

Chapter I: Introduction

Fitzgerald's Writings, Themes and Critical Responses

The hypothesis of this research is that Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* depicts the reality of post world war American society and its failure of American dream through the material prosperity, which finally reveals the fact of reversal irony. Protagonist Gatsby desires to have dream of earning money by means of doing illegal and cut throat business. He is fascinated by the material things. Daisy runs after the material prosperity by leaving true love of Gatsby. Other characters also run after the material things. They all represent the reality of post war American society. The American dream passes through the reversal irony. The American ideal dream fails to address the reality of post war American society that ends with the notes of reversal irony.

In reality, the characters fail in their own desire of persuading and achieving dream of material things in their own attempt and ways. The historical development of American dream describes one things and the plot of the novel reveals the fact of another things. They really contradict and ionize in this researched novel. In other cases, when we study American dream, it highly describes about the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness in term of Jefferson's definition. In the eyes of Martin Luther King Jr. and Langston Hughes, they are very much critical about American dream of making America as the country of people of black and white where they can be the part of each other with equal rights to live, share and enjoy the sense of humanity and brotherhood. Yet, there is reversal irony through the interpretation and analysis of characters and stories of *The Great Gatsby*. The plot of the story reveals the fact that the characters have failed to achieve the dream and the historical development of the American dream exists through the reversal irony.

Moreover, *The Great Gatsby* encompasses the theme of material greed and its result in reversal irony. Gatsby wanders everywhere in order to grasp money and to get Daisy. The post war American society is transformed into the material prosperity rather than realizing the real spirit of the American dream. Nick comes to the West Egg to be materially rich. The marital relation between Tom Buchanan and Daisy is also beyond the social system. Instead, it exposes the vested interest of each character. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson struggle to overcome from poverty which turns into destruction and death. Due to which the material prosperity could not bring happiness in character's life. The post war American society fails to represent the transformation and reality of American dream that could not resonate with the material prosperity. Further, the character's quests for material desire reflect the reversal irony. The American ideal really goes beyond the sense of humanity and morality and that question on behalf of the responsibility of each character has vividly presented. In this way, *The Great Gatsby* depicts the reality of post war American society and its failure of American dream through the material prosperity, which finally reveals the fact of reversal irony.

F. Scott Fitzgerald in his writings emphasizes the war mentality and materialistic nature of Americans and its result in the form of frustration and devastation. His novel vividly exposes the reversal irony in case of American dream become one of way of looking this novel. People have single aim to be rich overnight that is their dream. There is unhealthy competition to be in the dream of material prosperity. The American dream provides reversal irony that means to be happy and prosperous through material achievement but there exists ideal dream of life, liberty, happiness, equality, prosperity and equal opportunity. Gatsby, as the representative hero of American youths, struggles to be economically strong in the society. However, finally death of Gatsby or his longing form material prosperity symbolizes the reversal irony of American dream. They are

explained in relation to the characters. They are materialist and fail to achieve their goal of achieving material prosperity. Thus, the title of this research is very much contextual, relevant and significant to analyze the novel from the perspective of reversal irony with reference to American dream.

Fitzgerald as a writer had a good sense of living in history and historical events have become true examples of the representation in his writings. His novels represent the voice of his generation that seems to be quiet reversal and produces irony. Malcolm Cowley says, "Fitzgerald never lost a quality that very few writers are able to acquire: a sense of living in history" (30). His engagements with literary creations also show the results of the war-torn mentalities. Then, he has shown the social happening of before war experiences that are reflected in his writings. It was the turn of the twentieth century that consequently follows the great wars one after another in which he has showed his experiences. Therefore, some of critics believe that those were lucky enough to be born a little before the end of the last century turn into complete paradox. They went through much of their lives with a feeling that the new century was about to be placed in their difficult charges to have difficult life. Cowley further explains:

As Americans and optimists, they believed that the business was fundamentally sound. They identified themselves with the century; its teens were their teens, troubled but confident; it's World War not yet known as the First was theirs to fight on the winning side; its reckless twenties were their twenties. As they launched into their careers, they looked about them for spokesman and no doubt he was Francis Scott Fitzgerald. (19)

Furthermore, these are the incidences which inspire him to produce these literary works. Fitzgerald's works follow such historical incidents by capturing American's the socio-

cultural and socio-historical moments. There are different new trends and cultures have emerged in American's life that they introduce a new culture called 'the Jazz Age' and Fitzgerald is true representative of such changing tendencies. The Dear Scott says, "Fitzgerald, whose original phrases 'The Jazz Age' and 'emotional bankruptcy' aptly characterize certain aspects of the twenties and thirties and whose novels are steeped in cultural history, embodied a society and an era" (2). By following such consequences, Fitzgerald clearly gives shape in his writing of the society and social movements. Moreover, as a part of being society's member and representing his society of his generation, he has shared his own experiences in most of the fictional writings. Thus, some critics blame that *The Great Gatsby* along with other books are autobiographical in nature and feature. They represent his society and time in his era of American society.

In case of his writings, he has developed his deep personal experiences. He always uses to shape his experiences on the form of art. His art of writing fiction simply tries to deal with the problem of connecting personal experiences with that of connecting national or social issues of American dream because there exists the gap between what is written in the constitution paper and how it has been practiced in the real practical life. There is reversal irony that can be found through the lines of the novel. Arthur Mizener, one of the Fitzgerald's biographers in his book *Afternoon of an Author* explains Fitzgerald as a writer of dual character in which the deep personal experience is enclosed with an almost scientific coolness of observation. He says:

. . . One of the most remarkable things about Scott Fitzgerald as a writer is a dual character of self-knowledge, the curious way in which he combined the innocence of complete involvement with an almost scientific coolness of observation, so that he nearly always wrote about deeply felt personal experiences. This curious sense of experience is everywhere in

Fitzgerald's work because it was the permanent foundation of his awareness of experience (3)

Additionally, Mizener observes him in terms of Fitzgerald's dual nature. There is consciousness in his writings that he is able to watch everything being cool. He has observed his society and social reality of his time. There are his experiences and the historical development of the actions that they come together through his writings. These are the evidences that also represent his experiences of felt dreams with reference to post war American dream. They come in the form of literary works to represent his society of his era that could not escape from the themes of reversal irony.

Furthermore, in his almost all writings, we can find his failure of American dream and difficult to find proper place to achieve the proper moment as Lock Ridge says, "when the fulfilled future and the wistful past mingled in a single gorgeous moment when life was literally a dream" (30). There are few writers who have identified with a decade of 1920's is Fitzgerald who come up with the central idea of reversal irony in his writing of novel. *Gatsby* not only resembles with the historical development of the era of the twenty and its history. But it also reminds the haunting mood of a glamorous, destructive time in American history. Richard Lehan writes:

The loss of an ideal, the disillusionment that comes with the failure, to compromise, the efforts of runaway prosperity and wild parties, the intangibility of that moment, the built-in resentment against the new immigration, the fear of new radical element, the latent racism behind half-backed historical theories, the effect of prohibition, the rise of powerful underworld, the effect of the automobile and professional sports on post-war America—these and a dozen equally important events became

the subject of *The Great Gatsby*, a novel that evokes both the romance and the sadness of that strange and fascinating era we call the twenties. (2)

Fitzgerald also speaks in favor of the Jazz Age, in his *Echoes of the Jazz Age*, as Bush says “as an age of miracles, an age of excess and an age of satire” (171). The way Fitzgerald uses satire in his comment on the Jazz Age that draws attention what he reveals in *The Great Gatsby*. They are the distortion and destruction of the social values and practices that he undergoes in his whole life. The novel emphasizes on the value of human order in defiance of all which defeats it. The effort in this study has been to expose the defects of the characters and their obsessive desire for material or money about which they are crazy. That destroys and isolates their life. Further, *The Great Gatsby* also describes the illusion of Gatsby’s life, failure of Gatsby’s dream and the dream failure that money could not give everything as he has wished for in fact turns into destruction and death. At the end, it reveals the reversal irony. Mizener comments in *Afternoon of an Author*:

I am very far from wishing to suggest that Fitzgerald was able to state discursively all that is implied by *The Great Gatsby*; it is nonetheless revealing that he thought was ‘the loss of those illusions that give such colors to the world so that you don’t care whether things are true or false as long as they partake of the magical glory’. (9)

Fitzgerald’s characters can be categorized on the basis of their certain nature, features and qualities. Many of the characters as Fitzgerald has exploited are psychologically complicated and indebted to his past experiences. His characters are often romantic, obsessive, alcoholic, neurotic, isolated, and materialistic. Material obsessions and crazy after wealth, alcoholism, socially demoralized relationship in the minds of the characters are inseparable from each chapter of his novel. It really reverses the American dream.

Fitzgerald's characters share the alcoholic features. Almost all of his novels contain such a character that sometimes becomes very drunk and is open on the aspect of drinking. The characters seem to be very free. They do what they want to do. It is nearly impossible for us not to get reference of alcohol at least more than once in his novels. Another aspect of his works is that in most of them his characters take alcohol because they are engaged in party. The colorful party always has alcohol as a favorite beverage in it. *The Great Gatsby* has many alcoholic scenes. The characters do not mind drinking whether they are happy or unhappy, successful or unsuccessful. The interesting thing is that women also involves in drinking alcohol. They are just shown engaged in their selfish and material life for what they can do everything like breaking relation and going beyond the social morality.

Fitzgerald presents his other characters motivated towards the wealth. They run after the money being hungry. They are money minded and selfish. Their love for the money becomes the theme in the novel due to which they have rejected their spiritual belongings. Then, it shows that they are longing for material quest. That matches with researched thesis the reversal irony of American dream. Moreover, another feature of his characterization is romantic. He himself has involved in war. His characters have learned about the meaning of life and death. Instead of avoiding monotonous life in the minds of reader, he uses such romantic characters. We can also predict that there was great impression of British German romanticists like Keats, Byron, Wordsworth, Schlegel, Coleridge and Shelly on his life. Great influences in early twentieth century American thoughts are of British, French and German. Cowley writes, "He liked to imagine himself as the hero of romantic dramas and he worked hard to cut a figure among his classmates" (29). This dream of being romantic also suggests to have been going from the reality of his society that reverses and ionizes the American dream.

Every work carries significant meanings one way to other. Likewise, *The Great Gatsby* also contextualizes the true meaning of the reality that is the reversal irony of the America dream. The historical development of American dream reveals one fact whereas the development of the plot in the novel describes about the postwar American society. They really contrast in each lines of the research novel. Further, Fitzgerald focuses on materially degenerated society that has resulted from the material greed of the individual of the American society. The American dream is to be wealthy in an overnight and to gain prosperity is solely rooted in American youths. However, ultimately the material craze has resulted out of money leads to the alienated and corrupted condition that rather destroys the lives of the characters such as Gatsby, Nick and Mr. Wilson. One clear meaning of the text is reality and dream are completely two distinct dimensions of the time and space that happen in anyone's life.

The atmospheres are not favorable to all characters. The situations to the characters are completely reversal that the characters want one thing and other thing happens randomly. For examples, Gatsby wants to have his love relation with Daisy. But lack of money, he loses her and inspires to earn money. He did so but he could not get her. Nick also wanted to be rich but he could not achieve and return to East Egg. They are materially obsessed that creates unfavorable atmosphere in character's life. Therefore, the war torn mentality, obsessive desire for material and consequences of destruction in social life show the unfavorable atmosphere. There is not fair competition that leads to the destruction and death of the characters in the novel.

When the attitude toward life entirely transform, the sense of culture and morality get its rapid transformation in American society. Beyond conventionality, the talk of love, kiss and sex become ordinary and day to day conversations to discuss among friends, guardians and parents. Female sexuality is made public widely and openly. Love

changes into sexual pleasure. Human relations become a material thing without any soul in him/her. Everything gets its market values. They are kept in the market place.

Americanism resembles with the mechanical production of pleasure. There occurs cultural inferiority and gap between the two generations. It questions on the mechanical age that burst into American culture by challenging the older restrictive morality, communal values and conventional gender roles. The whole decade flashes the moral decadence, materialistic attachments, changes in moral values, and lack of faith and purity among the American materially crazy people.

Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* covers a wide range of criticisms and responses since its first publication. Some critics talk about the psychological aspects and others focus on the nature of his writings. Some critics review *The Great Gatsby* as Fitzgerald's autobiographical representation. Some other critics only discuss on thematic contents of his work. The attempt to research this novel will be from post war American dream and its reversal irony along with all these comments and criticisms of various critics. In his criticism, Suzanne Del Gizzo argues, "the temptation in the discussions of the great Gatsby and the American dream is to argue that commodity culture is somehow destroyed the purity and nobility of the dream" (92). It shares the American dream of having commodity culture that has almost destroyed the pure and essential American life.

It shows that the post first world society was full of money minded. Happiness is the matter of bought and sold things. There is unfair competition in earning wealth. People think that happiness can be acquired through material success and for that money is most for them. Tony Tanner comments, "Gatsby's involvement in bootlegging exposes the corrupt side of Gatsby's character which has to be reconciled with his "pure" love for Daisy" (3). *The Great Gatsby* obviously explores the issue of money that they wanted to earn at any cost. Even they show happy past becomes possible by assuming to repeat

through money. It deals with the issues on the abstract concept such as morality, love and sympathy could be bought through money. But final outcome shows the illusion resulted from all vain attempts that the characters did in it. It clearly shows that the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness of American dream has transformed into dream of money and material prosperity.

In his criticism, Donald Scott argues, “*The Great Gatsby* documents the truism that money can’t buy you love, or at least not the tainted money Gatsby acquires in his campaign to take Daisy away from her” (7). It also discusses about the class structure and the female condition in post war society. Moreover, the protagonist asserts the value of human order in defiance of all which defeats him. So, the effort and attempt in this study has been to expose the defects of the society which Fitzgerald has presented in the novel. Regarding this, Matthew J. Bruccoli criticizes in connection of Americanism with *The Great Gatsby*:

An essential aspect of the Americanness and the historicity of *The Great Gatsby* is that it is about money. The Land of Opportunity promised the chance for financial success. Gatsby, who makes his fortune in ways never envisioned by Benjamin Franklin, does not understand how money works in society. (13)

In this way, Fitzgerald’s deep observation of his time and place reflect in it is loveless, commercial, machined, obsessive, material and immoral behavior of characters and their excess desire for money. He throws fierce satire towards the changing American material oriented and demoralized society of post war era in which he still aspects to see the moral world with conventional practices. He implies through the narration of Nick Caraway proceeded by other characters. They despite gaining the material prosperity face

destructive and alienated life that we can see through Gatsby, Daisy, Tom, and others. Therefore, we can see sufficient material to show the reversal irony in it.

In the next chapter, the subsequent paragraphs will explore and theorize the issues of American dream being critical in order to analyze the intended research novel how it passes through discourses of irony within the premises of the post first world war era.

Chapter-II: American Dream versus Discourses of Irony

2.1 Critical Views on Historical Development of American Dream

As we observe the history of American dream, it passes through the presence of the Native Americans and European immigrants. Upto the present scenarios, this land have become the places for the rest of the world immigrants who legally or illegally wants to settle in America. They want to be the part of American dream whether they success or fail to adjust there. The American dream have become popular because they regard this new found land as the place of opportunities, riches, equality, security, freedom and prosperity. Different individual and community with their distinct culture, religion, rituals, go there to struggle for their rights, liberty and happiness. It is a promise of freedom and infinite opportunities for all as Harold Clurman writes, “The historical American dream is the promise of a land of freedom with opportunities and equality for all. This dream needs no challenge, only fulfillment” (68). In contrary, it passes through the reversal irony because of the differences between saying one thing and doing another thing. This gap will be the central concerns to observe the American dream from the perspective of reversal irony in order to analyze the research novel.

The Puritans are the initiators to settle in American land in order to continue their future generations with the spirit of the American dream. They migrate to Plymouth Plantation in 1620. In facts, they are the pilgrims. They find their dream of a new land where they could worship their own God. That really fascinated them to be the part of American dream. They settle in America. Since then, the Puritan heritage and dreams have become the most important elements in their life. Those possessions continue to dominate and affect the American dream from one generation to others that they come into existence in the history of America. Current et al write, it (Puritanism) left its lasting mark not in the form of theological doctrines or religious practices but in the form of

attitudes that were real though hard to define- a sense of duty, of hard work and of success as its reward, and of mission to make the world a better place (13). It shows that the Puritans themselves are the founder of the American society. They have a vision of individual respect, dignity, and mission. They believe on hard work and their religious creeds make them call the worth being in the history of American civilization. They follow in their descendents that possibly carry the positive themes in the formation of American dream.

In other words, the vast American frontier possessed by the Native Americans lay open during the colonial period. They struggle hard with the land being familiar to the land. It is assumed that anyone who have gained enough intellect, bravery and worked hard. S/he is expected to have a joyful and prosperous life. Since, the land becomes infinite possibilities equally to the Puritans and those early European immigrants. There were no challenges for them to fulfill their dreams. The myth of the American dream claims that human beings are self-made creatures with infinite potentials to achieve wealth, freedom, happiness and love. The historical development of the American dream goes back to the time of the new-found land that takes a definite shape as a nation. Spiller et al. write:

Ever since the early days of Western civilization, people had dreamed of a lost paradise, of a Golden Age characterized by abundance, absence of war, and absence of toil. With the first accounts of the New World, it was felt that these dreams and yearnings had become a fact, a geographical reality fraught with unlimited possibilities. (192)

Along with these dreams, longings and limitless possibilities, the Puritans and early European immigrants possess the dominant themes and potentialities of the American dream. Dan Rather views that the American dream is one of the most powerful ideas in

the history of human achievement which, as an idea, is “older even than the nation and the words than given” (XIII). Moreover, one after another, European immigrants also come in the lands of America to achieve their dream. They are highly guided by material prosperity. They wanted to use the new found land of America as dream land to expand their business as emperor and colonizer from European immigrants such as French, British, Portugal and Spanish, etc. They are mainly from Protestants who settle in America. They conceive America as dreamland. There occur internal conflicts among the colonizers of the times out of which British remain as the successor. They start dominating the native immigrants as well as its competitors. British administration use continuous monopolies in their business due to which they went against the acts made by British power. It becomes the contexts for revolts. They go against the British tyranny.

The America as the nation exists in its truest sense with the concept of the American dream when Thomas Jefferson, the Declaration of Independence, claimed the Declaration on 4 July 1776. It is the most significant and genuine signatories of the Declaration where he mentions, “we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” (13). The signature including phrase “pursuit of happiness” was promised in the declaration has been considered as an essential component of the American dream. Everywhere and everyone in the American lives feel overwhelmed in this the most memorable announcement with colorful world. However, it still possesses some of the remarkable questions and needs elaboration in Jefferson’s concept of the American dream. In other words, this theme carries with the theme of reversal irony because the United States of America has failed to practice it in the history of its proceeding days.

It shows that there are great influences of European enlightenment and empiricism in America along with European immigrants. Jefferson is impressed by the concepts of John Locke, a political philosopher and better empiricist who advocated for the equality of all human beings. Robert Darton views that John Locke, whose phrase “lives, liberties and Estates” where “Estates” was replaced for “property” in the Declaration was “a philosopher of happiness” (5) Darton further says that Locke was really influential figure at his times that many scholars have considered him as the grandfather of American Declaration of Independence. Further, the declaration advances a contractual theory of government that seemed to come straight out of Locke’s Second Treatise on Civil Government (1690). In this sense, Darton adds, “Locke considered property as a road that leads a person to real happiness and provides his epistemological process” (5). In this way, we can state that there is no such fundamental ground reality of declaration of independence rather it gives reversal meaning because it consists of its oppositional contexts.

Dan Rather further claims that the American dream deeply encouraged American soldiers to fight in the deserts of Arabia, in the squalor of Somalia, in the jungles of Vietnam, and along the mine-infested roads of Bosnia. He adds, “The dream is what keeps them fighting when every rational fiber may be telling them to quit, and it is what they dream of returning to when the fight is done. And again I have seen the Dream’s power to sustain those who call America home” (XIV). Therefore, the American dream is an objective goal and vital ambition that always drag and drive the Americans with better hopes to tackle with any hardship. Moreover, it was during the era after the stock market crashed and between the World Wars that the historian James Truslow Adams becomes the first to use the phrase, the American dream, in an article *Catholic Worker* that he has written in 1931. He says, “The dream of a land in which life should be better and richer

and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement” (XIV). However, there was continuation in order to claim the dream of a land for better life and opportunity as Adams has viewed in his times. In fact, the Puritans had already sought when they migrated to America with the hope. They can continue the Puritan cultures, laws and norms freely in the new-found land. They believed infinite potentials of human beings through hard works in America.

Jefferson has considered happiness as an embedded ingredient of the American way of life. The American people’s real impulse of happiness is money, matter, and land. They thought that the chance to get rich quickly was another part to their definition of happy life. The dreamers believe on the happiness of the American dream that was highly possible because of the open frontier, the availability of land, the gold rush and the opportunities to get rich. They have also provided thrust to fulfill their dream of happiness as an American dream. So, the Jeffersonian vision of happiness has transfigured into the American dream of material success based on property or money. In this regard, manifesto of the Declaration Independence, the American way of life and their vision with the pursuit of happiness has a kind of foundation on estate or property or wealth. It is through the dream that they are really powerful and strong enough to continue their pursuits and missions. That is the reason that the slogan of the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness could not cover the majority of the American people due to which Martin Luther King, Jr. claims on August 28, 1963.

Unlike Jefferson, Martin Luther King Jr., dream is about American to see all blacks and whites enjoy equal rights. They are treated equally as true humanity. The main conflict regarding Jefferson is that his principal philosophy was highly influenced by European thinkers of enlightenment period that could not completely depart from material prosperity. It was just limited within the life of the white community. King

focused on African American counterpart and encouraged to unite for equality and equal representation. That becomes the King's vision of American dream. It is King's address while commemorating the centennial of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation:

In spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. (157)

King's dream is very lucid and broad where he has addressed the different races of both blacks and whites. In King's dream, he sees equal opportunities, dignity, representation and freedom to people from all social positions. For the hope to live a free life has become essential to American dreamers that one after other differs from Jefferson's ambivalent nature of pursuit of happiness. Hence, the American dream as King has delivered is the dream of equality and creation of full-fledged justice society where all citizens are treated equally and the society itself progresses as a big family of the American brotherhood. There is reversibility regarding his dream and practical approaches of it in everyday life.

The phrase "all men are created equal" shows its more dominant theme while delivering speech of the declaration. In fact, it appeals for a greater unity in the American society. Each American can easily feel dignity and self-respect in their creed, religion, color or class and has to respect equally. The Americans are treated equally in the American society which the American dream as King further says, "the American dream reminds us . . . that every man is an heir of the legacy of dignity and worth" (1). The 'all

men' the black and the white Americans, the Catholics, the Protestants equally included are the agnostics and the different immigrants. They have migrated to America along with their own religions, cultures and languages should feel that they have the dream of happy life, freedom, human rights, respect, the dignity and worth achieved through hard work are the vital components and promises of the American dream.

Another poet, political leader, human right activists and black movement supporter of King's time speaks in favor of the American dream as complex concept which is left in diverse ranges of areas such as politics, economics, social science, history, education, etc. The American dream appeared in many forms mainly is to create brotherhood among the citizens. Langston Hughes also speaks on behalf of the American dream that ought to aim at fulfilling its different apparatus like liberty, equality, fraternity, happiness, success, opportunity etc. He composes:

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is the air we breathe. (11-14)

The American dream is the idea that has guided the nation and its people through the early days of settlements resulting in the formation of a republic and writing down of the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration envisions America as a utopian nation which can fulfill the political, economic, social and other dreams of the citizens. So, the discussions on the concept of the American dream really cover multiple views with multidimensional issues of American society.

In political sense, the Declaration clearly highlights that the political American dream is the dream of a policy and strategy where all the citizens share equal political rights which echo through Jefferson and King's speech. They are striking and

contradictory figures until the present times. Other also claims that the American dream is the foundation that gives rise to the present republic. In this regards, Dan Rather further opines, “the American dream was the ideal that has guided us through the early days of the republic. And it was the ideal that was compromised in the drafting of a constitution that, for all its strength and stirring appeals to universal law” (XV). The political dream of a just, free and equal polity has a great impact on the American dream. The Americans live and grow up with different version of the American dream through which America has earned the ideals to teach and struggle is to overcome with the material prosperity. The dream of liberty and freedom are major components of the American political dream because “Freedom, after all, is America’s bedrock” (1). Beyond liberty and freedom, the political dream also includes the right to self development, right to realization of democratic form of government and right to human right as major ingredients survive in this world. Alice Rivlin writes “American dream also means a democratic political system in which most people feel they can affect public decision and elect officials who will speak for them” (1). Thus, the political form of the American dream encompasses a democratic republic where people get pleasure from equal right to “life, liberty and pursuit of happiness” or true brotherhood.

In case of family and marriage, the appreciation of family is one of the most essential components of the social American dream. They nurture their family with an idea, a dream and to be the family members together. Family as a unit always plays a significant role in maintaining social order and harmony. Hareven says “through much of our past, the family has been seen as the linchpin of the social order and the basis for stable governance” (241). This myth of the American family have lived together happily in the same household is a spirit of the social American dream. Unlike, in the text, *The Great Gatsby* is quiet reversal to family and marriage. There is no ground is left to have

lifelong family relation and marriage. They just run after the material prosperity. They think that material prosperity is regarded as the sense of happiness, liberty and pursuit of happiness. But it reveals the fact of reversal irony.

It is the fact throughout its history that America has been a nation of immigrants. The dream of the immigrants encompasses the concept of American dream. That should be the major concerns to draw the total historical development of the American dream. The myth of American dream have pulled millions of immigrants and thronged them into America with their various dreams. Thus, the immigrant perspectives of the American dream should be focal point while searching for the American dream. Though the immigrants have their own dreams of migrating to the American soil, they are caught in American dream to have the material quest out of which they desperately bind each other. Rather writes, “The American dream provides the best common ground on which to build the American future. As an idea, it is inherently inclusive, and it has the power to its meaning with each new chapter in our national experience and our individual actions” (XXI). In addition, immigration from all corners of the globe has given American nation as multicultural shape. These kinds of multicultural shape have also given new cultural compositions and raises height of honor and value to the America as a nation of immigrants. That is to say, the dreams of the immigrants should be the theme of the American dream because the concept of the American dream offers them sufficient space to engage actively in the American life and perceive themselves as Americans.

The multiple aspects of the American dream with multiple voices are critically analyzed in this chapter to reflect how the American dreams are expressed by different positionalities from one historical movement to others. This research has further attempted to explain about the dreams that aim at fulfilling liberty, equality, happiness, success, opportunities, justice, etc in order to create equal and just society in American

land from initiation to present history within the discourses of irony with references to the post war American era.

2.2 Theorizing Irony with References to the Post War American Era

Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby* is greatly struck by the overwhelming situation of in-between two world wars era. He writes this novel after one decade of the First World War being expatriates in France. It may be in literary and non-literary works that the ideal of American dream has become familiar phrase to describe about the ideal of American dream and its failure situation. After the First World War, American people have been corrupted spiritually because they excessively desire for material prosperity. They find the worldly pleasure on those luxurious technological products. They discarded the morality and spirituality. Therefore, it is significant for us to develop the theoretical discourses of irony in order to understand the underlying facts of the novel.

Similarly, *The Great Gatsby* really shares the spiritual barrenness, degeneration, infidelity, selfish motive, violence, and so on of the post war American era. There are some similar consequences that a researcher finds in characters and recent people.

Abrams defines irony in term of verbal one as, “verbal irony is a statement in which the implicit meaning intended by the speaker differs from that which he ostensibly asserts” (135). In addition, verbal irony comes out of the ostensible use of language intending a sharp contrast between the expressed meaning and the implied ironic meaning. It is a kind of figure of speech in which the meaning of a statement is different and opposed to the meaning intended. It brings a straight forward case of a reversal irony. They really exchange common themes and same traits of running after material prosperity. The characters become typical examples. They are very much attached with discourses of irony. They have clearly reflected the reversal irony. Therefore, this research carries

significant feature and encourages researcher to explore the reflection of the post war American era in an ironical tone.

The term irony means to the gap between the statement of oppositional meaning of what is said and what actually it refers to. The significance of the irony can be found in every day discourse. It is more obvious in literature. It is the reversal situations that exist in the minds of writers, critics and novelists through which they want to reflect the social, cultural, political and other facts of their society. Moreover, irony, in drama and literature, is a statement whose obvious meaning is underlain by a contrary meaning.

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English defines the term irony as, “The amusing or strange aspect of a situation that is very different from what you expect; a situation like this: the use of words that say opposite of what you really mean” (822).

Further, *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* defines the term irony from the point of view of its literal implication. It defines irony as, “Either Speech (verbal irony) in which the real meaning is concealed or contradicted by the literal meanings of the words, or a situation (dramatic irony) in which there is an incongruity between what is expected occurs”(432). In this way, it may be the verbal irony or written irony or dramatic irony that distinguishes gap between what is said and what actually done or oppositional meaning of the same speech or action or reaction of same individual, party and society.

If we see American history, after the First World War, the decade of 1920s appears as High Modernism. People become impersonal, selfish and materialistic. They are highly guided by the technical and scientific inventions. They mainly misuse such inventions. The feelings, emotions and inspirations have almost remained fragmented, isolated and damaged. The family and mutual relationships are torn into parts. The First World War causes great impacts in America and people’s ideal result in the breakdown of morality/spirituality, religion, optimism, enthusiasm and creativity. The generations after

First World War remain separated, disturbed, confused and misled into distinctly the negative direction forgetting the previous norms, values, cultures and assumptions.

Abrams writes:

Many critics agree that it involves a deliberate and radical break with some of the traditional bases not only of Western art, but also of Western culture in general. Important intellectual precursors of modernism, in this sense, are thinkers who had questioned the certainties that had supported traditional modes of social organization, religion, and morality (167).

It becomes proper environment to flourish modernism with common themes of depression, gloom, frustration, disillusionment and isolation. There are many conventional ideals and practices that remain apart. People show their disbeliefs the sustaining faith without hope and spiritual tie because of the war torn mentality among the people. Gale Carrithers writes, “There are skepticism and doubt, apathy and indifference, towards spiritual problems. Man needs a sustaining faith, but such a faith has vanished after the First World War” (303). In addition, Fitzgerald mentions phrases of ‘Jazz Age’ ‘Valley of Ashes’ are the aftermaths of First World War. Several people witness it. They reveal irony rather than fulfillment of the promise and accompanishment of the American dream. It is in fact, the failure of American dream resembles with the meaning of the reversal irony.

Moreover, it deals with the situation in which what is always differs from what appears. We come to know that the creative writers use irony as a literary device to show the gap between what is expressed and what is intended. The expressed meaning is for the concerned person or whom it is addressed and intended meaning is for the privileged reader. Thus, Irony simply refers as a mode of speech that brings a meaning contrary to

the words. This concept of irony would be a fitting one in Greek comedies, however, such a simplified definition itself sounds ironical since irony in its concept and function is quite varied, dynamic and broad in its present uses. Now, irony has become subject for everyday discourse not only in literature as a prominent tool for writers and critics to explain and analyze the existence, life and death but also refers to other common phenomena of the society. In regard to the intended text, it tries to measure the features of irony to show how it gives reversal meaning.

If we look into the short historical development of the word irony is derived from the Greek word 'eiron' which means a dissembler in speech. "In Greek comedy the character called eiron was a dissembler, who characteristically pretended to be less intelligent than he was, yet triumphed over the alazon the self-deceiving and stupid braggart" (135). The word 'eiron', in a sense of irony is first recorded in Plato's *Republic*. Then after, the irony indicates a technique of concealing one thing and expressing another one, which in literature becomes the most common technique to find out the gap between saying and carrying different meaning. In most of the modern critical uses, the 'irony' remains the root sense of dissembling or hiding what is actually. However, it is used not in order to deceive, but to achieve special rhetorical or artistic effects. One can be blamed by ironical praise and praised by ironical blame. The Roman word ironia does not have the abusive meaning of the Greek word. Cicero explains it simply as 'saying one thing and meaning another'. Though the term is applied early in ancient Greek comedy, it appeared long time after in literature. J. A. K. Thomson writes:

As we saw, it was long in fighting its way into literature, and even then got in only by the back door of comedy. It was a 'vulgar' word. so, when the thing it denoted had become anything but vulgar, the name for it

appeared no longer suitable and that is one main reason why we have no adequate treatment in antiquity of 'Irony' as such. (4)

In England as in rest of the Europe, the concept of irony has developed slowly. We do not get the use of irony in English literature till 1950s. Spenser had used the term irony for the first time in English literature in *Shephard's Calender*. Later, Dryden follows it. The irony, however, is not employed up to the seventeenth century. It was gradually introduced in literary texts with the beginning of eighteenth century onwards with broader meanings. Dryden, Pope, Swift become the successful users of irony in literature. Though the concept of irony has developed late in Europe, authors and thinkers have used it frequently and gradually in order to support it with various new meanings. Because of more importance of the new meanings that the word irony has taken, emerged out of the ferment of philosophical and aesthetic speculation that made Germany for many years the intellectual leader of Europe. The principal 'ironologist' of this period was Friedrich Schlegel, but no less contribution was donated by other thinkers and writers as like August Wilhelm, Ludwig Tieck and Karl Solgar. In the context of America, the means of irony really becomes the one of the dominant themes. It becomes more latent while observing *The Great Gatsby*.

In this regard, the characters show their interests for cars, travel, telephone, and the other technological advances. At the same time, alcoholic, systematic crime and fashion become daily ways of life. There are no such prohibition, the ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol. Public places are turned into real entertainment spots where youngsters feel free and open to express their sensual craze. Then, Fitzgerald has artistically narrated the riches and glamour of the age with the uncontrolled materialist nature of his time as well as lack of morality that destroys the American ideal, has become one of the significant illustrations of the post war American society. This is

nothing more than that of reversal irony. In this sense, Fitzgerald narrative technique share with the meaning of structural irony. It appears as a rhetorical weapon to reveal the intension and manifestation of the writer because structural irony depends on knowledge of the author's ironic intention, which is shared by the reader. Rather it is beyond the intension of the fictional speaker. Abrams defines, "Some literary works exhibit structural irony; that is, the author, instead of using an occasional verbal irony, introduces a structural feature that serves to sustain a duplex meaning and evaluation throughout the work" (135). In the novel, writer is careful and artistic to present the reality of the American history that passes through the material prosperity that is of dream to earn money and have the luxurious life that also reflects the far removed reality.

The world war era has brought great social changes regarding the women in American cultures. It becomes one of the vivid examples that we can see in the characterization of Daisy. They thought that it was emancipation for them from their conventional restrictions. The skirts get tighter and raise a few more inches toward the knee. They have even started puffing cigarettes and moving in unusual manner. Boyer et. al. say, "tale-tale ring of crimson" (77). It seems to be completely beyond the conventional way of understanding the social values and practices that passes through the American history. In this stance, Fitzgerald have portrayed the beautiful pictures even depicting American women in such highfliers, extravagant and distorted ways. This represents the failure of his present era through which generations pass. Boyer et. al. further adds, "Skirts length crept up; make-up appeared on many female faces, and the elaborate and confining armor of petticoats was drastically reduced" (99). There are other things also gets changing such as exhibition, theatre, cinema, books and buildings. They all serve ideal of American dream and its failure to shape the morality and other creeds. There are hostile reactions that the American people have often followed. The paintings

are spat upon, riots organized at opening of works, and political figures denounced modernism as unpleasant, ironical and immoral. These are the representative figures of post war American era that have covered the entire society of Fitzgerald's time and space in *The Great Gatsby*.

The decade of 1920s for the United States has brought the rapid growth in economic changes along with social and cultural values. The American people with its national policies have given greater shapes in business due to which the nation has moved around the business, economic expansion, technological advancement and the speed of the consumerism. It is legally or illegally that they have progressed towards the economic growth. They are inspired to earn property in order to make life happier due to which wealth spread, the mechanical life have emerged with many misrepresentations. The society becomes consumerism through the rapid production and consumption of the goods. People have moved from village to city where they see the future of just the material prosperous life. It is simply the artificial mechanical paces of changes that grew rapidly in the history of the post first world war American era. Malcolm Bradbury comments:

The 1920s was an age of Puritanism and Prohibition, but also of psychoanalysis and flappers, Jazz and film. The age that challenged innovation and looked back nostalgically to the rural past also saw massive new technological advances: the airplane, the interstate highway, sound in movies, and the highly raised sophisticated excitement of the cities. (73)

Moreover, there are slight changes have occurred in the age of advanced technologies. They have done business in many areas of entertainment. People have started enjoying with material productions. They have isolated from spiritual relation. They have even

compared essential human relations with the money and wealth. So, Gatsby and Daisy relations break easily. Gatsby starts earning money at any cost to make his life better and to gain her that money can buy everything. There is irony of situation in the life of Gatsby that consists in the inconsistency between appearance and reality, expectation and fulfillment or the outcome of events and its consequences. This becomes more vivid when we see what Kierkegaard say, "Situational irony is not present in nature for one who is too natural and too naive, but only exhibits itself for one who is himself ironically developed" (271). A sense of irony involves not only the ability to see ironic contrasts but also the power to shape them in one's mind. This is very applicable in the life to the protagonist of the novel who not only represents the failure of American ideal but also the failure of American dreams and representative hero of post war American era. The youths start seeing every things as the glittering gold to be everywhere around them. There is cut throat competition to earn wealth as much as possible with great means and other alternative ways. They have turned into alcoholism, noisy parties and jazz clubs. The happiness of life is defined through wealth and material prosperity. They have assumed that age changes because of the technological things and material prosperity. American culture becomes more urban based on New York set the social and intellectual heights that they highly search material prosperity that has ultimately turned into reversal irony.

There appear great effects of First World War upon the United States. One way to other, it may be French revolution and the Napoleonic wars or industrial and agricultural expansion. Later whole European engages in war that could not keep America isolated. Rather they show their participation in the First World War. It gives greater impacts in American life too. Harold Underwood Faulkner writes, "Europeans turned from peace time pursuits the gap had to be filled elsewhere, and the United States

as a century earlier, served as a source of raw materials and food supplies -man” (582). During the War, America plays an important role as an exporter of minerals, manufactured goods, and armaments through which they earn money. America participates in the war. They do enormous foreign trade even by selling weapons.

Then, it becomes the vivid examples how America represents its obsessive desire for material prosperity. Faulkner further says, “It was the result not alone of the war needs of Europe but also of an increase in trade with Latin America and Asia where the United States was able to fill the gap made by the elimination of Germany and the preoccupation of Great Britain” (583). The surplus of exports along with the prosperity in America, New York becomes the centre for economic growth whereas the Europe earns the destruction. However, American ideal dream could not isolate from such phenomenon of the First World War to exchange the dream of economic prosperity. It means that is reversal to the reality of what actually diverse voices of American dream consists of. In this sense, romantic irony becomes the appropriate instances to draw the reality. It occurs when speakers or writers ridicule their own seriousness. They try to balance the two opposites of human nature and bring forth it together. The writer has used narrator Nick Carraway through which he mocks his own situation. The position of the writer seems to be similar to the narrator.

The major credit for the elaboration of the concept romantic irony goes to the German thinker Friedrich Schlegel. Schlegel has declared that irony was nothing to joke about, “That’s true of course; and of course, it isn’t true . . . Affirm and deny in one sentence, and you too can be a romantic ironist” (15). In the same way, D.J. Enright in *An Alluring Problem* writes, “Most of us are, in our more modest ways, divided souls. Perhaps romantic irony is simply having it both ways - infinity/finiteness, passion/reason, power/impotence, praise/lament, angel/ape, all those ancient dichotomies - on a grander

than usual scale” (14). It describes about the two interrelated ideas of human fate from which they never can escape. He further writes, “Keats mixed ardor with reasoned skepticism: he found life both beautiful and painful” (14). Thus, he observes the romantic irony as emergence out of the philosophical and aesthetic speculations that also could not escape from the paradoxical relationship between nature and human beings. This type of irony implies itself in the incessant paradoxes of success and failure or even of life and death. If we perceive the real picture in the novel, the characters frequently share with similar fate of romantic irony. Abrams defines Romantic irony as follows:

a term introduced by Friedrich Schlegel and other German writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to designate a mode of dramatic or narrative writing in which the author builds up the illusion of representing reality, only to shatter it by revealing that the author, as artist, is the creator and arbitrary manipulator of the characters and their actions. (137)

If we observe the reality of the romantic expression, that also passes with the examples of irony. The romantic irony also reveals the hidden sense of the unequal relationship between the owner and labor, farmer and workers. Likewise, the consequences of War have brought major changes in the life of millions of ordinary workers, farmers, blacks and women. The war goes beyond the battlefield and leaves great impacts in the socio-cultural, political, economic and technological fields. American has also brought the platform for industrial productivity based on technologies. The automobiles, radios, electrical appliances, and other consumer goods give new hopes. They grow further material prosperity in order to develop the national economic growth. The economy boom was grounded on the automobile field with new consumer goods that generate America as further material prosperous nation. Many business policies makers and wages

policies remain grounded on wage policies, productions and organizations. Alice Rivlin writes, “Rejecting the conventional economic wisdom, many enlightened business leaders began to argue that employers should not pay lowest wages possible rather higher wages should generate higher productivity” (832). This has even enabled factory workers to consume sophisticated consumer goods for the extra income sources in their life.

As a result of the American’s metropolitan transformation, traffic jams and the accident rates become common phenomenon due to heavy uses and craze of the automobile in American society. Going outside the houses, eating out and travelling into different places become the desire for American in their daily life. The automobiles anchor American urban people to come across their desires. They get different sources and means to entertain in their life. The parents and guardians become aware of their children and allow them to enjoy with friends and peers for any kinds of entertainment. Alice Rivlin further adds:

While the automobile brought the family together for excursions and vacations, it could also erode family cohesion. Young people welcomed the freedom from parental oversight that is offered. As the Lands observed, young person could now jump into a car with friends and drive to dance in distant city on a whim, with no one’s permission asked. (843)

In addition, the automobiles, electrical appliances and other mass products rapidly grew that brought change in the technological order. Radios, the movies, corporation, advertising agencies and mass magazines become earning sources as well as information provider to advertise about the technological products in world society. These mechanized consumer goods make the life more comfortable and desirous in the urban areas. Such technological and market oriented innovations become daily life of the metropolitans. In a way, the lives completely become the readymade items. The impacts

of electric and technological changes have also brought remarkable changes even in the life of housewives in America. With the “advent of refrigeration, supermarkets and motor transport, fruits and vegetables became available year-around significantly improving the national diet” (845). In regards, we can observe similar kinds of pictures that reflect social transformation. The life of Gatsby really reflects the modern American life and post war American era where he desires to have luxurious and deluxe life. Daisy also falls under the same conditions towards which her obsessive desire for material has been the significant issues. With references to the novel, irony may appear in the form of satire. It can be also taken as an artistic or literary expression, which generally aims to correct or reform either an individual or a society by means of ridicule showing the foolishness of an idea, manner, custom or tradition. Abrams defines it as follows:

The literary of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation. It differs from the comic in that comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself, while satire derides; that is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt that exists outside the work itself. The butt may be an individual, or a type of person, a class, an institution, a nation, or even the entire human race. (275)

Thus, satire can be defined as a sacred weapon of writers, which is intended for amusement and for the defense of truth. A number of writers like Chaucer, Dryden, Pope, and Swift have successfully used it ridiculing the character, intentions, or behavior of a person or a society. Swift, for example, in his *Modest Proposal* simply reveals his unambiguous moral indignation by use of it in such a way that the readers are required to reverse its meaning. He writes:

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old or a most delicious, nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, baked or boiled and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee, or a ragout. (44)

Here, the irony for Swift matches to reveals the assumption of brutality and inhumanity in the mind of readers. Swift's main concern is the dealings of English people with the Irish people. That is to say to understand the implication of irony; we have to go far from its literal meaning of words and to the meaning only sensed beyond the pages. Sometimes there can be only simple reversal of meaning. Suppose, as you are in a pretty sight; or as in the daily routine pleasantries of every day. The real meaning sometimes is not an exact reversal of what actually is said. In such situation, the irony may lie somewhere between the literal meaning and its logical opposite. In the meantime, irony does not relate only the events but also the temperament and personality of person who observes the events. Its coloring may result from the passing moods or from a deep-rooted habit of mind and its directions may obey the logic of particular chain of events. It may originate in a vision of the universe that the particular events are selected to either identify or represent.

The post war American era seems to have been embedded with the money. People think that they could sell, buy and exchange everything in the market. They have certain market price. It shows that post war America follows the principle of materialism. They discard spiritual or moral values in front of advancement in technology based materialism which has occurred in the post war history in America. Then, it raises the curiosity for the reader what irony suggest and how it becomes relevant in regards to the post war American era. This becomes the issues of explanation in the following paragraphs along with its meanings, implications and relevance with reference to post war American era.

As we come through history, we find that a new one has frequently replaced the earlier definition of irony, though the basic meaning has remained the same. From the point of view of the historical development of irony Soren Kierkegaard's essay *The concept of irony*, is significant one. He opines it differently. He does not believe that irony tries to establish anything. According to him, "that which is to be established lies behind it" (278). There is yet another view in New Criticism, especially by I.A. Richards, Cleanth Brooks and Kenneth Burke, who focus irony as dialectic of paradoxes. For them, a paradoxical irony is the outcome of multiple impulses and experiences that are likely to be subverted by another. So, for them, literature is the representation of this fact of paradox, which shows how human beings maintain poise over such contradictions. I. A. Richards therefore defines irony in a similar way, "the bringing in of the opposite, and the complementary impulses in order to achieve a balanced poise" (26). All of these three prominent proponents of new criticism have favored the paradoxical nature of irony as it balances the opposite experiences and attitudes. From the below quote, it becomes clear through the words of Kenneth Burke:

Every literary context is ironic because it provides a weighting or qualification on every word in it, thus requiring the reader to infer meanings which are in a sense not in the words themselves: all literary meanings in this view become a form of covert irony, whether intended or not. (7)

Here, Kenneth Burke claims that language is essentially ironic. It gets justified since ultimately the words are representations of such paradoxical human impulses. So each word is condemned to be rhetorical. They have the nature of the representative figure of the ironical tones. They provide reversal meaning in literature or literary text.

By the end of the nineteenth century, almost all the major forms and modes of irony were introduced. It is even defined in terms of its aesthetic, linguistic and psychoanalytical implications. S.B. Srivastava observes irony as a characteristic style of poets. He thinks poets prefer to communicate their visions of truth in guesses and conjectures by making optimum use of language resources. Vasant A. Shahne makes the following comments on the aesthetics of irony as:

The aesthetics of irony implies that it is primarily an art of expression — allied with a sense of beauty and generating two levels of meaning. It is also a means of contrasting reality from appearance, truth from falsehood, Subtlety from shallowness. Aesthetics of irony primarily arises from verbal irony of a profoundest kind, since it is through words, the tools for conveying the beauty of paradox that irony operates. (31)

However, Noam Chomsky comments on irony differ from other critics and linguists. He defines with references to deep level meaning and surface meaning. For him, sentences play a vital part in literature or any literary creations. It prepares appropriate ground for contradiction and juxtaposition which in its turn generates irony. According to him, “The syntactic component of a grammar must specify, for each sentence, a deep structure that determines its phonetic interpretation. The first of these is interpreted by the semantic component and the second by the phonological component” (31). In similar manner, there is another dominant thinker of Irony, Allan Rodway, who views irony not only as a technique to drag out ‘true’ meaning but as a technique to expose double meaning. for him, “irony is not merely a matter of seeing a ‘true’ meaning beneath a ‘false’, but of seeing a double exposer on one plate” (45).

There is historical shift in its definition, meaning and practical implication that means that irony passes from Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Plato till to the modern writers

and critics. As we come across time, we can observe the complex nature of irony. Wayne C. Booth reveals the complexity of the mobility of irony. He has categorized all types of irony into two distinct groups, namely 'stable' and 'unstable' in his book, *A Rhetoric of Irony*. He is of the opinion that, "The act of reconstruction and all that it entails about the author and his picture of the reader become an inseparable part of what is said, and that act cannot really be said, it must be performed" (39). For him, on the one hand, stable irony shares the ironic intention of the speaker with the reader. They view the writer's phenomenal circumstances that the writer has also offered some patent clues. Then, the ironic writers in such an irony provide literary fixity which automatically promotes unequivocal, absolute and fixed ironic interpretation. That is to say, stable irony covers all intentional ironies, which say one thing and give the opposite. On the other hand, the unstable irony does not promote unequivocal interpretation since it is not finite, absolute and fixed as one interpretation essentially emasculates another. Unstable irony is a mode of reflecting the paradoxes in the structure of universe and in human existence. Irony in this latest sense is a way of writing designed to leave open the question of what the literal meaning might signify. The old definition of irony, saying one thing and revealing the contrary is old-fashioned. In course of time, latest sense of irony says something in a way that activates not one but an endless series of subversive interpretations.

In the following chapter, the research attempts to read Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* from the perspectives of critically discussed American dream and discourses of irony as developed in previous chapter. It really tries to explore the significant meaning of how *The Great Gatsby* depicts the reality of post war American society through the material prosperity, which finally reveals the fact of reversal irony.

Chapter-III: Textual Analysis

3.1 Failure of American Ideal Dream: A Reversal Irony in *The Great Gatsby*

The Great Gatsby reflects true picture of American society in Fitzgerald's era. It really deals with problems of the American people whose dream revolves around the material prosperity. They are overambitious towards the material objects due to which they are engaged in cut throat competition. They show the reversal irony onwards which Fitzgerald seems to be critical on meaningless and. implication of American dream in individual and people.

He has presented numbers of examples that also reveal the fact of deviance of American life from its ground reality. They are: the people's minds are fully corrupted, there is absence of the spiritual life, and the accompanishment has the relationship with material interests. They become clear through sketches of the characters that they are really longing for. Everyone in the novel run after the material objects except Nick and Mrs. Wilson. These have become the dream of the characters to reach in their obsessive desire for material. These are the reflection of the dream of the characters that they want to reach in their dream of achieving the material things. The money becomes ultimate sources for them to reach in their destination.

Therefore, the writer relates Gatsby's dream to the American dream. The way Gatsby fails in his dream and representative ideal is very much contextual and justifiable in *The Great Gatsby*. It further exposes the failure of American dream because there is certain resemblance with the dream of the characters and the American dream. Yet it also passes through the contradictions that quit goes beyond the real practice of the American dream due to which the protagonist fails to achieve it. This is the reason that a researcher wants to pinpoint such kind of gap in order to perceive the novel from the point of view of reversal irony.

Furthermore, Fitzgerald also describes the socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic condition of America during the First World War. As we observe the scenario of Fitzgerald's society, it is the aimless, emptiness and showiness. The stylish lifestyles, extravagance of parties, and the fake business are the features of his society. They have shown extreme madness towards the technology based productions. The figures of the society show superficiality, materiality and well being through the material things. Such ideal is regarded as the real personality of the society. Women fall on the same business run after showy life. For example, Daisy marries Tom Buchanan though she loves Gatsby. The meaning of ideal and the reality of the society are two dissimilar ideas, things and hobbies that researcher finds through the atmosphere and tone that the writer has described in the novel of his contemporary society. In order to perceive it, reversal irony becomes the real and appropriate instrument to understand the failure of American dream in *The Great Gatsby*.

3.2 America Dream versus Desire for Material Prosperity

The protagonist desires to be in touch with the material prosperity crosses the social boundaries. He becomes American ideal in the novel. His only aim is to influence Daisy in order to regain his love with Daisy. He wants to connect it through having money. He is able to buy the extravagant building, automobile, clothing, other ornaments and furnishing. Though, he achieves all material things, he fails to materialize his ideal along with his love for Daisy. Rather that turns into the failure of his ideal that really resonates with American dream. Daisy is so superficial that she could not understand Gatsby's heartfelt love. But she obsessively desires to have his all material objects that he has illogically earned and possessed. The meaning of happy and prosperous life of the protagonist turns into the destruction of American ideal or American dream. In other words, there is failure of American dream. This becomes vivid form the reversal irony.

In other words, it is during the seventeenth and eighteenth century that the life, liberty and property become a subject of political contexts in the European people basically in administrative field. Many of the critics blames that the American Declaration of Independence replaced the pursuit of happiness for property in the popular phrase life, liberty and property. It suggests that happiness resembles with property. It also becomes the extension of it. The characters find happiness in the property. They separate human relation, love and co-presence despite discarding the spiritual tie. Daisy loves Gatsby but marries with Tom Buchanan. From this evidence, Gatsby is highly inspired to earn money by doing illegal attempts. Nick Caraway is also eager to do same business but he returns from it and wants to be there in East Egg.

Moreover, the characters occupy in the moralless activity to achieve for material things. They struggle to gain mater and money being morally corrupted. Those are the representative features of high society's lifestyle of his time. The characters even dare to deceive on their spouse. They give importance to the money that has a kind of linkage with the material things. So they do not care about the morality and humanity. The American ideal comes across the matter relation that they are more selfish and self-guided. The protagonist Gatsby and Daisy represented in this novel are typical examples of the failure of American ideal due to the obsessive desire for material objects that they breathe and die whole heartedly. The lines read, "My family has been prominent, well-to-do people in this middle-western city for three generations." (12). If we observe the historical development of American dream critically that has been theorized in chapter two of this research, it just gives the ironical meaning to the readers. That is saying one thing and doing other things. Thus, it embodies the failure of the meaning of the American dream that has a kind of association with America ideal. They really share the themes of reversal irony.

Fitzgerald presents the characters such as Gatsby, Daisy and Tom symbolize the corrupted nature of the American ideal because they have tried to remain with material possession. They are not faithful and cooperative to each other. Instead, they show their craze to attach with material thing. They are fascinated by new material goods in the market. In order to achieve them, they do illegal things. The means of morality and sense of spirituality has hardly worked in writer's society. That becomes Fitzgerald dominant aspects that he has revealed in his novel. Gatsby's ideal to achieve Daisy could not survive and his failure depends on material things. The lines says, "his family were enormously wealthy – even in college his freedom with money was a matter for reproach – but now he'd left Chicago and come east in a fashion that rather took your breath away: for instance he'd brought down a string of polo ponies fork lake forest. (15). on the one hand, American dream always talks about the life liberty, pursuit of happiness or equality, brotherhood and equal presence of other. Jefferson, King Jr. and Hughes have revealed such facts. The literary texts are as the true representation of the society try to speak about the social phenomenon. We could not see such ideologies that the writer has mentioned in his novel rather we can find reversal irony.

In case of the money and material things, the humanity, relation, respect and love become valueless and discarded things. They run after the money and matter become so noteworthy to appreciate the motive for Fitzgerald's writing. Their desire is strong to achieve money and matter at any cost to show in front of the society. The characters are more hypocritical, self-centered and opportunist in her behavior and manner. In this situation, Daisy is typical in the novel because she inspires Gatsby to be materialist. Though Gatsby reaches on his material dream, he fails to materialize his ideal.

The money and matter for Gatsby is highly linked with love of Daisy through which he wants to see his happiness. His main goal is to win the love of Daisy but he fails

to win Daisy's love. The characters long for mater and money. They see possible to win love, friend relation, family happiness and prosperity. Gatsby's desire for material prosperity destroys his life which has resemblance with the American dream. They are the true examples of the reversal meaning that passes through the novel. It is the irony that the writer has depicted in the novel. Thus, it reveals the reality of failure of American dream that also could not escape from the themes of reversal irony in *The Great Gatsby*.

George Wilson unfortunate career demonstrates the fate of the ordinary individual in the moralless world because his faith lies at the end of the provincial moral values of the Middle West. Nick is able to keep away from personal destruction because of his detachment with money and matter. He returns to the traditional moral environment of his home in the West to continue his remaining life. There are just few instances which seem to be positive but the majorities of lines share the themes of material craze and its reluctant consequences to lead the ideal dream as the failure of the American dream. They depend on the gap between the promise and implementation of such dream due to which they are bound to face destruction and death. The lines bellow read say:

Here, for example, as the book is Gatsby's story, it is a story of failure- the prolongation of the adolescent incapacity to distinguish between dream and reality, between the terms demanded of life and the terms offered. But insofar as it is the narrator's story, it is a successful transcendence of a particularly bitter and harrowing set of experiences, localized in the sinister, distorted, El Greco-like Long Island atmosphere of the later 'Twenties, into a world of restored sanity and calm, symbolized by the bracing winter nights of the Middle Western prairies. (226-27)

In addition, there are two major setting places such as the East Egg and West Egg. There is also unfair competition between peoples of East Eggers and West Eggers. They are in search of the corruptive effect of wealth that they are trying to reach immediately. The East Eggers represent conventional belief. They believe on transformation based the social hierarchy through the whole structure of society. The West Eggers reflects showy, extravagant and vulgarity that is the result from the corruptive wealth. They use the wealth to purchase different material things in their daily life. They become gleaming and stylish in the society. The modern means of vehicles or automobiles become their standard and necessary of their life. The below lines says:

About half way between west egg and New York the motor-road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile so as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land. This is a valley of ashes – a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens, where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. (27)

The post-war American society reflects the crisis in traditionally established moral and social values. The war mentalities are the true representation of the writer's time and his society where the characters are longing for the material prosperity. It does not matter whatever the way they have earned the mater and money. Those people have potentiality to change his car and building every day. She/he is supposed to be the wealthy and social person of the society. The war and its aftermaths give different shape to the cultural restlessness of the post-war years in which the American people becomes the real victims. These become the true reflections in the novel. The matters of love, kiss and sex become matter of every day talk. Even the public places could not remain uncovered for

the adults. Female sexuality becomes the common theme of the everyday discussion. The changing patterns on the behavior are free sex, homosexuality and others sexual perversions. They have the material space that the characters are obsessed by such desire to achieve in their life. In order to make it more apparent in the novel, Fitzgerald uses symbolic meaning to valley of ashes to describe about the situation of the post war American society.

In *The Great Gatsby*, sex has been described as a mere physical pleasure. The characters evaluate the sex with material things. They have become the lustful. One Sunday, Tom takes Nick to meet his mistress. Myrtle Wilson is the wife of the owner of the service station in the midst of the ash heaps. Tom arranges for Myrtle to join Nick and himself in New York very afternoon. They meet an apartment that Tom keeps in New York for himself and Myrtle. In this case, Dumenil comments, “At the news stand she bought a copy of Town Tattle and a moving picture magazine and in the station dry store, some cold cream and a small flask of perfume” (32). It shows that the characters engage in sexual activities in the day time which is not the extraordinary thing in American society of the First World War era. The sex is like the commodity. They could easily buy any time like they could buy the material goods from the market. In this way, Fitzgerald narrative writing revolves around the ironical tone because there no such matching relation between ideal dream and the reality.

Furthermore, Tom and Nick converse with each other. They also meet Myrtle on the way to their destination. Tom reveals that he possesses not only a fine house and a beautiful wife, but also an energetic and vital mistress. He does not see any differences of keeping wife and mistress because he has lost all sense of his behavior. There are no such fundamental differences between keeping the mistress and buying the building. In this case, we can claim that Tom’s mood seems to be as an immoral and asocial character.

There is no presence of any kind of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. If we talk about happiness we also suppose to think about other. We can rarely find this kind of situation in the novel. He develops his relationship with George and Myrtle demonstrates his superiority. The aforementioned lines say:

When are you going to sell me that car?

Next week; I've got my man working on it now.

Works pretty slow, doesn't he?

No, he doesn't, said Tom coldly. And if you feel that way about it maybe I'd better sell it somewhere else after all.

"I don't mean that, explained Wilson quickly. I just meant." (31)

He threatens George Wilson being rude that he can sell his car. Tom really uses dominant language to show his superior position before George. Material craze has really destroyed the sense of humanity and brotherhood in Fitzgerald's time that he has depicted in *The Great Gatsby*. Furthermore, Tom's relationship with Myrtle shows his hypocrisy, brutality and dominance. He builds his relationship in front of his colleagues that he has a mistress though he has married Daisy. The given lines Nick has narrated become the true examples:

Some time towards midnight Tom Buchanan and Mrs. Wilson stood face to face discussing in impassioned voices whether Mrs. Wilson had any right to mention Daisy's name.

"Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!" shouted Mrs. Wilson. I'll say it whenever I want to! Daisy! Dai – Making a short deft movement Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand. (41)

Here, he breaks Myrtle's nose in the same way he had earlier injured Daisy's finger. It simply shows his sense of brutal power and superiority that he even dares to forcefully use with women. He is unable to accept women as counterparts in their life. He simply underestimates them. Then, the questions come regarding the social and moral values, is there real response and practice of the American dream in the history of America. This just shares the themes of irony while explaining the facts. There is Daisy's comment as well, he is "a brute of a man, a great, big bulking physical specimen" (14). We can interpret Daisy and Tom and Myrtle's relationship from the matter or money relation which has no background and preface with the American dream. Tom keeps an apartment in New York on 158th street just to continue physical relation with Myrtle. In this case, Tom becomes the representative hero who gives material values to even human relation. His ideal dream is to be away from society and to show a kind of wilderness. Myrtle Wilson always appears in her cold cream and perfume. She changes her dress many times in the apartment just to attract Tom sexually.

Moreover, there are other characters similar to Wilson such as Mrs. Porter and her daughter who change their dresses and become flesh to attract more males. The lines say, "On the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter and her daughter. They wash their feet in soda water . . ." (99-101). The contemporary American society seems to be quite disassociated from the family life. The sex is not only limited with marriage. Love has deteriorated into lust. It did bring any vital changes in life rather they link the love and human relation with money and material things. Thus, both Gatsby's love for Daisy and Tom's love for Myrtle does not result in happiness. There is no sense of life. They are not ready to exchange real sense of liberty. There is a kind of gender violence exists which reverses to the American dream and ideal as well.

In fact, *The Great Gatsby* is Fitzgerald's response to the post-war America that experiences radical change. This sense of collapse and destruction has psychologically affected the characters which have inseparable relationship with the post-war sense of world. They really encounter weariness, isolation and separation that we find in both the story as Nick Caraway tells in the novel. There is vast difference in their way of taking meal and enjoying each other. The society changes from conventional dress, meal and talks into going disco, pup dancing and drinking and entertaining with other's wife and husband become common themes in Fitzgerald's time. Broccoli comments, "time has turned the underworld and internecine wars, the blood and savagery that accompanied prohibition into something close to comedy, perhaps musical comedy" (104). Fitzgerald uses the characters are really drunkard and fashionable in party. There is frequent meeting between Jay Gatsby and Daisy. It happens at Caraway's cottage in the tea party. The atmosphere seems to be welcoming to each other. In contrary, American dream does not reveal the fact rather it conceals such reality. When we read *The Great Gatsby* it simply reveals the reversal irony. We do not find any matching instances that the writer has described in the novel and philosophical explanation, he has mentioned about the American dream. Rather, it is just the irony that passes through the novel. The writer's intension seems to satirize his society.

There are other beautiful instances that really show the irony. Nick narrates Gatsby's fantastic parties where beautiful men and women dance, eat and laugh over the night. The outside atmosphere of Gatsby's parties is extravagant and showy. They have gone beyond their conventional pattern of celebrating the cultural practices. They are in a kind of competition to expose their earning potentialities whether it is legal or illegal one. One of the critics Edwin Fussell becomes very much critical about the party that Gatsby

and his guests are enjoying. He compares this movement like fragile moths in Gatsby's gardens are the very image of an illusionary dreamy. Edwin Fussell views:

There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer nights.
In his blue Gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the
whispering and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon
I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft or taking the sun on
the hot sand of his beach while his two motorboats slit the waters of the
sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. (244-263)

They have engaged in the party seems to be much glamorous. They are shown increasingly flashy. Everything in the party is the result of the material greed that the characters run after it being crazy. They are parties, buying automobiles and keeping artificial gardens and dolls around their houses. Nick Caraway narrates that the guests come freely and go without any inform from the house of Gatsby. Nobody knows who real guest is. Nick further narrates, "I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited – they went there. They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island and somehow they ended up at Gatsby's door" (44). Some guests have not been invited. They don't know their presence to Gatsby, turned Gatsby's house into a stage set and a splendid illusion of grace and beauty. In the party, women and children are equally enjoying each other being overwhelmed by the uses of different level of drinks. They are carelessly dancing with other's husbands. It shows that there is no fulfillment of the America dream nor there is presence of any understanding in each character. Fitzgerald in his novel frankly expresses such kinds of radical changes in the life of American through his imaginative characters whose devotion and sacrifice is in the material things. They are money minded, corrupted and destructive. There is no actuality between the American

dream that embodies for and the way Fitzgerald has described the real picture of the American society of his time. The given lines say:

She had a fight with a man who says he's her husband, explained a girl at my elbow. I looked around, most of the remaining women were now having fights with men said to be their husbands. Even Jordan's party, the quarter from East Egg, were rent asunder by dissension. One of the men was talking with curious intensity to a young actress, and his wife after attempting to laugh at the situation in a dignified and indifferent way broke down entirely and resorted to flank attacks – at intervals she appeared suddenly at his side like an angry diamond and hissed you promised! into his ear. (54)

Nick learns that automobiles are sources of creating polluted environment after he has attended one of Gatsby's parties. This has become one of the sources to show their position in the society. Nick adds that the automobiles are only the hinting and a stunning account of the aftermath of Gatsby's gaudy party. Nick hints at the confusion, negligence and accidents caused by automobiles in the twenties. He describes "a man in long duster had dismounted from the wreck and now stood in the middle of the road looking from the car to the tire and from the tire to the observers in a pleasant puzzled way" (56). The American of Fitzgerald's times are shown that they are delved into the material things. They want to be the rich and successful person in the society who really possesses such material things.

When we turn the pages of the novel, we come across the issues or problems that the characters face. They become more complicated. They go beyond the ground reality. There are the uses of automobile and other kinds of material facilities that could not disassociate the life with these mechanical productions. They think that having the recent

means of technological products are the reality of the life. So, the automobile and its consequences are highly linked with the character's behavior and manner. They drive their vehicles with full of drinks which causes them to have the accidents. Tom also encounters with automobile accident. Jordan Baker narrates:

it was touching to see them together – it was you laugh in a hushed, fascinated way. That was in August. A week after I left Santa Barbara Tom ran into a wagon on the Ventura road one night and ripped a front wheel off his car. The girl who was with him got into the papers too because her arm was broken – she was one of the chambermaids in the Santa Barbara Hotel. (75)

These are some of references of careless driving and accidents. It stands for the future tragedy that Gatsby's and Myrtle's death by the car accident. It reveals the fact that the material oriented life drives the characters in destruction of their ideal that has resemblance with the destruction of American ideal. They are influenced by the material things. That is artistically depicted through the character Gatsby. Fitzgerald has suggested an essential relevance to the society. In this regards, critic Robert Long comments that is with automobiles. He further comments:

His (Fitzgerald's) use of cars contributes to an impression of externalization, of lives without internal directions, of causal accidents and wrecks as representing almost a norm. There is logic; therefore that the tragedies of the novel should be precipitated by the auto accident in the Valley of ashes and that Myrtle Wilson should die . . . on the highway, like a dog. (145)

Fitzgerald's interests to present automobiles is to bring difficulties, separation, greed and dehumanizing situation are the symbols of fall from the dream that they are no more the

American ideal. They damage people's lives and the American dream as well. Fitzgerald even uses car as a material object that symbolizes upcoming consequences for the final tragedy. Nick's narration reveals the facts as he says, "The whole town is desolate. All the cars have the left rear wheel painted black as a mourning wreath, and there's a persistent wail all night along the North Shore" (18). Fitzgerald reveals the fact that the material crazes among the American are the bad sign in cases of characters that ultimately causes the death, destruction and separation. Furthermore, Long's idea really suits as he mentions, "The images Carraway uses – the car wheel, mourning wreath and wail – all prepare of later recurrences of cars (involving accidents), funeral wreaths, and mournful wailing in the work" (193). Therefore, automobiles and craze of the characters is the representative evidences that happen in the American life are the consequences of the material greed that also signifies as destructive nature of American dream as well as American ideal.

George Wilson possesses similar kind of interests to be the part of the material things. He thinks towards his own benefits by promising Tom to sell automobiles. He sees his earning money and happy life that he can spend with his wife. The mentioned lines say, "Generally he is one of these worn-out men: when was working he sat on a chair in the doorway and stared at the people and the cars that passed along the road" (127). Wilson has been presented as the powerless and indecisive man. He becomes the true an agent of death for Gatsby. He mainly focuses on the people and automobiles business. He also experiences his wife's death that compels him to shoot Gatsby. Wilson's attempt to search order in the Valley of Ashes and somewhere in the West with his wife is associated with the automobile, an embodiment of material prosperity which turns into frustration and isolation throughout his remaining life. On the one hand, the novel describes the bitter reality of Americans of his time. They are highly obsessed by

the material prosperity. On the other hand, if we observe the historical development of American dream that has numbers of examples of escaping from the reality. Therefore, it clearly reveals the reversal irony in terms of themes and contents of the novel.

Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* depicts the vivid pictures of the changing socio-cultural and economic practices and values of his time. The description of party, the guests and their uses of dress and vehicles are clear examples of the material things. That creates radical fluctuations in life of the characters. Everything has immediate reactions. Young women are drinking, laughing and crying equally with their counterparts. Husbands and wives are freely enjoying. This is really crazy dance which goes beyond the social norms and practices. The atmosphere shows that they are beyond their controls. The events are extraordinary and wild that happen in the cars. The American enjoy in Fitzgerald's time seems to be the age of automobiles that have played pivotal role to throng easily in the extravagant and expensive parties. The women are equally responsible to create such kinds of horrible environment for their counterparts. Throng of the uninvited guests in the party is the waste attempts of the American people. They are the result of the material greed that they purposelessly celebrate with material things being wild and crazy in daily life.

3.3 Money, Matter and Its Relation with American Society

American society has been sketched as the money minded. The American people run after the money. They value for matter for what they need money. it has become the dream of American society. There are numbers of instances of money and matter towards which the characters move forward. Gatsby is seventeen, he wishes to have money. He also learns from the love of Daisy that he ought to earn money. Gatsby as representative hero of Fitzgerald struggle in his life reflects his desire after the money. There are other examples that prove the novel as protagonist's struggle for money. Everything is the

product of the money. Gatsby is able to keep servants and welcome the guests are the result of money. He is able to buy his building. He gives extravagant party is possible due to the money. He celebrates his life with automobiles has been possible through the money. Daisy marries with Tom Buchanan because he possesses great amount of money. So, American society covers the themes of money and matter are also the central concerns to exchange all material and emotional things in everyone's life. If they have they are satisfied. If they lack, they find life unhappy and disrespectful as a result of which they have engaged in such coat throat business.

Many of the characters in *The Great Gatsby* have their commodity life. Their identity is associated with the cars or automobiles. Gatsby has a hydro-plane, apart from his cars. He has even earned flight because Nick describes that his car is grand with fenders spread like wings. He has earned such amount of money that exposes his superior position in the society. It is able to attract the people around his surroundings. The aforementioned lines reveal the fact:

I'd seen it. Everybody had seen it. It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hatboxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of wind-shields that mirrored a dozen suns. Sitting down behind many of glass in a sort of green leather conservatory we started to town. (63-64)

Here, it simply shows a symbol of wealth and material prosperity that the characters possess except Nick caraway. Nick uses an old model Dodge. He drives other's car mainly riding with Gatsby. In their conversations, Tom Buchanan and Jordon Baker say that Nick is the one who is not tainted by material desire of owning a grand car. Unlike him, they are crazy to have the material things. In order to buy them, they need money. They are engaged to earn money even by doing illegal business. We further discuss how

Gatsby continues his business to have the wealth and social prestige in life to depict American society.

The novel further deals with the theme of moral carelessness to provide meaning that comes from the motif of careless driving, apparently the rise of power without a sense of responsibility or of humanity. Mrs. Wilson becomes the personification of such carelessness until that role is taken over by Tom says, "It's bitch," said Tom decisively. "Here's your money. Go and buy ten more dogs with it" (33). Nick comments that Daisy and Tom is careless people having a sense of power seeking, of selfishness, and of complete moral desertion. Jordon Baker manages to be honest and says, "I hate careless people. That's why I like you" (60). This conversation between Nick and Jordon Barker embodies that it is the mater and money that drive them carelessly towards the immoral and uncivilized world.

Fitzgerald's uses of symbols show the failure of the American ideal. Americans regard money as the medium to reach in such personal dream. This personal dream has a sense of association with American dream. Clothes or material goods immediately enchant other people. Daisy and Gatsby moment of meeting can be taken as the disillusionment of the material charms. Gatsby brings his material possessions as a means to show his feelings. She immediately comes close to his fascination. In this stance, Roger Lewis comments, "Even the sentiments are genuine; they are formulated in monetary terms. Gatsby's love for Daisy is an intense and worked-out variety of that which lovers of all ages have felt; its expression is distinctively that of postwar America, of a society that consumes" (46). Then, love is reduced to a mere commodity that can be bought and sold to consume by the display of one's material possession. The power of the money and American society it destroys the sense of morality and humanity on which

Fitzgerald seems to be critical through the representation of the characters. They are found in his novel.

Further, Gatsby wants Daisy to see his huge and grand mansion, a symbol of material prosperity, and revive her love for him. He says to Nick “I want you and Daisy to come over to my house. I’d like to show her around” (86). Gatsby knows the fact that he has lost his love being poor and not having money, he is rushed to be a millionaire man. He did rightly. That he want to show Daisy to impress her. Then, what Gatsby wishes to see is Daisy’s evaluation of his house in material sense. The below mentioned lines share:

He hadn’t once ceased looking at Daisy and I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her sell-loved eyes. Sometimes, too, he started around at his possessions in dazed way as though in her actual and astounding presence none of it was any longer real once he nearly toppled down a flight of stairs. (88)

Daisy is money minded. The matter becomes sources of entertainment for her due to which she marries Tom for his string of pearls value at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars leaving behind Gatsby’s love to wither. And again she cries stormily over Gatsby’s display of his beautiful shirts. In this case, Fitzgerald is really able to catch the mentality of the not only of men but also of women of his society how they caught in monetary and material objects. There is fascination and attachment between and among the characters that describes the themes of American society.

This is another example that illustrates the American society and their money nature as an essential part of their life in the matter of material possession. Mrs. Wilson has close relationship with Gatsby with whom Mr. Wilson has borrowed and given her a borrowed piece of suit. Gatsby has helped in that process. But, Mr. Wilson has never told

such fact. So, Mrs. Wilson confesses that she married as she says, “Mr. Wilson because she thought he was a gentleman” (39). Moreover, she says about her reality of not having the craze of money that Wilson and Gatsby possess. She further reveals:

The only *crazy* I was when I married him. I knew him. I knew right away I made a mistake. He borrowed somebody’s best suit to get married in and never told me about it, and the man came after one day when he was out. She looked around to see who was listening: “oh, is that your suit? I said. This is the first I ever heard about it.’ But I gave it to him and then I lay down and cried to beat the band all afternoon.” (39)

Fitzgerald describes his generation through the eyes of mater and money that the characters have wholeheartedly spent their time. He adds to express it from the mouth of Nick when he in his latter days learns while joining one of Gatsby’s gaudy parties. Nick describes about the young Englishmen as hungry when they appear in the party. Nick is aware how these young people struggle to shape themselves in Gatsby’s paths. They come without any information in his party. He narrates:

I was immediately struck by the number of young Englishmen dotted about; all well dressed, all looking a little hungry and all talking in low earnest voices to solid and prosperous Americans. I was sure that they were all selling something: bonds or insurance or automobiles. They were, at least, agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key. (45)

The Great Gatsby is as a representative dream hero American society of the twenties that examines the fearless, illegal and careless American life. They run after the disastrous price that the people do cut throat competition for money. It is clear through the example

of Gatsby's fate. Jay Gatsby claims in his own personal vitality and the power of money. He assumes that money can earn the power to gratify his personal quest. He also believes that he can bring back his lost past. When Nick says "you can't repeat the past", Gatsby cries incredulously, "Can't repeat the past? . . . Why of course you can!" (104). Gatsby is overconfident that he can extend his personal strength through money. He understands his past and his happiness in the money. He thinks he can go back to Louisville with Daisy and can get married from her house. In addition, Lehan views that with the development in civilization man moves to the city that has become centre for money. He writes:

The rise of a new breed of money brokers turns the old world upside down . . . In historical terms, culture gave way to civilization; in human terms, Faustian man gives way to Enlightenment man – the priest – king is replaced by the new Caesar, the man of money and power. When this happens, a primitive sense of race is lost, and the decay embodied in the idea of civilization begins. (84)

Fitzgerald shows the decay of modern money minded American society. Everything turns into the unconditional desire for money and its power. Tom Buchanan represents the rise of the new money Caesar as the new nexus of power who run after and misuse the power for his own selfish benefits. Tom makes Myrtle an object of his lust. He exploits her sexually of being powerful and of having a higher social position. She keeps her boundless dream of marrying Tom and living a wealthy life though she is wife of George Wilson, her husband. He knows her reality and decides to sell the garage and go west because his wife's incestuous behavior irritates him. This is the cause of the desire for money. Having her shattered dream and being frustrated, they want to finish their each enemy. Then, Myrtle runs towards the death car which Daisy is driving because Myrtle

thinks that it is Tom's car. Gatsby too becomes a scapegoat. These all happen in the Plaza Hotel, Daisy, while driving Gatsby's car, runs over and kills Myrtle Wilson. The only fact is that matter and money onward which American society is crazy is the great cause of the tragedy. They happen around the plaza hotel.

In order to make his story more affective, Fitzgerald bring historical and mythical narration that also reveal the failure story of certain mythical character. In this stance, Nick Caraway narrates the mythical story of Dan Cody who crosses sailing into his world. He compares the life of Dan Cody with the life of Gatsby whose desire is to come across the world by earning great deal of money and to have matter associated life. The aforementioned lines say,

Dan Cody is at that point fifty years old then, a product of the Nevada silver fields, of the Yukon, of every rush for metal since seventy-five. The transactions in Montana copper that made him many times a millionaire found him physically robust but on the verge of softmindedness, and suspecting this an infinite number of women tried to separate him from money. (95)

This is the mythic characters through which the writer in his work wants to show the historical development of the American dream. They are crazy after their dream of earning money or expending the material things into other parts of the world is just to earn money. Gatsby develops his relations with Meyer Wolfsheimer who introduces him as the New York underworld man. This is the secrecy through which he earns great amount of money. The money and matter comes from bootlegging, gambling, and bucker shops that Gatsby makes the fortune that gives him mansion, automobiles, servants and guests in his compounds on West Egg. As Nick deal with Wolfsheimer after Gatsby's death, he also reveals the reality of using him in business:

He hadn't eaten anything for a couple of days. 'Come on have some lunch with me,' I said. He ate more than four dollar's worth of food in half an hour."

Did you start him in business?" I inquired.

"Start him! I made him"

"Oh"

"I raised him up out of nothing, right of gutter" (156-57)

It shows that Gatsby's life begins from gutter and ends with the death that no one knows in the busy money minded American society of Fitzgerald's contemporary America. In addition, Tom and Daisy's moneyed selfishness compels Wilson to commit suicide after he murders Gatsby in cold blood. He becomes an agent to cause Gatsby's world upside down world. The extreme carelessness of Daisy and Tom as Nick comments is consequences of money, matter and moneyed mentality that is responsible for the destruction of American ideal. In this regards, American dream symbolizes its failure in broader sense. Nick says:

I could not forgive him or like him but I saw that what he had done was, to him, entirely justified. It was very careless and confused. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy – they smashed up things and careless people and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together and let other people clean up the mess they had made (164)

It deals with the true life of the moneyed American society and the power of their money that makes others scapegoats just for the sake of accomplishing their own personal interest and selfish motifs. It was during the twenties, money being easily accessible. Money, matter and American society are the common themes of in the novel. It

highlights more on material pursuit which is possible through the money. Material desire, technological product and mass media are the major sources of the Americans. Consumer goods and new house appliances based on technology product such as radios, telephone, refrigerators, family cars and new mass entertainments bring great cultural and economic changes everywhere in American society. The material things that they want to possess at any cost have the monetary value. Bradbury writes:

To shape and relationships were commercialized as people believed they could buy love, life and happiness by means of money. Shifted the USA from a production – to a consumption-centered economy, redistributed income, and split the past from the present, the country from the city, giving American culture a gloss, a bustle, a metropolitan vigor and a high-rise technological face that spread its messages and images right across the nation. (74-75)

It conceals the American society and attitude towards the money has created the problems among the people that they are represented through the protagonist and his relationship with other characters. That causes the environment of disbelief among the characters. When Mrs. Wilson know about the reality, which bring the problem between Myrtle Wilson George Wilson as husband and wife. As Daisy comes to know the source of Gatsby's money, she changes her interest in him forever. Gatsby also learns the value of the money and being poor in his life that creates separation in his love. He knows what West Egg stands for. It is an extension of city's underworld. As a westerner, he has brought a frontier sense of self to New York and played it out destructively in the world of Tom Buchanan. When Tom tells Daisy and Jordan the source of Gatsby's money in Plaza Hotel scene, Daisy becomes terrified and Jordan simply looks at him as if something smelled bad. Dan Cody's money was also olfactory, so is the case with the

Buchanan's sources. Gatsby never learns this simple truth and blindly goes in earning money. He easily believes that illegal money can win the ideal object such as love and social prestige in life. In this way, there are sufficient reasons behind characters' failure of reaching in the dream world that can be understood through Fitzgerald's novel with the reversal irony.

3.4 Reversal Irony

In many sense, Fitzgerald's representation of Gatsby symbolizes the reversal irony. He is impressed by the false impression that money can bring back his past, prestige and social dignity. He struggles to possess money to be in touch with his mansion, clothes, automobile and all material. They are his dream. He does all these attempts without any sources that become mysterious. His earning sources of money just give him momentarily pleasure. The way Gatsby fails in his dream to achieve his true love as an individual. America also fails to accept its dream as nation has a kind of resonance. At the end of the novel, he completely fails to accept his dream. His house, as Fitzgerald describes it is, "a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw and a marble swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden" (9). This house, as Fitzgerald fabulously describes is an immaculate symbol of Gatsby's incalculable income. He further say, "The house he feels he needs in order to win happiness" (9). He has an elegant mansion that of which an excellent symbol of carelessness is displayed and is a part of Gatsby's own persona. As a whole, it simply passes through the reversal irony.

In Gatsby's material position, he has achieved his goal which to some extent contradict with American dream because the American dream has association with life, liberty, equal understanding and pursuit of happiness is from the material prosperity. This is the example that he has kept eight servants in his house. They work for party and

guarding the house. It has its own entrance gate and is big enough to hold hundreds of people at a time. His careless use for money to impress others is portrayed through his clothes, a gold metallic hat, silver vests and gold jackets. The shirts and clothes that are ordered every spring and fall show his simplicity in expressing his wealth to his beloved Daisy. At the sight of his piles and piles of shirts, Daisy breaks down and says, “They are such beautiful shirts, it makes me sad because I’ve never seen such beautiful shirts before” (89). We can imagine that keeping servants and exploiting others question on the validity and reality of the American dream. Those shirts have its symbolic meaning that means the shirts themselves overwhelm towards Gatsby’s wealth. Fitzgerald shows that Gatsby uses his money to buy Daisy. But his wealth draws Daisy closer temporarily to him as she does with Tom Buchanan. In fact, there is reversal irony in the lines.

In addition, we realize that both Tom and Daisy are careless characters. They are not serious about other seriousness. They only concern about money. They humiliate other. They are responsible for Gatsby and Wilson death because they have wooed them to move into such direction. The aforementioned line says, “They smashed up things . . . and then returned back into their money” (24). They only know about the money. Gatsby realize about the reality. Daisy is responsible to create or destroy his life. So does happen in the life of the characters’ life. He feels that he must be rich and he carelessly indulges into illegal activities to regain his past love. By earning enough money, he expresses his love for Daisy, Gatsby is badly abandoned. Lehan adds:

The word ‘conspiring’ suggests that Daisy does confide in Tom – and so the meaning of *The Great Gatsby* in some ways turns on one word. The narrative implications here are gigantic: if Tom knows that Daisy was driving Gatsby’s car when he sends Wilson to Gatsby’s house, then Tom kills Gatsby as clearly as if he pulled the trigger himself. If

he does not know, then Daisy is equally complicit in Gatsby's death.

(78)

They are unknown about the fact that there occurs car accidents but Tom knows the reality. He becomes an agent to bring Gatsby's world upside down. This might be the reason of material craze that destroys the life of Gatsby and Wilson. It is the vast carelessness of Daisy and Tom, as Nick comments, "is a consequence of money and moneyed mentality because the money they have taken is of them" (164). It is sketch of the money driven American society and the power of their money makes others to be the scapegoats just for the sake of accomplishing their own personal interest and selfish motif. Such kind of dramatic irony embodies the real meaning of the matter and money oriented American society.

Dramatic irony often becomes the Tragic irony that is successfully practiced in Greek Tragedies. The dramatic irony and the ironic effect depend on the author's ironic intention that the author want to share with the audience. Sophocles' king Oedipus in *Oedipus Rex* also shares the view of the dramatic irony. Now days, it has its implication in many fictional narrative, "Whenever an author deliberately asks us to compare what two or more characters say of each other or what a character says new with what he says or does later" (63). Furthermore, Abrams defines the terms as:

Dramatic irony involves a situation in a play or a narrative in which the audience or reader shares with the author knowledge of present or future circumstances of which a character is ignorant; in that situation, the character is unknowingly acts in a way we recognize to be grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or expects the opposite of what we know that fate holds in store, or says Something that anticipates the actual outcome, but not at all in the way that the character intends. (137)

In its broader analysis, dramatic irony becomes vivid whenever the audience sees a character with assurance remains in the position of being unaware of his ignorance. For instance, we can find a dramatic irony the dialogue between Oedipus and Louis. But he does not know the man whom he has killed is his own father. Oedipus then puts a curse on the slayer of Louis. We come to know that Oedipus has married his own mother, but he is ignorant about the fact as he says, “A man should live only for the present day. Have no more fear of sleeping with your mother” (831). In a similar manner, Gatsby also experiences the dramatic irony that reveals about the immediate circumstances or future events of which he is unknown and ignorant. That is he is going to be the victims of the car accidents. Therefore, in this novel, the irony lies in the heart of the plot as the writer has described in it.

Gatsby’s failure to achieve Daisy with all the wealth and material goods symbolizes the failure of American dream that material prosperity guarantees the pleasure of their dreams to individuals. It has linkage with the writer’s narrative technique to show the feature of irony in it. Edwin Fussell comments on Gatsby’s lured reduced and destroyed fate resulted out of the American dream of capitalism rather than the ideal American dream that has been influenced in American history in Fitzgerald era. He views, “The escape from time and the materialistic pursuit of a purely hedonistic happiness” (258). Thus, the novel is the critique of the fatal beauty of American capitalism, its destructive charm and recklessness through that are justified by the subtitle of the research that reflects reversal irony.

Gatsby has strong faiths in the automobile that is a symbol of material prosperity. In reality, it causes his death. Gatsby, an embodiment of American dream of material prosperity, dies with a tragic death that is linked with a matter and money. Similarly, George Wilson’s intension is to impress his wife by means of a borrowed piece of suit

that embodies matter and money that at the end destroys their family life. Tom's faithless relationship with Myrtle is misuses of the material desire. Daisy's selfish nature to choose Tom rather than Gatsby's ideal love has a kind of underlying relation of failure of American dream. They really share the themes of reversal irony. The narrator Nick says that material prosperity has made American society selfish, morally corrupted, degenerated and careless. The selfishness and carelessness are the results of the matter and money that ultimately destroys individual life also has a kind of linkage with failure of American dream. Therefore, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* depicts the reality of post war American society through the material prosperity, which finally reveals the fact of reversal irony.

IV: Ironic Motif of Material American Life

Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* reveals the fact of reversal irony that results out of the extreme desire for the material possession. The characters run after it without caring about the social values and practices. They are selfish, unfriendly and materialist. They look after the money. The matter and money become their sources of energy towards which they are crazy. They are engaged in cut throat competition in order to earn money. They find money as the reliable sources to get even social position in the society. They consider money as only reliable sources to conduct their life in better way. They have got inspiration to earn money. They want to possess everything by earning money. Then, Gatsby wants to earn money at any cost to possess all the material prosperity is to show his personality and regain his lost love become void, destructive and meaningless. This becomes the true example of ironical motif of material American life.

Even though Gatsby is able to achieve all the material related things such as buildings, automobiles, entertainment instruments, parties, he fails to achieve spiritual happiness or Daisy's love. This stands as the clear picture of failure of American ideal. That results out of the desire for material prosperity. Tom Buchanan has also been presented as the materialistic figure in the novel. His relation with Daisy has a kind of attachment with material thing. It reveals the irony in terms of the true meaning of the story. The conflict between West Egg and East Egg practices really reveal the dominant motifs through the characters. They pass through distinct conventional and modern experiences. It shows the reality of the post war American era of Fitzgerald's time that they are fragmented, isolated, separated and disillusioned among the American society. That still continues in American life that they are materially crazy and money minded. It reveals a kind of irony in the novel.

The materialism has been defined as the American way of life. It is a trend that draws the American picture is more apparent and visual. It is also an insight into the wealth and prosperity through which they define the term Americanism. In disparity, it reveals the true reality that the material prosperity is beyond the matter of social transformation. It is not just being the rich and wealthy means to have the social life. It further reflects the American's luxurious and extravagant life. The material desire really depicts the reversal meaning in the novel. It distinctly shows the failure of American ideal. So, Gatsby's main causes of failure life are the extreme desire for material things. Money and matter dominates the American society. In regard to the writer's motif, there is irony in the development of American dream and exposition of the dream that we can see in the novel because the American society is material society.

Materialistic desires have played dominant themes in American dream. American economy also possesses greater changes in their life. They have been mechanical. They sell the human bodies to earn money. Therefore, sex, love and affection cross the social boundaries. There was the tough financial crisis during twenty thirty. In order to escape from the tough financial struggles of a depression, many Americans engage purchasing and selling destructive weapons. They value the material things. In these recent days, Americans are followers of global products. They run after such products are just to earn money. In this way, the protagonist Gatsby, Daisy and Tom follow the material prosperity. They also become the prey of same material desire and money. One way of getting economic benefit can be from materialism. It also destroys values and practices of the American society. The characters seem to be successful and happy in the middle of the pages of the novel become the failure of American ideal at the end of the novel because they lack social ground reality to realize their own deeds like narrator Nick Carraway does by going East Egg who has faith in social life. He almost all remains

beyond the material prosperity. There is true sense of irony in the life of protagonist that also shares the themes of the ironical motif of American life.

Moreover, Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby* has been able to draw the clear picture of American history that contradicts while considering the issue of American dream. The Americans have made the beautiful slogan that life, liberty, equality and the pursuit of happiness are the foundation of the human's overall progress. It is the belief that the American dream consists of the material desire. But it reveals that the pursuit of happiness means the pursuit of the material prosperity. They are the money, buildings, technological products and automobiles can resemble with the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. These become the boundless desire for gaining material prosperity through which they want to gain social spaces with spiritual thing such as love, humanity, family and affection. Unlike, they also represent the failure of American ideal that is really the results of character's longing for extreme desire for the material prosperity. They truly speak in favor of the reversal irony that the whole novel passes.

Thus, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* depicts the reality of post war American society and its failure situation through the material prosperity, which finally reveals the fact of reversal irony.

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