of Norman, also had a dream to live her life happily with her lover after her husband's death but she

could not live her life with her lover as she wished for. Mrs. Bates' life is also ruined in search of her individual happiness keeping aside her duty and responsibility towards her son. The act of stealing, voyeurism, illicit scenes, motel shower, the mansion on the hill and all the criminal acts presented in the movie show the failure of American dream.

This movie is full of scenes and symbols representing the failure of American dream. The movie opens with the aerial view camera sweeping left to right and randomly choose a half open window of a building where camera pauses and peeps inside and we find a semi nude couple. During their conversation we came to know that they are lovers and have come there so that they can hide their relationship from the society. It was taken as an illicit relationship at that time. In this scene Marion is shown in the white bra and slip which suggests even though their relation is illicit but their hearts fair. Marion after the theft is again shown in black bra and black slip signifying her darkness. Norman peeping undressing Marion, motel shower scene, Marion's murder in an unknown place by unknown person, mansion on the hill, criminal acts, preservation of Mrs. Bates dead body, Norman's mental imbalance etc all symbolize the failure of American dream.

Christopher D Morris talks about the way Hitchcock presents the film to the viewers. He explains about the techniques that he has used to deceive the viewers by showing everything in the movie. He argues:

The way in which Alfred Hitchcock's film '*Psycho*' confounds the sense understanding typically attached to seeing reflect the influence of surrealism on his films. The film detaches the signifier from the object it is intended to signify to undermine the viewer's assumption that what they see the viewers understands. Impersonations, shadow and

rapid cut editing are used to heighten the sense that all human visual interpretation has a component of delusion and deception. (48)

Here, Christopher D Morris talks about the surrealistic scenes, impersonations, shadows and rapid cut editing in the movie. While talking about the film's component of delusion and deception he is talking about the American dream which deceived the people from different countries of the world. The movie focusing on the impersonations, shadows and rapid cut editing in the movie focuses on the delusion and deception of the American dream.

This movie projects the dark side of the American dream. Hitchcock has not only focused on the material gain. He has also focused on the other aspects of American dream such as voyeurism, insecurity, lack of privacy, freedom etc. Norman, a mental patient peeps Marion undressing in the motel room through a hole. This scene of the movie suggests lack of privacy and voyeurism. The murder of Marion in a very private place such as bathroom projects the insecurity present in the society.

The dream that attracted millions of people is attractive only from the distance. In reality, it is a hollow dream. American dream is like the preserved dead body of Mrs. Bates, who from distance looks like a living body but when one reaches near finds it lifeless body. In the same way American dream is also attractive from distance but from near it is worthless.

The American dream which promises people of happiness and good life fails but in reality it proves just reverse. People who run behind the material prosperity and individual happiness have not achieved it in any way. American dream seems to be harmless but it is not true at all. It is similar to the dialogue spoken by Norman, in his mother's voice at the end of the movie:

"I'm not even gonna swat that fly. I hope they are watching. They'll see. They'll see and they wouldn't even harm a fly."

The characters, the story and the circumstances presented in the movie are so real that anyone can be convinced. They projected all the events and situation so naturally that we are forced to believe it. All the scenes, story and the characters are very powerful in projecting the failure of the American dream, the dream which is highly appreciated by all people and wanted to achieve it in anyway.

The shadow woman, Mrs. Bates is never shown in the screen only her shadow and voice is heard by the audience. The audiences are convinced and they accept the presence of Mrs. Bates in the same way, American dream is the dream which all people want to achieve it without knowing the reality behind it.

Thus, the current thesis presents the situation and people who run behind the material prosperity and individual happiness due to which the dream of America fails. America, the perfect land is not perfect from any angle. Marion one of the protagonists had to die in search of material prosperity and personal happiness in a unknown place and from unknown person's hand. Mrs. Bates carelessness and irresponsibility towards her son made him the victim of multiple personality disorder. There is lack of sense of security, privacy, protection and guarantee of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, America as perceived by the other people of the world. The story which was screened during 1960s is so true even in present context. Though, it was screened more than 50 years ago the story, events and characters correspond to the American life which only ran behind materiality and individual happiness neglecting other aspects of life.

This research tries to explore and examine the failure of American dream. And in order to show the failure of American dream, this research views the film from the

perspective of film studies as methodological tool with special reference of Bernard f. Dick, James Monaco, Steve Neale and others.

This research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is introductory part and introduces the present thesis. It contents hypothesis, purpose of the study and general over view of story and characters. The Second part gives the brief introduction of the film theory to be applied to examine this film. It includes its beginning, development, elements and types of movies. The third part of this research presents the analysis of the movie using the film theory along with literature review, dialogues performed by the characters and the pictures which help in projecting the point to be proved. And finally, the conclusion part which concludes the proven research and hypothesis along with main points.

II. Critique of Materialism in Hitchcock's *Psycho*

The present study focuses on the failure of American Materialistic culture, the American Dream in the movie *Psycho* (1960) by Alfred Hitchcock. This movie shows the dark side of American Dream, the dream of material prosperity keeping the moral values and traditional norms aside. In the present movie the central character, Marion Crane and Mrs. Bates run after the American dream to achieve success in their lives but they unfortunately fail to achieve and the dream and becomes the victim. Marion, central character of this movie is an attractive, single 30-ish secretary in Phoenix, Arizona who flees toward California by stealing \$40,000 from one of her employer's clients to marry her lover, Sam Loomis. Marion, whose name is even spelled as 'o' signifying her emptiness, has only the dream of getting married with her lover and having a prosperous conjugal life for which she needs money. Money is the main material to achieve the American dream. People were running after the material only to achieve their dream not concerning about their moral, social, individual decline. Marion wants to achieve her goal with the stolen money as she is not being able to achieve her dream with her hard work and the money she earns.

Marion is much obsessed to get married to her lover Sam, who is already married and is burdened by his dead father's debt and the alimony that must be paid to his ex-wife. Sam does not want to marry Marion at the present situation as he himself is in critical" condition where he cannot afford anything else until he finishes his debt.

But Marion anyhow wants to marry him as soon as possible and settle down her life with Sam for which a heavy amount is must. Marion, though she was an earning lady but her was not enough to achieve her dream. We can say that her income was not satisfactory for her. And her dissatisfaction made her criminal. Her

desire to get better and happy conjugal life with her lover is destroyed. Her dream not only made her criminal but she happens to lose her life finally.

In the same way Mrs. Bates, mother of Norman Bates also faces the same condition Mrs. Bates, when she lost her husband she instead of taking care of her only son she found a lover and started enjoying her life with her life neglecting her responsibilities and duties. Her carelessness towards her son became the cause of her and her lover's death by her own son, Norman. Here we can find the decadence of moral, cultural, social, traditional and sentimental values while running after the dream of individualism and privacy and its failure.

In the movie, some other innocent people have also become the victim of the failure of American dream. Mr. Tom Cassidy lost his money, Norman Bates lost his mental balance, Arbogast, a detective in the movie lost his life. They are compelled to bear the loss without their fault. The concept of life, liberty, security is being shattered because the characters shown in the movie is not secured, neither with their life nor with their property. The concept of life and liberty also fails as people are not able to live their life freely enjoying their freedom. They have the threat of losing not only their property but even their life at anytime. People are totally guided by the material, psychological and physical prosperity without thinking about its consequences.

The term American Dream was first coined by the historian James Truslow Adams in 1931 and is connected with American Literary history. If anything but the circumstances of geography and history connect its motley population and defines the United States, it is a complex set of shared ideas and aspirations commonly referred to as the American dream. The United States is the land of citizens who project their unattainable communal desires in to the vast continent expanse. Nobody can begin to understand American culture without coming in terms with the American dream.

American Dream can be understood in a broad sense. They are broad and narrow sense. In broad sense the American dream refers to “the democracy, equality and freedom” as a national ideal. In narrow sense the American dream is defined as the dream that one obtains success through his\her effort.

Psycho (1960) is the powerful, complex psychological thriller which is the "mother" of all modern horror suspense films .we can find various themes such as confused identities, voyeurism human vulnerabilities and victimization, the deadly effects of money. Oedipal murders, dark past histories are revealed realistically throughout the movie, which projects the consequences of failure of American dream.

Thriller films use suspense, tension and excitement as its main element. “Thrillers heavily stimulate the viewer’s mood giving them a high level of anticipating, ultra- heightened expectation, uncertainty, surprise, anxiety and terror. Films of this genre tend to be adrenaline- rushing, gritty, rousing and fast- paced”.(2) (3) Thriller keeps the audience on the “edge of their seats”, akin to a sensation of hanging from a cliff, as the plot builds towards a climax. The plot of thriller is villain driven where he/she creates obstacles which the hero/ protagonist must overcome.

Psychological thrillers, crime thrillers, erotic thrillers and mystery thrillers are some of the common subgenres of thriller films. Alfred Hitchcock’s films are the successful examples of thriller. Horror and Action also often overlaps with the thriller. “Homer’s *Odyssey* is one of the oldest stories in the western world and is regarded as an early prototype of the thriller”. (Wikipedia, free encyclopedia). Modern day’s thriller began with the movie ‘*The Lodger*’ (1926) by Alfred Hitchcock and *M* (1931) by Fritz Lang.

This movie, *Psycho* explores the story of a phoenix real-state secretly Marion, who has a boy friend, Sam. He is burdened by heavy debts and couldn't marry Marin

at the present but can only keep on meeting secretly on his business trips. To meet Sam, Marion has to steal lunch hours. They enjoy their love life secretly in cheap hotels whenever they get time especially during Sam's business trips.

Marion is fed up of such meetings and wants to get married to Sam soon to lead her happy and conjugal life. Marion says-

Marion: oh Sam, I hate having to be with you in a place like this.

Sam: Married couples deliberately spend an occasional night in a Cheap hotel.

Marion: I know married can do a lot of things deliberately.

Sam: you sure talk like this a girl who has been married.

Marion: Sam, this is the last time

Sam: For what?

Marion: For this, meeting you in a secret so we can be secretive. You Come here on business trips. We steal lunch hours. I wish you Wouldn't come.

Sam: All right, what do we do instead? Write each other lurid love letters?

Marion hates meeting her lover in secret places like cheap hotel where they can hide themselves and their relationship from the society. They are forced to hide their relationship as they are unmarried and unmarried relationships are taken as illicit act in the society. She expresses her intense desire to get married to Sam as she is frustrated about their private love. She wants chastity, respect and public meetings. She warns her lover that she is no more going to meet him secretly.

A small town, hardware proprietor, Sam who lives in Fairvale California is also frustrated and self-pitying due to his money worries. He has become a financial

martyr as he is not only burdened by his father's debt but the alimony that he must pay to his ex-wife. Sam Says-

Sam: I am tired of sweating for people who aren't there. I sweat to pay off my father's debt and he is in grave. I sweat to pay my ex-wife's alimony and she is living on the other side of the world somewhere.

Sam is working hard and sweating out so that he can earn some money which could pay back his debts and make his life comfortable. After the clearance of his debts only he can have some money which could bring comfort and happiness. Before that he can't marry Marion, the love of his life. This projects that money is the only material that is needed by all the American people as the medium to bring prosperity and happiness in life. People are focused to earn to get material prosperity and happiness leaving the sentiments, emotions, feelings and even the love of their life aside. For them only material can bring happiness which is the false notion of American dream.

Hitchcock narrates the story using the camera as a narrator in which world is observed through the camera or the lenses. In this types of narration there is no interference of any other sources only the presence of the sequence of events in a well- structured manner where audience directly come in contact with those images. In this narration camera establishes a kind of relation between two images through movement, repetition, obscuring events etc. camera's role is very important here as we get to see only the things that camera wants us to observe. Suspense movie uses this kind of narration. This movie also adapts some features of modernist narrative technique. We can see diversity in theme, story, narrative and presentation exploited by the new film makers. In this movie also we can get to see a toilet bowl and flush in the bathroom for the first time in the American film breaking the past tradition.

American dream instead of pushing people to live fulfilling lives, it has done exactly the reverse. People without thinking wisely about their wants and wishes just run after materiality or money. Money, fine clothes and jewelry cannot give one inner peace and happiness that we are really in search of. Sam also has the belief that money can only make them happy so he denies the proposal of Marion to get married due to his poverty says-

Sam: Yeah. And live with me in a store room behind hardware in fairvale? We'll have lots of laughs. I'll tell you what. When I send my ex-wife her alimony, you can lick the stamps.

Here, Sam represents the poverty of America and the American people who are forced to live in a store room of their work place. When he will take his wife in that store room, people will talk about them and laugh at them. This shows that materially prosperous and wealthy people are only respected. They can only be honored in the society. Poor people and their poverty is the subject to be laughed by society. Above all these, when Sam will be sending his income to his ex-wife at that time Marion will not be able to help herself except by licking the stamps.

On the other hand, the story represents other characters- Mr. Lowery, the boss of Marion's office and his customer named Mr. Cassidy, who, both are materially successful person. Mr. Lowery being materially successful and wealthy person did not provide air condition machine to his employees letting them to work in hot environment, though he could afford it. This is suggested by the words of Mr. Cassidy "air condition up" and "can afford today". Mr. Lowery has only air conditioned his office room leaving the worker's room shows the unequal treatment of upper class people towards their workers or lower class people.

Tom Cassidy, a wealthy millionaire, represents the sophisticated and aristocratic class who has just bought a house on a Harris Street for his “sweet little girl”- his eighteen years old, daughter soon to be married. His appearance with \$40,000 hard cash and his statement- “you know what I do about unhappiness? I buy it off. Are, uh, are you unhappy?” and “I never carry more than I can afford to lose.” Shows the material mentality of American people, who thinks money, can buy off any kinds of unhappiness. At the same time Cassidy’s daughter, who is just eighteen years old is soon getting married while Marion, who is already thirty is still unmarried and no any clue of getting married soon. America and American people seems happy and prosperous from distant is just like the valueless yellowish metal which glitters from the distant and attracts people. Unhappiness, inequality, dissatisfaction, different kinds of evils and criminal acts prevails in so called the perfect land of America.

Lower class people are compelled to hide their own miseries in the presence of upper class people as Marion did in the movie, before Mr. Cassidy by replying that she is not unhappy? Marion, though she was unhappy for several reasons among which the main was her unfulfilled desire to marry Sam. Similarly, to be in the same post for last ten years in the same office shows her no progress in prestige and property is also another reason for her unhappiness but she cannot express it in public. She, belonging to lower class has to suffer from lots of problems which bring unhappiness and dissatisfaction in her life.

In contrast, Cassidy’s daughter, a member of upper class and aristocracy is economically privileged. They enjoy luxurious life style, buy off unhappiness and pain. So they never have to be unhappy. As they have the mentality, that money can buy off all the unhappiness and only material prosperity and wealth can make one always happy. In this regard Steve Johns presents his idea –

Ideology represents imaginary relations of individuals to their material existence. It means that the ideology distorts our view of true condition of existence. He presents two theses ideologies: the one is negative, concern with the object which is represented in material form of ideology; the second is positive, concerns with the materiality of ideology. We find different types of ideologies: legal ideology, political ideology, racial ideology, gender ideology and so on. Today in late capitalism, the expansion of new mass media in principle, enable ideology effectively to penetrate every pore of the social body.

(58)

In any society, Ideology plays vital role. Steve John talks about the ideology of the society which is created by higher class people, to impose upon lower class people. Mr. Cassidy's material existence is higher than Marion's so Cassidy tries to impose his ideology upon Marion. John says an upper class person tries to penetrate the hegemony in all sphere of society. Ideology distorts the view of real material existence and creates class difference. Not only material Ideology but they also impose many other ideologies which include legal, political, gender, racial and so on. In the movie Sam and Marion love each other but cannot express their love in public space because it is taken as an illegal act to do so. Only marriage can remove the tag of illicitness in their love relation. In the late Capitalism the capitalist try to penetrate their ideology from different perspective inside the social body such as mass media in principle, culture, politics, material perspective and many other ways.

Marion has come home with the money \$40,000 cash instead of her boss's order to deposit it on a bank, tempted by such a heavy amount which can fulfill her dream. Marion, in the movies has been shown semi-nude twice. First in prominent

white bra and slip when she was in the hotel with Sam and in the second time in black bra and slip after the theft signifies her darkness. Now a trust worthy employee of Mr. Lowery who has worked faithfully for him since ten years has changed into unfaithful and a thief. She has become criminal by committing the crime of stealing money to fulfill her own material instincts her wish to get married to Sam have respectable sex and raise the family. Before leaving her room with the money she stares at it with desire tries to stop herself from doing so but she can't stop her sinful act, wrong and shameful act. She leaves the room as her suitcase is already full and shut which shows much more importance given to the money than moral values. To fulfill one's dream of material prosperity and happiness one can do anything that is not accepted by the society, law, religion and person himself/ herself.

The camera zooms in and cuts back for the money which was kept inside the envelope on the bed more than once which shows priority is given to the money to achieve the American dream. In this scene, camera or the lenses is used to show the importance given to the money. Here, we find no interference of any other sources only the presence of the sequence of events are in a well- structured manner where audience directly come in contact with those images. In this narration camera establishes a kind of relation between two images through movement, repetition, obscuring events etc. camera's role is very important here as we get to see only the things that camera wants us to observe. Camera zooming in and cutting out repeatedly focusing the envelope full of money focuses on the priority given to the materiality or money.

Images alone can also tell a part of the story independently without the use of language. Some unforgettable moments in film are wordless. For example, the shower murder scene of this movie, *Psycho* illustrates the way images advance or enhance the

action without the use of dialogue. The shower murder of Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) of the movie will always be remembered. “The episode is completely wordless. There is sound of course: music that really shrieks, as if anticipating the audience’s reaction. As Marion prepares for a shower in her room at the Bates Motel, Norman Bates (Anthony Perkin’s) is in the adjacent parlor, where there is a peephole, covered by picture of Susanna and the Elders. Removing the picture, she goes into the shower, luxuriating in the spray of water. Suddenly a shadow, presumably of an elderly woman, appears against the shower curtain. The “woman” pulls the curtain aside and proceeds to stab Marion repeatedly as blood mingles with the water and swirls down the drain. Although the entire episode lasts less than a minute, a great deal of information has been imparted”. (3-4)

During the trip she starts to imagine her conversation with Sam which is not clear and interrupted as their relationship. She tries to achieve her dream to marry Sam but different obstacles did not allow her to do so and she is interrupted. In the same way when she ran away with the stolen money to fulfill her wish and dream, she is killed by Norman Bates, the Bates Motel owner who is suffering from multiple personality disorder.

While driving to Fairvale, California from Phoenix, she repeatedly looks into her rear-view mirror which symbolizes checking out her inner thoughts. The dark black glass used by the California highway patrolman also reflects her inner soul-ridden with guilt.

The violent rainstorm, the windshield wipers slashing back and forth through the water across her window accentuated by the second track perfectly matches with the shower scene of Marion. It is the perfect visual metaphor for the shower scene.

Marion registers her false identity as Marie Samuels which also reflects her unfulfilled wish to marry Sam.

When Marion tries to find out somebody to response her appearance we also get to see at the gloomy, gothic-style Victorian house behind the motel on the hill through the eyes of Marion. The stereo typical horror movies 'old dark house' looks like a giant skull with lighted eyes windows. The mansion on hill is captured by low angle camera making it superior aristocrat and upper class.

The pictures presented in this research are taken from the movie *Psycho* itself.



The above shown picture of a house is also one the example of low angle shot. This is opposite of high angle and it makes the character and thing look more powerful. As this house stands behind the Bates motel at a higher place than the motel presents the upper position. The gloomy, gothic-style Victorian house behind the motel on the hill represents the superiority, aristocrat and upper class. The house being at the top of the hill represents the superiority of the American materialistic culture and the darkness of it represents the darkness or dark side of the American dream.

Alfred Hitchcock first introduces the notion of split personality with the help of his central character Marion. Her reflection is often in the movie by using several mirrors and windows behind him represents Norman's split personality which is the consequence of the failure of the American dream. When Norman and Marion stands together on the porch, the camera photographs them as if they were the two sides of same coin and Norman's image reflected in the glass window camera photographs them as if they were the two sides of same coin and Norman's image reflected in the glass window.



Hitchcock represents characters, who are badly trapped in their own private traps. Marion and Norman both lives are imprisoned in their own private traps from which they can't escape their whole life. Norman is imprisoned between the personality of his mother and his own. As he has become the victim or patient of schizophrenia or multiple personality disorder, he can be both his mother and he himself at a time which is the consequence of his mother's irresponsibility towards her only son and her moral and martial decadence. This also projects the failure of American Dream.

Cinema, the art of moving images is taken as a visual medium to tell stories and exposes reality. Cinema comes from the French cinematograph which refers to the device that projects a motion picture on to a screen. This French word is also derived from the Greek word 'Kinein' which means to move. Cinema is the world's most recent art form which was developed in the 19th century. Cinema is also taken as the most collaborative, artistic and complex form of expression. Cinema represents real life in reel and people try to live the reel life in the reality. It has become the integral part of people's life.

Hitchcock presents Norman as a shy, charming and lonely boy when he is introduced first time. He is projected as a very loyal and caring son. But slowly we get to see his frustrated and confused part. Both Marion and Norman are trapped in their own personal traps. During the conversation with Marion, Hitchcock presents Norman as a very caring son who cannot leave his ill mother and run away in search of his personal happiness as Marion did. Norman also becomes able to convince Marion to return back to Phoenix and face the situation before it's too late. But at the end the shy, charming and lonely boy is revealed as frightened, sinister and criminally insane man. The character, Norman, corresponds the American dream which in the beginning attracts everyone and finally shows its dark part as Norman did in the movie. Hitchcock presenting the changes in Norman's character represents an American dream which is not as we see from distance. Norman's illness represents the consequences of the failure of the American dream.

A scholar of American popular culture Jim Cullen offers his take on a dozen of overlapping version of American dream in his book subtitled "A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation". What is American dream and who are the dreamers? In general, sense, dream is regarded as fantasy. The motivating forces of fantasies are

wishes and unfulfilled desires and every single fantasy is fulfillment of wish, a correction of unsatisfying reality. For Sigmund Freud, it is psychological outcome of unfulfilled desires and wishes but American dream differs from Freudian definition of dream. Cullen writes:

American dream is the dream of wealth, freedom and pleasure. It is shaped by eidenic promises of American land before and after the exploration of America. Puritans and European immigrants through of America as a land of infinite wealth, unrestrained freedom, and unchallenged fresh beginning of new life in the new found land is called American dream. So it is related with life, liberty and pursuit of happiness to everybody regardless of race, gender, class, ethnicity etc. The Euphoric vision of wish fulfillment is what is called a dream. Finally, it enhanced capitalism in the sense that success lives in the possession of money. (11)

The puritans from England and Ireland, who wanted to escape from the political, economic and religious persecution of the old world, dreamed of building up a new world. That is the beginning of the American dream. America, a place where everyone had a fair chance at making it big: America, a land of the free and the home of brave set your sail and travel to new world of wonder and where your wildest dreams come true.

The movie portrays the failure of American dream. Marion loses her life in search of her happiness, success and dream which is not fulfilled in Phoenix where she is from and moves to California supposed to be her private island, where she can achieve her dream, wish and success. During the conversation with Norman Bates she says she is moving and looking for a private island.

Marion: I am looking for a private island.

American dream has so much attracted people that they can do anything to achieve it. They quit their job, forget their duties and responsibilities, let down their morality, and above all they commit crime too.

In the movies 'Psycho' Hitchcock has used camera as narrator technique to portray the story. The movie opens with the aerial view camera sweeping left to right along the urban skyline of "PHOENIX, ARIZONA" where we can see some new constructions in progress. Hitchcock randomly chooses to descend and penetrate deeper into a window among many windows in a high-raised hotel building. The window is half-open, the camera pauses and peeps inside where a post coital, semi nude couple have just completed a seedy, lunch-time tryst. Hitchcock showed us this scene with the use of high-angle shot.

"FRIDAY DECEMBER THE ELEVENTH
TWO FORTY-THREE P.M."

Hitchcock focuses on the specific place, date and time to show when and where the story began. By specifying the place and time Hitchcock wants to indicate the period and place when people were crazy about the American dream. American dream was at its height. People were ready to do everything to achieve the dream. And at the same time the so called rich and sophisticated people were busy on showing their money and developing their own ideology that money can buy off unhappiness. During that time too much importance was given to the money. Money was everything and value able then any kinds of responsibility, duties and moral values.

Everything that is shown in the screen in the movie has its own importance such as sets, locations, actors, props, costumes, light and shadow etc. It can be realistic or abstract, purely back ground or an interpretive active element. They are

used to focus something or symbolize various things. For example; the grey vertical and horizontal lines that moves back and forth, violently splits apart the screen and disappears just before the movie begins correlates to the split or schizophrenic personality of the major character. Marion showing in the white under garment for the first time and in the black undergarment for the second time after the theft symbolizes the inner change that has taken place in her. The image of the characters that is reflected in the mirror and the window screen repeatedly also suggests the split personality of the characters. The knocking down off a bird's picture from the wall by Norman resembles the murder of Marion by Norman. The shadow figure and the preserved corpse of Mrs. Bates in the movie symbolize the lifeless American dream which is attractive only from distance.

In the movie Psycho, Hitchcock presents audience both as participant and viewer. He has become successful to keep the bond between the audience and the characters and the plot of the movie. He also has become able to gain audience's sympathy for Marion in the beginning by presenting her as a young, attractive and in love but has problems which can be solved by money. Audience gets shocked when Marion is murdered just after the first forty seven minutes of the film start. Before the death of Marion, Hitchcock shifts audience's sympathy to Norman Bates as he is quiet and shy and he is totally devoted to his mother, who according to him is sick. As the story of the movie begins to develop, audience also starts identifying themselves with the characters present in the movie. On the one hand, they slowly start to build the bond with the characters and the plot present in the movie and on the other hand they keep on guessing what is unfolding in front of them. Regarding the shift of audience's sympathy from Marion to Norman Bates and the bond between the characters, plot and audience, Roger Ebert states:

Psycho continues to work as a frightening, insinuating thriller. That's largely because of Hitchcock's artistry in two areas that are not as obvious: The setup of the Marion Crane story, and the relationship between Marion and Norman. Both of these elements work because Hitchcock devotes his full attention and skill to treating them as if they will be developed for the entire picture. (*Chicago Sun-Times*, December 6, 1998)

Ebert in the above lines praises Hitchcock's artistry saying that the set up of the Marion Crane story and the relationship between Marion and Norman are not as obvious but still it works a lot Hitchcock has paid his full attention and skill on treating them as if they will be developed as main characters together in the movie.

Later, Hitchcock again lets us peep Marion undress down to black brassiere and slip from the point view of Norman. Hitchcock not only allowed his characters to peep voyeurism but also involves us, the audience, in peeping voyeurism. Regarding this Edward Rechia states-

Hitchcock uses reflexivity to good effect in *Psycho* (1960) by making the viewers actors in the on-screen drama. The direction tells the story first from Marion's point of view. The perspective shifts shortly before Marion's murder, but the true identity of the murderer is not revealed. Hitchcock encourages the audience's identification with Marion, and then with Norman Bates, but slowly reveals to them a more realistic perspective. The audience is both participant and viewer in *Psycho*.
(265)

Rechia states that Hitchcock's *Psycho* presents viewers both as participant and the viewers. The director tells the story from the perspective of the two major characters,

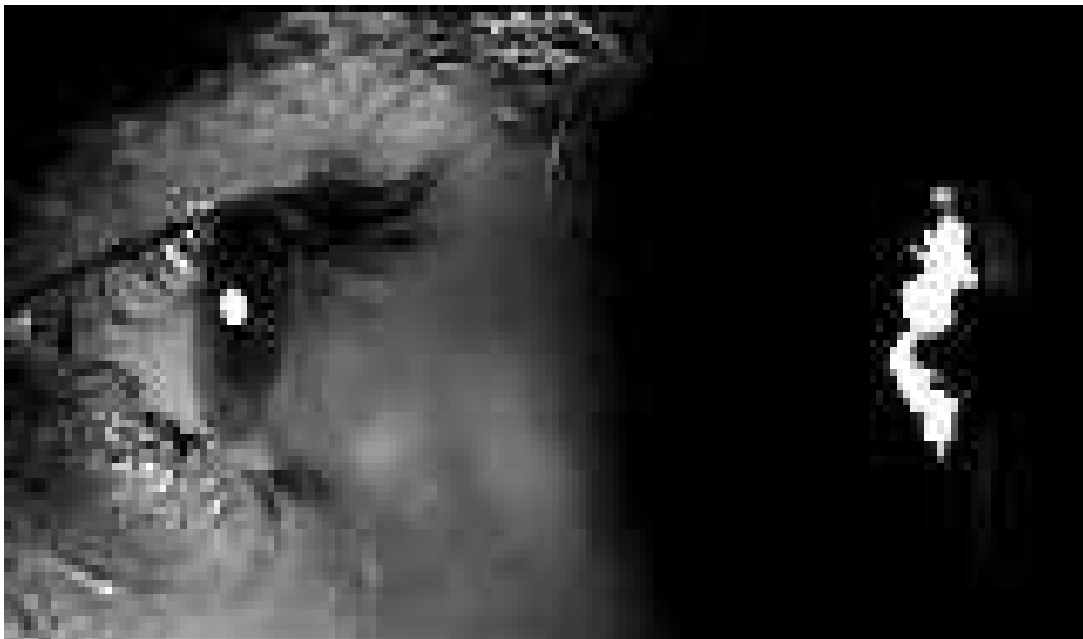
Marion and Norman. In the first part of the movie, we get story from Marion perspective and just before the murder of Marion the perspective shifts to Norman. This shifting of shows the shifting of shifting of American dream and the undefined murder in the movie corresponds with the failure of American dream.

Hitchcock, letting the viewers to peep everything in the movie makes the viewers strong participators of the movie. Viewers get shocks, frightened and terrified in the movie. Viewers get to see bathroom, toilet bowl, character in undergarments only, illicit relationship, violence and sex in the movie that they have not seen before. Regarding the illicit and peep scene Harmon Jympson says:

"More miserable than the most miserable peep show I have ever seen."

(Evening standard, (London), 1960)

Jympson, in the above line talks about the scenes where very private and secrets of the characters are also disclosed by the director in the movie including love making, dressing down, and taking bath too. Viewers get to peep Marion dressing down in the motel room before taking bath through Norman's eye.



The above picture shows one of the negative aspects of American dream that is the act of voyeurism, to peep someone secretly is to interfere one's privacy. The picture also suggests the failure of American dream that is the promise of security and freedom. Though, *Psycho* is a suspense thriller movie where we get to see crime, sex, illicit relationship and voyeurism.

Regarding, the illicit scenes presented in the movie Knickerbocker Paine also says:

[Hitchcock] has very shrewdly interwoven crime, sex and suspense, blended the real and the unreal in the fascinating proportions and punctuated his films with several quick, grisly and unnerving surprises.

(San Francisco Chronicle, August 11, 1960)

Knickerbocker argues that Hitchcock has very intelligently interwoven crime, sex and suspense. He says the movie is full of horrible and unnerving surprises. Hitchcock presents the real incidents that can happen in one's life. The director has properly blended all the materials needed in the movie to make it successful. The murder, crime, illicit relationship and the undefined murderer of the movie corresponds to the dark side of American materialistic culture or the American dream.

The murder scenes present in the movie projects insecurity that prevails in America, the dreamland. Viewers get to see the murder of Marion and Arbogast, a private detective and investigator and the murder of Mrs. Bates and her lover is heard from the psychiatrist, Dr. Richmond. The murders in the movie question the sense of security which was promised by the American dream.



The above picture represents one of the most insecure scenes of the movie. Here, in the figure, Marion is taking bath in the motel bathroom at night and just behind the shower curtain we can clearly see a shadowy figure standing and staring at her. We can see that people in America, so called perfect land is not secure at all. They do not have security and privacy in their lives. The main character of the movie, Marion is murdered in the bathroom while taking bath. Bathroom, which one the most private and secure place is also not safe here. The brutal and irrational shower murder scene of major character, Marion represents both, lack of privacy and insecurity of the people. Hitchcock murdering his central character in the movie in one of the most private place presents the failure of American dream which promises freedom, privacy and sense of security.

The privacy of Marion is interrupted again and again in the movie. From the very beginning of the movie Hitchcock discloses Marion privacy throughout the movie. Hitchcock discloses Sam and Marion's love making scene which is supposed to be very private and they are not married couple so it is not only private but secret too. Similarly, Marion before paying for the exchanged car , enter into the ladies room

to take the money out of the purse, so that no one can see her counting the money but Hitchcock discloses this to with upper camera angle and convenient placing of mirror. In the Bates motel also through Norman's eye we get to see Marion undressing. These above repeated scenes where major character of the movie is not getting any privacy present that people living in America is not getting any privacy. They are always watched and insecure every movement. Above presented scenes that prove that insecurity prevails in America and the promise of privacy and sense of security is not fulfilled which also represents the failure of American dream.

Film is considered as an important art form, a source of entertainment and also taken as a powerful medium for educating citizens. The visualization part of movie gives it a universal power of Communication. This movie projects the failure of American dream by presenting the different types of audio visual acts. Marion's act of fleeing with the stolen money, Marion and Sam's illicit relationship and Bates multiple personality disorder represents the failure of the American dream.

Marion's wish of getting married with Sam can be fulfilled with money but she lacks it. So she steals her boss' money and runs away towards her lover's place but happens to lose her own life. In the movie Hitchcock proves that money is not the only solution of every problem by murdering Marion before reaching her destination. Marion even after having money with her also could not buy off her unhappiness.

Materiality, which attracted Marion much towards happy, prosperous and prestigious life, betrayed her in the midst of her journey. It not only ruined her dream of living happy conjugal life with Sam but ruined her life too.

Concept of materiality brought out by the American dream destroyed all the old traditions and moral values. People even did not hesitate to commit crime and sin. Marion commits the crime of stealing the money and had illicit relationship with Sam,

a divorcee which was not allowed at that time. Norman killed his own mother and her lover and Marion too out of his psychotic state. These types of acts were taken as a big crime. All these kinds of acts present in the movie projects the dark side of the American dream. The old tradition and moral values are disobeyed and destroyed by the American dreamer. American dream seekers are totally crazy and run after materiality and self happiness.

Spoto Donald regarding the movie *Psycho* states:

"This film is really a meditation on the tyranny of past over present. It's an indictment of the viewer's capacity for voyeurism and his own potential for depravity. It's also a statement on the American dream turned nightmare, and there's a running concern for the truth that physical vision is always only partial and that our perceptions tend to play us false.... **Psycho** is also...a ruthless exposition of American Puritanism and exaggerated Mom-ism. ... In method and content, in the sheer economy of its style and its brave, uncompromising moralism, it's one of the great works of modern American art."(48)

According to Donald *Psycho* is the representation of the American dream that turned into nightmare. The dream that attracted all the people in the beginning turned into nightmare and whatever we see from the distance only partial true and our perception tends to play us false. *Psycho* is also a ruthless exposition of American Puritanism and exaggerated Mom-ism. He also says the movie contains sheer economy and uncompromising moralism and it is a great works of the modern American art.

Norman Bates after killing his mother not only preserves his mother's memory but her dead body too. Killing the real mother and preserving her dead body corresponds to the American dream which also killed the real notion of happiness and

started searching happiness in material or materiality. Norman's psychotic stage was the result of the unbearable and intolerable crime of matricide that he did in his conscience and consciousness. This also represents one of the consequences of failure of American dream.



The above picture is the picture of Norman's dead and preserved mother. As the picture is fleshless and heartless above all it is lifeless which is similar to the American dream. Viewers get to see her from distance and her voice was only heard. By seeing her shadowy figure from distance and her voice viewers believe her presence but when the reality of Mrs. Bates is revealed viewers get shocked. In the same way American dream is also cheating the dreamers. Whatever we are assuming from distance about the American dream is not the reality and the reality is vast different from what we perceive. As the lifeless figure above is the American dream which is attracting from the distance only. As the above figure skinny and full of hard bones corresponds to the American dream and the wide open laughing mouth corresponds to the teasing of the American dreamer who are just running behind it without knowing the reality or fact. The above figure also projects the dark side of the American dream.

Sound, one of the most essential parts of a film refers to the sound heard in a movie except dialogue, music and off-screen narration. Noise in the Jacques Toureur's *Cat People* (1942) is atmospheric and intended to heighten the suspense. Absence of noise in the *Cat People* may not have made it the horror classic. Noise in the film is absent only in the situation when the filmmakers want to show the character is deaf or has no hearing power. Among the three components of sound – dialogue, sound effects and music is the most evident and striking one. Music has the power to shape the viewer's feeling and perceptions of a scene. "Dialogue and sound effects while more subdued in effect than music, are essential in bringing us into the world of the film and suspending our belief". (Collinsvillelibrary.blogspot.com)

Film having all the formal elements also has no guarantee to succeed but sometime film lacking some formal elements also can achieve grand success. Sound and music part of this movie is excellent. They perfectly match with scene and theme that the scene is providing. In this regard Sullivan believes that –

"Herrmann's music is inseparably linked with the film in the popular imagination; indeed without it, *Psycho* would probably not exist" (243).

Movie scene and sound perfectly matches with each other. We can find *Psycho* so effective in the absence of Herman's music. In a sense, we can say that *Psycho* wouldn't have been so much popular without its present music.

During the flight of Marion with cash \$ 40,000 She is accidently seen by her boss and Mr. Cassidy, her face turn frozen while she realize that she has been caught and soon the jarring music begins to play, slashing at her. Similarly, in the brutal shower murder scene, Herman has chosen a casaba melon to produce the sound of flesh slashing knife which was very effective. The piercing, shrieking and screaming

of the violin strings of Bernard Herrmann's shrill music plays very important role to create terror.

Cinematography is the art or science of motion picture photography by recording light or other electromagnetic radiation either electronically by means of an image sensor or chemically by means of light sensitive material such as film stock. In one of the most horrific and infamous murder scene cinematography and sound both are blended perfectly. Fenimore asserts:

“Herrmann sharpens Norman's knife: (93)

Above line stated by Fenimore also give emphasis to the Benard Herrman's music behind the immense success and popularity of the Marion's shower murder scene. Psycho, in its initial release was taken as a vulgar movie which visualized Marion semi-nude twice, flushing toilet, violating the previous filmic ignorance of the existence of bathrooms, shower scene, voyeurism, exclusive and intimate exchange between a couple which was not accepted during the period. Even the censor forced to edit an infamous shower scene, darkening the lower half of the frame.

According to critic, Danny Peary:

“It was not the sex and violence alone that unnerved us, but- and this is what people usually forget that we felt guilty about watching the sex and violence”.

When we watch movie we are not unnerved by the sex and violence scene only we are unnerved to watch the Marion's act of stealing. Norman's sad past which made him the victim or patient of multiple personality disorder, Marion's helplessness for being not able to fulfill her wish or dream to get married with Sam but people usually forget this and keeps on feeling guilty for watching the sex and violence.

Cinematography refers to those unedited and uncut images which are recorded continuously from the time the camera starts to the time camera stops. There are various shots used in the film which includes close up shot, far distance shot or long shot , high angle shot, low angle shot etcetera. Long shot refers to the quantity of depictions within the frame which roughly corresponds within the audience's view of the area within the proscenium arch of the legitimate theatre. "These systems also offer grounds for the further anticipation. If a film is a musical, more singing is likely to occur and the plot is likely to follow certain directions rather than others" (Neale 158).

Here in the movie there is the use of close up shots in various scene suggesting materiality, illicit relationship, voyeurism, victimization, the deadly effect of money etc. the close up shot of money several times in the movies projects materiality, Sam and Marion shown half nude projects their illicit relationship, peeping their (Sam and Marion's) secret love affair and Marion removing her dress suggest voyeurism and similarly the close up of Marion's mouth screaming while she was being stabbed, her sliding down the wet wall looking upward with a fix stare and Marion's dead- still iris-contracted fish-like right eye with one tear drop projects the victimization and deadly effect of materialism or money.



The above picture projects the horrible and the tragic end of Marion who ran behind the American dream without thinking about the consequences that she might have to face. The consequence of running behind material happiness keeping aside all the moral values has been clearly shown in the given picture.

Her slow descends against the wet wall symbolically represents the fall of the people who run after the American dream. It represents the fall of materialistic culture in America where people thinks materiality is everything. The concept that money can buy happiness, prosperity and prestigious life has failed. These things have been projected in the movie closely by using close-up and extreme close-up shots.

The cinematography of the movie centers on the victimization of central character Marion Crane by another central character, the anti hero, Norman Bates. The cinematographer of this movie has utilized the most common shot sizes such as- extreme close-up, close-up, medium shot, long shot and establishing shot. Most of these shots are self explanatory with the establishing shot being a shot which indicates to the viewer the change of location or time that has occurred.

James Monaco, while describing film technology says: “political or economical question: prostitution, marriage, rebellion, problem of existence, even

architectural sociology. By the late 60s however, these questions are deeply involved in the film technology". (335)

The cinematographer has utilized the technique of extreme close-up and close-up shot. The characters are focused much more than the background scene to project the fear, tension, pain, and voyeurism, the deadly effect of money, victimization and insecurity inherent in the society.

John Steinberg in her *Grapes of the Wrath* says that everything of America is- It is only a dream which is same as the vision of plucking an orange in the midst of a busy road where we can imagine the life of any kind of plant and living being.

She ironically asserts:

Why don't you go to California? There is work there and it never gets cold. Why, you can reach out anywhere and pick an orange. Why, there's always some kind of crop to work in. why don't you go there? The origin of term "American Dream" derives from the second sentence of the American declaration of Independence, which states that "all men are created equal". The declaration also mentions "Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness" as crucial rights of the American people (Steinbeck, 36)

The above statement makes clear that America is a place of only dream and not of practical happiness. There is chaos in life. Human beings are humanity less like a stone that don't have any kind of soul. There is relationship between film theory and reality of society. As for example, James Monaco argues:

Dialectical criticism, on the other hand, studies the film in their existential context. Pioneer by the Frankfurt school of German philosopher in the 1930s and 40s –especially Walter Benjamin, T.W

Adorno and Marx Horkheimer's dialectical criticism analysis the direct relationship the film, the artist, and the observer as they are expressed in terms of political and economic structures (14).

Therefore, we can claim that cinematography has also contributed to claim the movie a true example of failure of American Dream.

The protagonist Marion of the movie has anticipated a perfect life in America as claimed by American constitution. But she becomes frustrated and depressed with the life that she is living or leading. Her attempts and thoughts to lead happy and prosperous life are not only shattered but unfortunately she happens to lose even her life. Her heavenly thoughts soon changed into hellish reality because: "instead of producing the heaven on the earth that the utopians confidently predicted, they have succeeded only in creating hell. (Kumar 221)

Among the various camera angles utilized in the movie, long shot is used to show Mrs. Bates for the first time in the Mansion's window behind the motel which is in fact Norman Bates himself in his mother's dress. Mrs. Bates is not introduced in the movie for the long time and we only get to hear her voice from distance which is not spoken by her but her son, Norman himself. This shows that reality is far from what we perceive like the America and the American which looks perfect and attractive from distance only but when we get closer we find that the reality is different from what we perceive.



In the presented picture we find a shadow of an old lady from distance who is supposed to be Mrs. Bates, though the reality is different than our perception. Long shot is used to show this fact. By utilizing this technique, Movie is successful to depict American people's dream, a kind of failure. It has become able to show America- a failure nation.

Hitchcock has used camera both as a narrator and deceiver. He has showed everything through camera and by showing everything also has become successful to hide the main suspect in the movie. The main culprit, Norman is shown in his mother's gown and wig only just before the end of the movie. Audience is once again shocked to know the real culprit and the reason behind murdering Marion. Hitchcock never shows Norman's mother in the movie clearly and just a shadowy figure of a woman from the distance and the loud voice resembles her. Audience is convinced to believe the presence of Mrs. Bates in the scene where Norman carries his mother to the Fruit cellar to hide her. Her loud voice is also heard during the scene, denying her son to leave her room and move to the cellar. During the argument, the camera pans up the stairway to the above bedroom door and then to a disorienting, spiral overhead

shot as Norman emerges with his mother in his arms and carries the frail figure down the staircase to the basement fruit cellar.

Along with the music and cinematography, editing also plays vital role in making the shower murder scene so successful. It is one of the most famous murder scene ever filmed. Editing is the key to cinema because it is the only formal element that is unique to the medium. Editor connects the scenes one to the next and sometimes several shots in the same scene using a few different editing techniques. Among different types of editing techniques such as the cut, the fade out, dissolve and wipe, the commonly used one is the cut. Others are rarely used due to its stylistic feature. This murder scene has used fast cut editing of 78 pieces of film and 70 camera setups. Editor has become successful in joining the 70 pieces of film so intelligently that it has been able to arouse the terror and fear in the audience. The continuous stab with the butcher knife penetrating into Marion's naked stomach shatters the sense of security which also projects the failure of American dream.

Marion, when she is stabbed with a knife, opens her mouth wide and screams which covers the whole screen, is a good example of extreme close-up shot projecting the pain, fear, terror and suffering of the American dreamers through Marion's scream. The pain which we can't see from distance has been shown closely.



The above picture of Marion's wide open mouth and the screaming sound represents the fright, pain, suffering and insecurity of the American people. The death of Marion at Bates Motel, a totally unknown or newly entered place and her death from the unknown person questions the security of American dreamer in the dream land, America.

The characters of the movie Psycho plays vital role in projecting the dark side of the American dream. The central characters, Marion and Norman, both are the victim of failure of the American dream. Marion, who was the one of the loyal worker of her office changed into a disloyal, cheat and thief for the money. The change that came in her was just for money which was lacking in her life to live happily with Sam, her boyfriend. The change that came in her is symbolically suggested by her innerwear. She is shown in white Bra and slip in the beginning and is dressed in a black bra and slip after the theft. This projects the darkness present in her.

Marion's act of fleeing away with the stolen money symbolizes the American people who are running behind materiality or material success. The fall of Marion from a faithful and prestigious staff and human being denotes the fall American dreamer.

Another character, Mrs. Bates, mother of Norman Bates also represents the dark side of the American dream. She, being a mother of her only son runs away from the responsibilities. She, instead of bringing up her son with great love and care, herself finds a lover and starts enjoying her life after her husband's death.

Mrs. Bates not only kept away her moral and social norms and values but even her motherhood aside in search of her personal happiness. Her irrational act not only ends her life but ruined her son's life too. This shows the failure of American dream resulting the decadence of social, moral and sentimental relationship among people.

Norman Bates, a Psychotic character also represents the consequences of the failure of the American dream. He, in the movie is a patient of split personality or multiple personality disorder and generally lives two different lives. First, as himself, Norman, a loving and caring son. Second his mother's life, Mrs. Bates, who is dominating and evil. His mother's carelessness towards him is totally responsible for his dual life that he is living at the present. Mrs. Bates leaving behind her responsibilities and motherhood moved forward and started enjoying her life with her lover. This encouraged Norman to kill her and her lover. The guilt of the matricide imbalanced his mental balanced. So, to erase the crime of matricide he started living dual life.

American dream of success fails because of too much importance given to money, wealth or materiality. This happens when human forget their humanity, their responsibilities and their moral values. In such situation all the emotional, physical relationships are reduced to tradable possessions. As a result, depressing and humanity less society remains.

Allen Gutten, a critic in *American Nightmare* remarks the failure of American dream as:

The American dream is the unattainable that our culture accepts as something we should all strive for to lead happy lives. The American dream consists of the possibility for everyone to work hard and to be able to make lots of money for a successful life. Furthermore, today our American dream has evolved to the importance of one's image, fame and materialistic items (cars, mansions, and stupid meaningless items) one thrives. (154)

American dream which brought the notion of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness could not maintain its notion. People without understanding the inner sense began to run behind the money. They start searching their happiness in materialistic items. So called upper class created the ideology " money can buy off unhappiness". The American dream consists of the possibility for everyone to work hard and to be able to make lots of money for a successful life. But leaving the hard work and keeping all the moral values aside people gave so much priority to money that they even did not hesitate to commit crime.

Marion in the movie stole her boss' money where she worked for ten years as a very loyal and faithful employee. Norman, where, loses his mental balance after the murder of his own mother. And the preservation of Mrs. Bates dead body, the illicit relationship between Marion and Sam, voyeurism, victimization and the deadly effect of money in the movie represents the failure of the American dream.

In the movie *Psycho*, we find the characters, who perfectly represents the failure of American dream. Marion, a loyal staff steals money and runs away toward California. Her downfall from a trustworthy staff to a thief represents the downfall or failure of American dream and her fleeing away corresponds to the chase to attain American dream. Her murder in the unknown place by unknown person represents the failure of the sense of security and freedom which was promised by the American dream. Norman's mental condition is also the consequences of the failure of the American dream. His act of matricide and the preserved Mrs. Corpse represents the murder of morality and preservation of hollowness of the dream. As Norman in the movie killed his murders her mother and preserves her corpse people are also murdering the real notion of American dream and only preserving the notion of materialism. Thus, this movie, *Psycho* represents the failure of the American dream.

III. Alternative to Materiality

Alfred Hitchcock's film *Psycho* is one of the most famous movies ever made. *Psycho*, generally, refers to a mentally unstable person. Here, in the movie also we get to see characters who are not mentally stable. Marion, the main and female protagonist is always in search of name, fame and happy life for which she stole her boss' money. Soon after that she becomes mentally unstable, thinking of possible results of her crime while fleeing towards California with the stolen money. Another central character, Norman, happens to lose his mental balance after committing matricide, a crime and sin too.

Marion crane, the protagonist of the movie embodies the dream of prosperous and prestigious life. She believes that her life would be prestigious and prosperous only after her marriage with Sam, her lover. Therefore, she is obsessed with a dream of prestigious and prosperous life which requires a heavy amount of money. The dream that Marion has, is the American dream since it requires more money than she earns. In search of edenic life in which, dreamer can occupy the highest economic and social status.

Marion, a secretary and an unsatisfied lady whose, income is not sufficient for her desired life style and standard. So she steals a heavy amount of money and flees away towards Fairvale, California where she can start her prestigious and prosperous life with Sam. She hopes that her stolen money would fulfill her yet not fulfilled desires. But unfortunately the unfavorable weather and a psychotic owner of the Bates motel murder her before reaching her destination. Her strong desire of prestigious and prosperous conjugal life destroyed her life. She, herself is the reason of her down fall and finally murder.

Marion, though she is an earning lady but her lover, Sam is a hardware store proprietor and he is burdened by his father's debt and the alimony of his ex-wife. Due to this reason he is unable to fulfill Marion's wish of getting married to him at the present condition.

The protagonist, Marion in the movie is a very loyal employee but her strong desire for the conjugal and prestigious life turned her into a corrupted and disloyal employee. She was so much obsessed by her dream that she did not want to miss the chance to fulfill her dream. She flew away with the stolen money towards California so that she could fulfill her wish. In the way of fulfilling her dream she happens to lose her dream and her precious life too. She becomes the victim of a psychotic motel owner, Norman Bates. Her loyalty, sincerity, beauty and talent all fade away with the act of her stealing and fleeing away with the stolen money.

Hitchcock, in the movie, has presented the failure of American dream and its consequences through his characters, cinematography, plot, symbols and many more techniques. The repeated focus of camera to the money refers to the priority given to the money. The change in the colour of Marion's inner dress from white to black represents the change or darkness present inside her. The murder of Marion and her slow down fall against the bathroom wall corresponds to the failure of the American dream. Her slow down fall against the bathroom wall symbolizes the fall of American dream about which Marion was totally crazy. The end of her life before reaching destination proves that material gain cannot fulfill every desire or wish.

Norman, another character of Hitchcock in the movie presents the consequences of failure of American dream. Norman, a shy, charming and lonely boy is very different personality than that is presented in front of us in the beginning. At first we get to see him as a very loyal and caring son but as the story develops we get

to see his different personality than in the beginning. Slowly we get to see Norman's frustrated and confused part. He talks about his mother with Marion and says her rude behavior towards him is because of her illness. He also becomes angry and defensive when Marion suggests him to put her to someplace referring an institution or A Madhouse. His attachment with his mother is so deep that he cannot even think of putting his mother to someplace. He cares his so much that he did not care about his personal happiness. Norman is presented as a very dedicated son throughout the movie. But at the end we are shocked to know that the mother about whom he talked much and cared is dead ten years ago. More than this the killer of his mother Mrs. Bates is none other than Norman himself. Viewers are shocked to know that the boy who was so shy, charming and lonely was only his outer appearance. He, in fact is a sinister and criminally insane man. The love and care he showed for his mother was just his guilt of matricide that he committed in his anger and jealousy. After killing his own mother he could not bear the sin and crime of matricide which imbalanced his mental balance causing multiple personality disorder. He wanted to erase the crime of matricide so he starting living his mother's life too. He physically murdered his mother but mentally kept her alive in his mind.

Norman's split personality is the result of his mother's carelessness towards him. Being a mother, she forgot her responsibility towards Norman and started enjoying her life with her lover after the death of Mr. Bates which Norman could not tolerate. So he killed his mother and her lover too. Mrs. Bates while seeking her personal happiness keeps aside her responsibility and even motherhood. In search of her personal happiness she destroyed three lives; her, her lover and her son's. Mrs. Bates and her lover lose their lives in search of their life, liberty and happiness. Her carelessness made her son a criminal and mental patient too. These three characters

and their story show not only the failure of American dream but also the consequences of the failure of American dream.

Hitchcock using the technique of close up and extreme close up shots presents the dark side of the American dream. The priority given to the money, victimization, deadly effect of money, voyeurism, corruption, confused identity and crime are shown using close up and extreme close up shots which are the consequences of the failure of the American dream. Close up and extreme close up shots are adapted in order to show the pain and suffering of the American dreamer and the reality behind the American dream. Hitchcock presents American dream as a yellow metal that shine from distance and attract people but when we get closer to it we realize that it is not as precious as we valued. He presents the concept that whatever we get to see from distance is only partial truth.

American dream is not exactly the same what we observe from distance. American dream of name, fame and wealth which was supposed to be an ecstasy of joyful life is worthless because after getting wealth also there is the possibility of not getting the desired success. Excessive importance given to materiality can destroy one's life. People should give equal importance to their relationship, responsibility, emotions, sentiments and moral values. The murders and the mental imbalance of Norman prove that materiality never lead to success. Money could not give Marion name, fame and wealthy life that she desired.

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