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Critique of American Dream: A Study on Spark's *The Notebook*

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Letter of Recommendation

Ms. Sarmila Maharjan has completed her thesis entitled “Critique of American Dream: A study on Spark’s *The Notebook*” under my supervision. She carried out her research from August, 2015 to May, 2016 and completed it successfully. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for the final *viva voce*.

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Letter of Approval

The thesis entitled “Critique of American Dream: A study on Spark’s The Notebook” by Sarmila Maharjan submitted to the central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research paper focuses on the issue of critique of American dream in the novel *The Notebook* by Nicholas Sparks. The objectives of the study are to show how capitalistic society tries to get all kind of happiness through wealth. The protagonists of the novel are victimized by social hierarchy and the novel raises the issue of two different classes of 20th century where Allie represents the upper class and Noah the lower class. This class disparity creates a conflict and class consciousness stopping them from getting married. The study deploys capitalistic ideology and the American Dream to analyze the novel, how individual are subjected to the material ideology, get oppressed by it and struggle against the structure of taboos. Materialistic society does not value spiritual ideology as it prioritizes material possession. This research addresses the causes as well as consequences of imposition of parents' desire and values on their children. In this regard, this thesis highlights the unfavorable effect of the dominant ideology which inhibits individual's rights to live life as their wish and desire. Here, the human relationship is determined more by Socio-economic hierarchy than their feelings. American dream decides human relation from socio-economic perspective .It introduces materialistic and consumerism society where all characters realise the failure of American Dream.

Critique of American Dream in Spark's *The Notebook*

The research paper discusses on reflection of the American dream post war society in America. The post World War II period represents a capitalistic ideology which makes social relation on the basis of position of material prosperity and wealth. The American dream refers to a materialistic belief which had taken after World War II, especially America announced an ideal ideology. It drove all American including other European countries as well and later on it became global destination. It was an ideal world which can get by going materialistic achievement. In this regard, American dream showed a distinct path ahead, and then all people run after it for achieving their dreams. Regarding, American dream Lyndon B. Johnson opines, "The American Dream has ultimately been about the manner in which our lives unfold and the ability of the individual, no matter where he or she comes from, to exert considerable control and freedom over how that process occurs. In this sense, it is about being able to live out our individual biographies to their fullest extent" (3).

An American dream is a political ideology, was created in America when it was transitional period. In fact, it is a summary of capitalistic notion which puts forward materialistic society where everything becomes achievable with use of money and matter. However, the ideology was applied in most of the European and American societies. It has been common and individual slogan for all materialistic life seekers. For the reason, it hit all western countries so long as they meet material possessions. It is in fact hunting of material life after the end of spiritual age. The ideology convinces people to find material life in reality instead of finding spiritual life. This ideology fascinates all people for having physical happiness and consuming lives. It guided all of them into new perspective regarding thinking about life. Basically, life, liberty and pursuit of happiness are the wordy line but it carries larger

meaning. It had been interpreted from own understanding and it was applied as far as possible.

The novel has carried out application of American dream in which most of the follower assimilated the policy of the dream. In order to pursuit real application of it, all of them forgot world beyond consuming life. It is proper analysis of American dream in *Great Gatsby* which shows a complete failure of dream as Marius Bewley critically examines the novel:

The Great Gatsby is an exploration of the American dream as it exists in a corrupt period, and it is an attempt to determine that concealed boundary that divides the reality from the illusions. The illusions seem more real than the reality itself. Embodied in the subordinate characters in the novel, they threaten to invade the whole of the picture. On the other hand, the reality is embodied in Gatsby; and as opposed to the hard, tangible illusions, the reality is a thing of the spirit, a promise rather than the possession of a vision, a faith in the half-glimpsed, but hardly understood, possibilities of life. In Gatsby's America, the reality is undefined to itself. It is inarticulate and frustrated. (2)

The American dream brainwashes that wealth is one of the central forces for achieving prosperity and happiness. On the basis of the notion, the American society moves ahead. It ignores all rest of the social norms and values. It distinctly replaces previous spiritual values of society where humanity, love, kindness and generosity had values. It swept away all these values replacing monetary values in society. It changes human understanding about life and way of living.

In fact, an American dream was inanimate and abstract idea; however, it maddened people, when it was described as an ultimate goal and destination. Moreover, it was associated with heavenly pleasure. In this regard, all human beings caught it and run after it. Furthermore, it is explained by Johnson:

Take the quintessential American Dream of rising from rags to riches. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, Horatio Alger wrote dozens of stories about young street urchins who were able to lift themselves out of impoverished urban conditions through their hard work and moral strength, eventually finding wealth and acclaim in their lives. The popularity of these stories was enormous throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's, and this particular pattern of success has remained in our national consciousness ever since. (3)

The above line explains American dream was one of the amnesia which could give solution and it could rescue to the people. By thinking it, all people desired to achieve it for capturing maximum happiness in their lives. Referring the idea of American dream, this novel relates similar idea in the novel *The Notebook*.

The Notebook represents the same socio-economic condition of post World War II in which wealth becomes common destination for everybody. The major character Noah represents a poor class, but he wants to change his social status by earning money. He is hard worker too. He wants to be rich and wealthy person. Due to his desire for having his love, he has to collect wealth. He leaves his home and sets for work. In contrast, her beloved Allie represents wealthy class, for this reasons her family is not ready to marry with Noah. Heather has described about American Dream. In his point of view the American Dream is a myth. Furthermore he describes:

The American Dream Functions as a myth within our political discourse by providing hope to citizens and reinforcing beliefs in the protestant work ethic and meritocracy. It examines the myth through categories of mobility, marginalization and hope. One myth that has shaped the United States is the American Dream, interpreted through material wealth and class ascendancy. As a major feature of class discourse, the American Dream functions as a myth by appealing to and reinforcing the protestant work ethic, protecting our system of government, perpetuating existing class structure, and providing hope among. (268)

The research focuses on how economic factor influence social relations. In other words, the society values economic standard for making relations. The capitalistic society establishes this values that wealth can provide all kinds of happiness. The American dream values a materialistic life. However, the research questions over rationale of American dream which cannot give any more happiness, but it brings tragic experiences among people. Noah runs after American dream for achieving his dream, but, he loses his parents as well as other social relation. He has to be alienated by her beloved. Therefore, American dream fails to give happiness for people.

Spark's novel has been based on the concept of class. In novel, upper class, or the "moneyed class", is present as well as the middle class and the working class. In his view of society in America, Spark shows the balance between the different socio-economic classes. Spark's own experiences from both the upper class society and the middle and working class society have probably affected his work. The sense of not belonging to a specific social class is displayed in the novel as both Noah and Lon try

hard to fit in where they do not, according to the social standards of the time. The novel also equally portrays application of American dream which can be passion for as many western peoples however; the notion of American dream did not satisfy many of them. Bewley further analyzes the novel:

That attitude was bred into the bone of America, and in various, often distorted, ways, it has lasted. Perhaps that is where the trouble begins, for if these virtues of the American imagination have the elements of greatness in them, they call immediately for discriminating and practical correctives. The reality in such an attitude lies in its faith in life; the illusion lies in the indiscriminating multiplication of its material possibilities. (2)

It is possible to come from practically nothing and get almost everything. However, the novel also stresses the importance of social class and how difficult it is to ignore a person's social background. Even though Noah can display an enormous wealth he still does not possess the same status as is not seen as an equal in their eyes. It is evident that background is just as important as money in the assessment of social status, or at least how important it was in the world of 1920s American upper class.

Lon shows the upper class man that uses his old family money to get what he wants, in terms of women as well as anything else. As a representative of the entire upper class Allie represents all the negative things about a divided society as he is prepared to sacrifice people around him for his own selfish purposes. Lon's arrogance could perhaps be explained by the fact that he has lived his entire life believing that he belongs to a superior group of people due to his privileged heritage. Noah's personification of the American Dream matches with his class journey from a farm boy to a wealthy man living in luxury. It clearly shows the significance of social class

and status in society and the depth of it, as there are more factors to it than what we can assume by looking at a certain lifestyle.

The research paper discusses on background of the study, the historical time period signifies in this study. It represents post war period when American society was practicing new social ideology. After post war, capitalistic ideology entered into American society which established new notions that motivated them to have material possessions. In this sense, all Americans desire to have more material prosperity. Believing material possession can provide much more happiness in society.

Nicholas Spark's *The Notebook* represents the contemporary social realism by which the story has been influenced. It presents an ordinary love story. The novel captures to the end of twentieth century in which the novelist indirectly shows social norms and values. More importantly, it reflects material world's people values which determine human relations and culture in modern materialism culture. The story follows two young lovers named Allie and Noah who fall in love each other. Noah is the male protagonist who represents a poor class from country whereas Allie represents rich class from city. Later on, Allie's parents separate them due to Noah's poor economic which it causes separation between them. The novel brings economic issue of the contemporary society determines human relation as these two major characters are separated by representing two different classes. Another scholar Sandra L. Hanson discusses on American dream in this way:

Take the image of the American Dream that developed after World War II-that of achieving a comfortable middle class standard of living. This dream included a well-paying and stable job, a house in the suburbs, a family with two or three children, a new car in the garage, and a two-week summer vacation. Such images were broadcast weekly

into America's living rooms through radio and television programs.

The prosperous middle class lifestyle portrayed in these popular shows was seen as attainable for the majority of Americans. (4)

Noah and Allie are major characters in *The Notebook* who represent two different classes of the contemporary society. Both of them want each other; however, they cannot marry due to have unequal social status. Noah represents a poor economic class; therefore, Allie's parents disapprove to engage with Noah. The economic factor stops them from being married. Though, Allie loves him and ready for getting marriage but his parents do not allow for it, whereas, they look for another man from similar class status.

The protagonist of the novel Noah and Allie are affected by economic factors. It is determining force for them to make their love relationship. The society cannot consider over spiritual feelings, whereas, economical status separates them. This research aims to study a class consciousness which has impacted social relation as well as human.

The novel *The Notebook* has got many critical responses so as to the novel has been studied from many theoretical insights. However, the researcher is going to analyze the novel from a different standpoint which has not been used yet. This study applies Marxist reading in this novel. Unlike the researcher's standpoint, many critics observe the novel from several perspectives. Warner Book interprets the novel as a romantic story, he analyzes:

The romantics would call this a love story; the cynics would call it a tragedy. In my mind it's a little bit of both, and no matter how you choose to view it in the end, it does not change the fact that it involves a great deal of my life and the path I've chosen to follow. I have no

complaints about my path and the places it has taken me; enough complaints to fill a circus tent about other things, maybe, but the path I've chosen has always been the right one, and I wouldn't have had it any other way. (5)

The above mentioned extract clearly mentions about the novel as a romantic story in which both ups and downs happen generally. Romance is a common topic for writing novel however, the critic presents romantic elements in this book. . It just presents a couple's love story who wants to sacrifice for the sake of love. It means it is common subject matter for love story.

In the contrary, Jessica Cymerman views the novel from a different standpoint who introduces retrospective images which frequently haunt human psychology. He further interprets it:

Notebook tells its story in retrospect. A man in his later years reads to an Alzheimer's patient from an old note book, reminding her of a romantic story she once knew, in order to bring her back to a lucid state. The story in the raggedy notebook is of two lovers, Allie and Noah, separated by World War II, who reunite seven years later. Allie has been engaged to another man during this time but needs to find peace with the first love she left behind. (12)

According to him the novel is based on retrospective memory by which the protagonist is affected. He loses his present sense of reality whereas he goes his bygone memories.

Another critic Claudio Carvalho observes the novel as a humanistic philosophy in which human emotions depend on situation. Moreover, it reflects all these kinds of experience come across in human life. He explains:

His writing is beautiful in its truth. The characters are authentic, the plot is fantastic yet not unbelievable, and each scene flows smoothly together so we are able to understand a story told in pieces. Getting into the head of the characters was delightful. Sparks writes in a way that brings out the love, pain, and uncertainty that fuel his characters. When it rains in the book, the reader feels the chill and excitement of the downpour, and understands just how two people can fall in love as Allie and Noah do. (11)

According to him, human psychology is guided by some kinds of deep rooted memory in which a person wants to live. Similarly, this novel introduces similar experience about the major character.

Warren Beatty presents it as a common desire for everybody when a person undergoes long devastating war. Any war brings disappointment in personal psychology then the person wants to be loved. He argues upon this novel:

The bulk of the story is told after WWII, in the days that Allie and Noah are brought together again after seven years. Readers are left thirsty for a sense of how things were when they first met, and the beginning of their love rather than the reunion of it. It is hard to imagine what sort of romance could last through seven years of separation, and Sparks would be most impressive if he were to let the reader feel it. (9)

It shows that the World War II destroys all human peaceful lives; therefore, human beings after world war were seeking humanity for forgetting fearful image of war. It is like Noah and Allie love story in this novel.

All these critical studies on movie show that it has been studied by many critics who have analyzed from several critical insights. As they have found different issues and claims on the novel. However the researcher has chosen a new critical insight to study the text.

Regarding this, it incorporates idea of American dream. The American dream also related with social class. It historically addresses after First World War period. It establishes new social values therefore, along with it, the society declares new values. The new social ideology defines social relation with the help of material possession. It redefines social relations and social status on the basis of material possession. Moreover, it also defines way of life and living standard. It distinctly marks social class.

Associating American dream most of us have an understanding of what the American Dream entails: a good life, in short. However, the concept is more complex than it may appear. Adams defines the American Dream:

As the dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman can be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. (13)

This is one of the most referenced definitions of the American Dream, as Adams was first in bringing the idea of the Dream into the light. The sense of hope

characteristically associated with the American Dream is highlighted by the fact one of the most difficult economic crises of the nation's history. Samuel concludes: "the depression and war years would prove a fruitful period for the American Dream as the country struggled to retain a sense of identity amid economic, social and political turmoil" (13).

Arguably, the corruption of the Dream might have an even stronger rhetorical meaning than the American Dream itself. It commonly refers to the degrading of family values and individual integrity in favor for the economical tyranny that the nation faced. (Samuel 16). The meaning of the Dream will never reach a stable definition, as the very notion of a dream of a nation is a "dimly perceived vision of a possible future" (17). Thus, the material manifestation of what the Dream entails changes over time as society evolves and values change.

It represents the moral and social decay that results from the uninhibited pursuit of wealth, as the rich indulge themselves with regard for nothing but their own pleasure. The society adopts new ideology and it drives them. Materialistic society does not value spiritual ideology whereas it prioritizes material possession. As American dream regards for wealth and social class. The novel projects a love story in which love relation is affected by social ideology. The material society does not appreciate and understand their spiritual love. Therefore, they have to be separated from each other. The theme of the American dream is how socio-economic condition decides human relation as Noah and Allie are affected in the society. As in *The Great Gatsby* pure and holy love and spiritual thinking does not get space in human mind. The novel introduces similar feeling; therefore, both of them are unable to marry and it is reflection of material prosperity instead of having human values. As it has been analyzed in *The Great Gatsby* by Kimberly Pumphrey:

The desire to attain the status of high society, no matter how ugly it really is, is inherent in Jay Gatsby. Even at a young age, Jimmy Gatz had the same determination the reader sees in Jay Gatsby, before it was poisoned with consumerism. In being introduced to Mr. Gatz, the reader is also exposed to a side of Gatsby previously unknown. Even before Daisy's captivating impudence, Jimmy Gatz was already a dreamer. Jimmy Gatz was on the right path towards achieving the American dream, by way of improving his mind and working hard. It was not until he met Daisy that his dream changed; Daisy became his dread. (117)

In this way, the novel depicts a perfect picture of American dream in which most of the characters have been victimized by American dream and it is also important that having American dream fulfilled also people are not satisfied in which all of them have been experiencing dreadful and dying lives which does not give them happiness as much as they would imagine.

The present research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents an introduction with a brief outline of the present study. The second chapter analyzes a text with theoretical perspective. It sorts out some of the extracts from the text as the evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study. The third chapter is the conclusion which concludes the entire research.

The research paper analyzes effect of capitalistic ideology in America. The post world war period represents an American dream and materialistic society. This time period in America establishes new social norms and values. It is post world war period which swept away old traditional notions and replaced new values. The novel typically represents an impact of American dream which fundamentally changes

human perspective regarding way of living and life. The novel presents a love story between major characters Noah and Allie. Both of them have strong infatuation, however, the society and Allie's family does not support them. Both characters represent two different class of the contemporary society. It determines their social relationship too. Noah represents poor economic class whereas Allie is from rich class. Their class difference becomes barrier for acceptable relationship between them. The society values wealth is prime needs of human being; therefore it determines every human relationship among people. Hanson further clarifies the American dream:

The American Dream continues to place a heavy emphasis upon economic prosperity and financial security, along with other ambitions as well-finding and pursuing a rewarding career, leading a healthy and personally fulfilling life, and being able to retire in comfort. But regardless of the time or place, America has always been about the hope and promise of a good life. Of course, the American Dream has never guaranteed that hard work will ensure economic and personal success, but it has been strongly suggested. From our earliest days to the present, millions have arrived on these shores seeking to improve their lives. America has long symbolized the land of opportunity, where skill and hard work are viewed as paths to personal success and economic well-being. While the specifics of each dream may vary from person to person, the overall vitality of the American Dream has been fundamental to the nation's identity. (4)

The novel introduces major two characters; Noah and Allie, both of them are teenagers. Noah is from poor economic class, but Allie is from richer social class.

Due to the class differences, both of them are unable to make their relationship each other. Allie's mother and her family do not accept for this relationship. Noah is from poor economic class, therefore his relationship with Allie becomes problem for the family. The society does not understand human feelings and humanity. The materialistic society only values matter and money in the society. Because of new societal norms and values, both of them cannot fulfill their love relationship in the society. For this reason, the social material ideology influence upon their relationship. The new ideology prioritizes wealth and monetary values. Carringer explores new generation of Americans longing to achieve success in life:

The up-and-coming young American was shrewd and practical, an image of compulsive energy, a man with his eye always on the future. His Americanness also consisted of such traits as enterprise, indomitable idealism, a certain naturalness and openness to experience, and a relentless will to succeed. (307)

The setting of the novel presents a New Bern city and the city itself represents new capitalistic city. It is new rising city where rich class establishes their position. The new society with new ideology develops new social norms and values. The setting place also represents to the new American notions of life. It prioritizes wealth and material prosperity which can provide happiness to the human being. Having this societal value, the society runs after accumulating property and wealth.

The novel *The Notebook* reflects the changing society and the norms and values in America post war period. The novel presents characters from several different socioeconomic classes and this research aims to study the relationship between these social classes. It examines the presence of social class in the novel and the effect it has on the relationships between the different characters.

The post world war society adopts materialistic values therefore, every relationship are defined in terms of wealth. It impacts and uproots human values like love, kindness and generosity. It evaluates humanity in terms of social status or material position. The novel also reflects the impacts of social material values which causes tragic personal life. The social class and status determines relationship between them. Economic factor determines their roles in society. However, it was one of the major factors during initial phase of capitalistic society. It represents to the American dream which only values economic factors. During that period, every individual run after money for achieving American dream which prioritized material prosperity. It could fulfill all human happiness and meaning of life.

The novel presents pre world- war narration when Noah falls in love with Allie. Both of them were teenagers who do not have knowledge about social relations and social ideology. It does not matter for them while making relationship. But, later on it becomes obstacles for them. In fact, spiritual love between them is influenced by materialistic society. It devalues such traditional and abstract social ideology. People do not have faith upon love and kindness. The capitalistic society devalues spiritual values instead of materialistic ideology whereas it sets material values which determine societal relationship.

At the beginning of the novel, it shows love relationship between Noah and Allie. Both of them fall in love in summer time. The novel present flashback narratives when it occupies pre world war situation. During that time both Noah and Allie had strong desire for accepting each other. However, the society did not accept them as married couple. He has to face challenges and hatred from Allie's family:

She had to make excuses to her parents whenever they wanted to see each other. It was not that they did not like him- it was that he was

from a different class, too poor, and they would never approve if their daughter became serious with someone like him. I don't care what my parents think, I love you and always will, she would say. We will find a way to be together. (21)

Because of poorer economic representation in the society, Noah has to be criticized. However, Allie supports him but her parents do not support her for choosing such poor class man. This exemplifies the fact that there are other factors involved in determining status compared with social class. He discusses on different social marker for creating social division. It is post capitalistic social reality, but the novel addresses initial phase of capitalistic society money becomes prime factor for dividing society.

Similarly, the novel discusses on same social ideology which influences society. Being a poor economic condition, Noah is refused by Allie family. Noah realizes that he does not have economic power, therefore Allie's family reject his relation which motivates him to earn money for upgrading his social class. Therefore, he searches job to fulfill his social class. The novel presents:

Eventually he decided to leave New Bern to help get her off his mind, but also because the depression made earning a living in New Bern almost impossible. He went first to Norfolk and worked at a shipyard for six months before he was laid off, then moved to New Jersey because he had heard the economy wasn't so bad there. (21)

Noah wants to fulfill his desire after having better economic condition. He decides to do some work, so he searches job. He finds a small manual work in shipyard for six month. He joins there. It is value of capitalistic society which only values economic forces. It is basic assumption of American dream. It motivates

people to earn money for happiness and prosperity. Eels describe the concept of the American Dream as follows: “In the bright glow and warm presence of the American Dream all men are born free and equal. Everyone in the American Dream has the right, and often the duty, to try to succeed and to do his best to reach the top” (67).

The American dream envisions people about personal freedom and happiness. But, economic force determines personal freedom and happiness. For this reason, Noah also searches his position in the society. Economic factor is major theme of the society. But, it avoids other societal factors like religion, caste and race. Therefore, the society creates new values. Noah does not have this social understanding but he realizes it when he gets betrayed from economic force. Therefore, he searches job for fulfilling his desires. It is noted in the novel:

He eventually found a job a scrap yard separating scrap metal from everything else. The owner, a Jewish man named Morris Goldman, was intent on collecting as much scrap metal as he could, convinced that a war was going to start in Europe and that America would be dragged in again. Noah though, didn't care about the reason. He was just happy to have a job. (22)

For fulfilling his desire, he does work. He also assimilates American dream because he realizes that without better earning, he cannot get happiness in society. The society does not know how monetary force has values. At first, Noah does not believe on it. But, it is become his destination for him. Therefore, he only thinks about improving his economic condition. He wants to fulfill his desire by getting better income in the society. It is described here:

His years in the lumberyard had toughened him to this type of labor, and he worked hard. Not only did it help him keep his mind off Allie

during the day, but it was something he felt he had to do. His daddy had always said: Give a day's work for a day's pay. Anything less is stealing. That attitude pleased his boss. it is a shame you are not Jewish. Gold would say, you are such a fine boy in so many other ways. It was the best compliment Goldman could give. (22)

Noah has been affected by his economic status in his society. Realizing it, he further works hard. It awakens his eyes, so works under a Jewish man. His mind is corrupted by American dream. The American dream leads him toward materialistic norms and values. He does not think except having sufficient wealth. He can get his love after doing this. He wants to get higher social class as Allie has. Only he can fulfill his dream, when he earns money.

In the contrary, Allie represents high class in the society. Allie herself supports her love, but her family does not value her love because of lackness of social class difference. Allie's family does not understand Noah's poor economic conditions. For this reason, Noah is separated from her beloved Allie. The following extract explains about how Noah works for gaining his love:

For the next eight years, he worked for Goldman. At first he was one of twelve employees, but as the years dragged on company grew and he was promoted. By 1940 he had mastered the business and was running the entire operation, brokering the deals and managing a staff of thirty. The yard had become the largest scrap metal dealer on the East Coast. (23)

As a result of capitalistic society, Noah forgets everything about his life but, he keeps on having money. Later on, he joins war because he is selected as an army.

Therefore, he involves in war. But his dream is never changes; he wants to have her beloved after earning certain amount of money. It becomes his ultimate dream.

After fourteen years back, Noah returns from war. Before fourteen years, he lost her beloved due to the lack of social status and economic power. For this reason, he leaves his place for earning money. He searches job for improving his monetary power in society. The American dream makes him slave; therefore, he wants to have wealth which can support him to gain his beloved. It is his dream of life. But, he cannot find herself there.

Noah has a dream to buy a huge house to succeed his love with his beloved. Therefore, he does not matter what kinds of work. While working as an army he went different places. But, he only worries about having money. It becomes his ultimate desire. He works there nearly three years. Later on he moves back his city in New Bern and buys a beautiful house. It can uplift his social class. It is described here:

The following week he returned to New Bern and bought the house.

He remembered bringing his father around later showing him what he was going to do pointing out the changes he intended to make. His father seemed weak as he walked around, coughing and wheezing.

Noah was concerned, but his father told him not to worry, assuring him that he had the flu. Less than one month later his father died of pneumonia and was buried next to his wife in the local cemetery. (25)

In fact, it is failure of American dream. Because of lower economic status, he is challenged by her beloved family. Therefore, he looks for earning work and moves different places and also does different work. But, when he earns certain amounts of money, he loses his father. He cannot save his father. He is even able to buy a house but later on he becomes single in it.

He can able to change his economic condition in society; however, he is not as happy as he had thought. He loses his parents, friends and relatives. It creates spiritual barrenness in him. It is just values of capitalistic society which motivates people to gain wealth for happiness, but Noah does not find any more happiness. He can maintain social standard as the society believes but, it does not make happy. It is addressed here:

His best friend Gus these days was a seventy years old black man who lived down the road. They had met a couple of weeks after Noah bought the house when Gus had shown up with some homemade liquor and Brunswick stew, and the two had spent their first evening together getting drunk and telling stories. (9)

As Noah returns from his camp, he gets her beloved is engaged with someone. It tortures him. He becomes hopeless when he comes to know about. He meets her when she came to know. He searches meaning of his life throughout his life, but he understands his helplessness when he meets her. The following conversation shows:

It was long moment before she answered.

I am engaged.

He looked down when she said it, suddenly feeling just a bit weaker.

So that was it. That's what she needed to tell him.

Congratulations, he finally said, wondering how convincing he sounded. When's the big day?

Three weeks from Saturday. Lon wanted a November wedding.

Lon?

"Lon Hammond Jr. My fiance."

He nodded. (39)

The basic values of American dream is that, money can provide much more happiness, but Noah reproaches when he knows Allie's marriage. It makes him sad and depressed. Although he is sad he remembers something about "The Hammonds". He knows that they are one of the prestigious and rich class family and he says:

The Hammonds were one of the most powerful and influential families in the state cotton money. Unlike that of his own father, the death of Lon Hammond Sr. had made the front page of the news paper. "I've heard of them. His father built quite a business. Did Lon take over for him?"(39)

He knows that Allie's family is happy for Allie to get marry with Lon because he is the person whom they really expects for Allie and her future in the materialistic and consumerism perspective. It is his failure and he does not find meaning of his life.

Adams further clarifies about American dream in this way:

It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. (12)

This definition varies a definition of American dream and to have material goods forms is not only dream but it is dream of millions of people opportunities and equality in American society. It further implies that historically men and women had been limited in opportunity based on their social class. Finally, it implies that each person should succeed or fail based on his inborn abilities or lack thereof. People are born with natural indwelling traits which garner them success in a social world and people can draw upon these traits in open society. The significance of this definition

is that an individual has the power over his own material destiny in spite of prior social position or the workings of the economic and cultural structures. The further more about American Dream and its effects in the life of person, Messner , Alder and Laufer has described in their research that:

“The American Dream,” a term introduced by historian James Truslow Adams in 1931, refers to “a broad cultural ethos that entails a commitment to the goal of material success, to be pursued by everyone in society, under conditions of open, individual competition” (Messner et al., 2007, p. 6). Essentially, with this ideal, each American citizen has been led, or rather “socialized” to desire to realize this success, while believing that he can sufficiently achieve it (Messner et al., 2007, p. 6), despite any obstacles, because America is a place of equal opportunity, where each person has the ability to pursue his endeavors, and can feasibly attain his dream of material wealth and stability. However, if the pursuit of this dream is so realistic and accessible, then why are the crime rates in America, specifically in regards to serious crime, comparatively much higher than those of other countries in the world (Adler & Laufer, 1995, p. 159). In sum, the American Dream ideal has distorted the values that Americans possess, centralizing on monetary success and thus confusing the pursuit of happiness with the acquisition of materialism. In turn, this has created a culture that prioritizes the material worth of end result over the legitimacy of the methods utilized to reap such success, resulting in an “anomic imbalance” in American society (Adler & Laufer, 1995, p. 164).

According to Messner and Adler the American Dream becomes hope of the people and they are just running behind it. They want to make themselves busy on work. Similarly in the novel, when Noah is far from Allie he wants to make himself busy on works. He does different kinds of works too and he dates a few different girls too but he never feels comfortable with any as Allie because she is his spiritual love. It is shown here:

During that time, he dated a few different women. He became serious with one, a waitress from the local diner with deep blue eyes and silky black hair. Although they dated for two years and had many good times together, he never came to feel the same way about her as he did about Allie. (23)

According to the American dream, he achieves success for having economic success but it does not provide much more happiness ahead. He looks for his beloved now. Now, he has made renowned social class. Another representative character is Lon who is suitor of Allie. Allie's family engages her with Lon because Lon is representative of rich class. Even not being Allie's choice, her family forces her to marry with him. It is social values of economic forces. Capitalistic society values money and material prosperity. Williams writes:

Achieving a place in the altering social structure of the land but continually threatened with losing it: with being pushed down, as eventually many were, into the exposed anonymity of the landless poor. Such men, who had risen by change, were quick to be bitter about renewed or continuing change. (1160)

The eventual change derives frustration, suffering and alienation in human kind and that is automatically appeared in responses. As a result, the capitalistic society ignores spiritual values; therefore, ultimately it becomes matter for them.

Allie's family decides to marry with Lon. He represents reputed class of the society. His family class is equal with Allie's family. Therefore, he is accepted by her family. Both Allie's and Lon's families represent high class; therefore both of them live easy lifestyle. Both families engage in party and social function. Both of them do not have any kind of social disturbance. At the first time, Lon approaches in Christmas party:

When Lon, with all his easy charm, introduced himself at a Christmas party, she saw in him exactly what she needed: someone with confidence about the future and a sense of humor that drove all her fears away. He was handsome, intelligent, and driven a successful lawyer eight years older than she, and he pursued his job with passions not only winning cases, but also making a name for himself. She understood his vigorous pursuit of success, for her father and most of the men she met in her social circle were the same way. (15)

It shows that Lon also represents a richer class, but, he was self made person. It seems that even he was influenced by American dream or capitalistic notions of life. It suggests that having material prosperity, men can get happiness in life. For this reason, he even searched better opportunities here and established himself as richer class in the society. For, this reason, he is accepted by Allie's family.

Having richer social status, Lon tries to impress Allie by sponsoring parties. It is American dream which believes on material consumption and showy type of life styles. Therefore, Lon invites all renowned people from the society. It is his showy

behaviours for establishing himself as a rich class of the society. He spends money for creating power in the society. He wants to get Allie's love by showing his economic standard. Therefore, he arranges a wedding party:

The wedding plans were stressful to everyone involved. Almost five hundred people were invited, including the governor, one senator, and the ambassador to per. it was too much in her opinion, but their engagement was news and had dominated the social pages since they had announced their plans six months ago. Occasionally she felt like running away with Lon to get married without the fuss. (27)

It explains about a huge party arrangement where social rich and dignified people were invited. it is behaviour of social rich class who arrange party for creating power over other groups. The American dream develops this kind of showy culture where different rich class competes for spending money.

The novel represents post war period and contemporary ideology of the society. It promotes materialistic philosophy and consumerism culture. It fascinates all with slogan of consumerism culture. It attracts and changes human perspective regarding life and world view. The novel represents the same philosophy which suggests human consumerism culture. The society divides classes between rich and poor class. On the basis of material prosperity, the society creates social status. Under the material philosophy, every human relation changes on the basis of economic status in society.

In the novel, effects of American dream can be seen and the society practices the capitalistic social ideology. Because of economic values and class division affects to both Allie and Noah. Their love relationship is influenced by social class. Noah realizes his position in society when his love relation is refused by Allie's family

because of his lower economic position. This realization leads him toward struggle for improving his social class. He leaves his house, family and beloved for achieving American dream. He works for earning money which can represent his social class. Only he can get his dream true. This kind of social philosophy drives him. Another major character Lon represents newly rich class from the same society. Because of rich class, he is accepted for Allie's suitor. In this kind of society values money, property and wealth primary needs of human beings. And these values decide all kind of social give and take relations.

The research paper discusses on effects of American dream and capitalistic society in Spark's *The Notebook*. It exposes the contemporary society which is corrupted by new social ideology about American dream. The capitalistic society redefines and restructures social norms and values whereas it sets new notions for society. The novel represents the contemporary society by showing effects of American dream or capitalistic society.

The novel introduces major three characters for the purpose of the research study. Noah is one of the major characters who represents social poorer class, loves with Allie but she represents higher class. In the capitalistic society, social class and monetary values get priority. Therefore, lack of both social values, he is unable to get marry with Allie. To fulfill his dream of marrying Allie, he searches better option for having good earning. Later on, he spends almost fourteen years. During that time, he searches only money and wealth. He is victimized by the new American dream. The society values it in comparison to other moral behaviors. In this respect, he leaves the place for earning. He spends more than fourteen years, during this period, he can capable to earn money.

During this period, he loses his parents, however he is able to earn some amount of money. It does not give much more happiness. He buys a beautiful house; still it is not his dream. It does not make him satisfied. Only for getting his beloved, he runs after money, but he loses many things. He has to be alienated this long period of time. He suffers from tensions and other family loss.

In the contrary, Lon represents a high class of the society; therefore, he is decided to marry with her. For impressing Allie, he manages party and social etiquette, however he cannot impress her. It makes his realization that material prosperity only cannot provide happiness. Even both families accept its relation, but Allie herself denies this relationship. She does not show any interest with him. It hurts Lon because even having everything, he cannot fulfill his desire. It is a depiction of American and the novel represents only American dream which is madly intoxicated in people. All of them run after illusory lives and all of them did not have clear insight regarding what is American dream indeed. It projects dream in which community assimilated own beautifully dream. Similarly, the novel *The Notebook* also projects an application of American dream in which both lover and beloved are victimized because both them are separated even though both of them love each other. It is an American ideology which neglects spiritual and human values ultimately. For this reason it has been critically examined and even today it has been question for social trend.

The research discusses on how an American dream corrupts society and which affects to society. It projects new direction for moving ahead to people. It changes human perspective for understanding life. Mostly, it introduces materialistic and consumerism society where only matters get values. All major characters realize the failure of American dream when they are forced to separate among them.

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