

Tribhuvan University

**A Critique of the American Dream in Gabriele Muccino's Film,
*The Pursuit of Happiness***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
in the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in English**

by

Saroj G. C.

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

May 2011

Tribhuvan University

A Critique of the American Dream in Gabriele Muccino's Film,
The Pursuit of Happiness

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
in the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in English

by

Saroj G. C.

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

May 2011

Tribhuvan University

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu.

Letter of Recommendation

Saroj G. C. has completed his thesis entitled "A Critique of the American Dream in Gabriele Muccino's Film, *The Pursuit of Happiness*" under my supervision in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English. He carried out his research from December 2010 to May 2011.

I hereby recommend that his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

Dr. Anirudra Thapa

Supervisor

Central Department of English

Kirtipur

Tribhuvan University

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu.

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "A Critique of the American Dream in Muccino's Film, *The Pursuit of Happiness*" submitted to the central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Saroj G. C. has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal

Dr. Anirudra Thapa

External

Dr. Rewati Neupane

Head of the Department

Dr. Amma Raj Joshi

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

In writing this thesis, I am really indebted to some people. People deserve my sincere thanks. This thesis would not have been written without their help whom I really extend my honest thankfulness. I am pleased to take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude to my thesis supervisor **Dr. Anirudra Thapa**, lecturer at the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, for providing me with this topic, format and the materials and for his continuous support and genuine suggestions, and directions.

It is my pleasant occasion to acknowledge the help provided to me by **Dr. Amma Raj Joshi**, the Head of the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, for encouraging me with his insightful and inspiring suggestions. And I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the external of my research, **Dr. Rewati Neupane**, for his genuine guidelines.

Similarly, I really would like to thank **Mr Ghanshyam Bhandari**, ex-lecturer at the Central Department of English, for providing me with some very useful and important books really compatible to my thesis agenda. The books really help me delve into the issues and carry out the research. Similarly, I would like to thank my teachers, Shankar Subedi, Hemlal Pandey, and Raj Kumar Baral.

I also would like extend my thankfulness to my friends: Chetana Koirala, C.P Aryal, Dhiran Sharma, G.P Acharya, Rachana Karkee, Sijan Regmi, Kamal Regmi, Sagar Adhikari, Subi Gurung, Lx Dahal and Ganga Limbu, for their unselfish support and encouragement and keeping my spirit high. I must show appreciation to my family members for their continuous financial, moral supports and humble concerns.

Saroj G.C.

May 2011

Abstract

This thesis examines the idea of the American Dream in Gabriele Muccino's film, *The Pursuit of Happyness* in relation to race, class consciousness, financial security and the family values. The Declaration of the Independence postulates “Life, Liberty and The Pursuit of Happiness” as the unalienable rights of citizen. And still today America is presented as the “ideal” country, the country of unlimited possibilities so that the expressions like “It is only possible in America! Here you can achieve everything!”. Chris Gardner, the protagonist, is also allured by this enticement. He is a black man who suffered from the lack of personal fulfillment. He had problems in his family, had lost his job and had to sleep in an underground station with his son because he had no money for a room. So, the thesis analyzes how the racial underpinnings; his status of homelessness and financial quandary in the then society threaten his quest to achieve the dream. Moreover, it examines how the protagonist gives the corrective response to the views about the African American family life. An important question is always whether this story is just an example of a single lucky person or whether Chris Gardner is a representative of the whole American population. The thesis concludes the American Dream, as depicted in Gabriele’s movie, is not really feasible for everyone in America. The achievement of the American Dream is delimited by the pursuers' social position, his financial security and class in the society.

Table of Contents

	Page No.
Chapter I: Exploration of the American Dream in <i>The Pursuit of</i>	
<i>Happyness: A Critical Assessment</i>	1-14
Chapter II: A Critique on the American Dream	15-58
2.1 Egalitarian American Dream, Racial Shadows and <i>The Pursuit of</i>	
<i>Happyness</i>	15
2.1.1 Positive Images and Political Positioning	25
2.2 American Dream, Class Consciousness, and Financial Security	31
2.3 Family values and the American Dream	45
Chapter III: Ironic Happiness: The Stakes in Pursuing the Dream	59-63
Works Cited	64-68

I. Exploration of the American Dream in *The Pursuit of Happiness*: A Critical Assessment

The thesis centers on *The Pursuit of Happiness*, a film set in the San Francisco of 1981, directed by Gabriele Muccino, the film's script written by Steven Conrad features the protagonist who constantly struggles in the pursuit of happiness. The film shows the protagonist's arrays of attempt to meet his dreams and needs in the backdrop of economic meritocracy of American society of the early 1980s. The protagonist, Chris Gardner (played by Will Smith) is after a dream: the pursuit of happiness. Despite the painstaking efforts of protagonist, the film exposes the racial and market forces that shape and structure his journey of the pursuit of happiness. Compounding his struggling and painful situation he faces up challenges in order to sustain his life with the concept of American Dream, the research exposes the failure of the American Dream in contrast to the promises it distributed. The project has probed into the slack ideals of the American Dream that promises success, prosperity, equality and equal opportunity in the lives of individuals. Looking at the movie from the perspective of critical racial theory, class consciousness and the African American status, the study argues that the film is a critique of American Dream and it exposes the inherent contradiction in the notion of American Dream as it is envisioned and advocated by founding fathers such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and Alexander Hamilton.

It seems impossible to formulate a precise definition of the American Dream and in all probability it can never be delineated adequately. The reason for this fact lies in its vagueness and the subsequent interpretations that followed over the years. Traditionally, Americans have sought to realise the American Dream of success, fame and wealth through thrift and hard work. In every respect the American Dream evokes the impression of America being an ideal world and "God's own country", which can be explained by regarding certain historical developments. After the discovery of the "New World" the American continent

became a place which old, traditional hopes and ideals characterising the utopian schemes proclaimed by philosophers and poets were projected on. America seemed to impose no constraints on the fulfillment of these dreams and due to the fact that it was still unexplored it conjured up the impression of a country with unrestricted opportunities. Therefore, many Europeans turned their backs to their home countries and set sails towards the “New World” in the hope for a new beginning and a better life (Keller 49).

Although these were the common motives for those who emigrated from Europe, there were still individual hopes and expectations concerning this new, better life which varied among the settlers. The pilgrims who crossed the Atlantic aboard the “Mayflower” to escape religious prosecution hoping to be able to practise their religion freely in the “New World” exemplify this sense of hope and futurity (Keller 49). Accordingly, America seemed to promise uncurtailed personal freedom and equality as different religious groups were offered the same rights for none of them was elevated above the other or prosecuted.

Apart from those with religious motives there were a great number of people migrating to America for more secular reasons: the newly discovered continent offered vast yet uncultivated areas of land to be purchased and abundant resources – especially gold. This striving for material success and prosperity continued and became visible during the time of the frontier movement in the late eighteenth century. The area west of the frontier became an area of seemingly unlimited opportunities due to the presence of arable land and resources. Therefore people were lured to begin a new life in the hope of finding “the riches that fate had denied them in the past” (Keller 51). Although the individual dreams connected to the expectations concerning life in America may differ, nearly all contain one fundamental common aspiration: the pursuit of happiness – whether achieved by material success or by personal freedom and liberty. This notion is also embodied in "The Declaration of Independence" which postulates equal rights for everybody regardless of birth, wealth or

social status. As equality and the pursuit of happiness obviously are essential elements of the national identity of the USA – and thus of the American Dream – the movie, *The Pursuit of Happyness* questions such notions. As striving for prosperity is often closely connected to these aspects and because this point is also one of the most intrinsic characteristics of the American Dream, it has to be part of the analysis, too. As already mentioned the American Dream is too complex to be defined by in terms of notions. This study does not examine liberty and freedom of speech in detail, rather the thesis explores the elements such as material success, equality and the pursuit of happiness.

Throughout the film money or the financial security is the driving force. It controls the social and family relation in the film. The film also emphasises the idea of Equality – the unalienable rights for every person regardless of the social status. In the film, the protagonist and his family (wife and son) come from the low strata of social ladder, and they are blacks. Chris Gardner (Will Smith), by all appearances a saint and diligent, firm, and resolute, knows he has the head of business and talent for sales but is frustrated by the lack of success due to what appears to be a genetic bad luck. He invests his life's saving in a medical device, a portable bone density scanner, although there is too little demand for it. Thus, he spends long days in a crumpled suit, logging the scanners from hospital, praying that doctors would not see under his slick sales spiel an increasingly desperate man in need of money. The protagonist encounters constant set-backs and struggles. The growing tension with Linda (Thandie Newton) and his inability to pay the rents fuel his troublesome moments despite the double-shift work of his wife at laundry. His bum luck even extends when the badly run child-care center his son Christopher (Jaden Smith) studies, will not remove graffiti and swear words written on the wall or even correct the spelling of 'happyness' that has been scribbled. Still, the film always has a glimpse of hope in the horizon. Stories of the triumph over the adversity are the foundation on which cinema has been built. There are tales flush

with uplift, sure to radiate an aura of good feeling to cheer the audience. He continues to pursue his personal dreams of getting sound financial status and give movement to his life from rags to riches.

In the first part of the film, *Happyness* has doggedness about it as Gardner tries to find a quick salvation from the mundane way of life. He embraces the 'get rich quick' philosophy of the American Dream as he understands his freedom to fulfill his personal dreams. In the very beginning of the film, he compares himself with the crowd of people whom he thinks are happy and says that he is not happy. He isolates himself from the crowd and then says why not he could become like that. Then, he determines to achieve happiness in his life. He is concerned with the happiness. When he sees the wrong spelling of the happiness in the day care center, he comments to the guard and suggests the correct spelling. By the happiness, he means a sound financial status and a better family life. Gardner's story is one of hard work, dedication, ideals and personal responsibility. And he considers and follows these features as key to acquire his fulfillment of the personal dream. No easy answers are provided to Chris; and when trouble comes, it does not dissolve the character into hysterics, but knocks him to the ground. Happiness enchants Gardner as a sweeter accomplishment.

Once the second part of the film takes over, trapped in a never-ending cycle of debt, Chris Gardner is desperate for hope in his life. While still struggling to support his family, he learns of the prized internship opportunities at Dean Witter Investment House. In the scene 9.58-11.13 minutes, his wife, Linda, dislikes his idea that he is applying for stockbroker by saying why not an astronaut. But, this does not discourage his hope in life. He assertively says to his wife: "I am going down to see about this. And I am gonna do it during the day". For giving up his dead-end job to pursue his non-salaried opening, Chris's wife leaves him and puts him in the charge of his son Christopher. Still, he clings to his hope; he lets his wife go and keeps the son. Chris combats poverty, doubt and ruthless business world, Chris

struggles to keep his wits about him as he hopes to achieve his dream of being a successful man.

In second last scene of the film at Dean Witter in which he knows that he is selected, he is shown with an overjoyed face, being unable to say anything, climbing down the stairs and the mixing with the same "goddamn crowd" he had met before he entered into Dean Witter. He claps for himself and cover his face with his palms and sobs. According to him, "this part of my life, this little part of my life, it is called Happiness". At the end, we find the hero secure a good job at Dean Witter, cry being overjoyed, and talk to his son. He has reached his personal American Dream, of which success is the most important part. This is what Gardner calls "happiness" with spelling 'i'. But the cry leaves lots of questions unanswered. The research assesses that the happiness Chris finally assumes to have embraced is ironic – the happiness that came at the cost of compromising his culture, family values and personal happiness. An important question is always whether this story is just an example of a single lucky person or whether Chris Gardner is a representative of the whole American population. Is the American Dream as depicted in Gardner's movie really feasible for everyone in America?

The film in a great deal is about the untiring efforts of a male family head ever trying to meet and fulfill the family needs and dreams. Kevin Crust, *Times* staff writer, comments on this the elusive idea of happiness:

. . . among the inalienable rights promised in the preamble of the Declaration of Independence, happiness is the only one not guaranteed. We are theoretically assured of life and liberty, but happiness we are left to pursue on our own. *The Pursuits of Happiness*, a routine domestic drama starring Will Smith, is the 'story of one man's unwavering pursuit for a better life (and presumably happiness with an "i") against long odds'. (13)

His criticism makes it clear that the film is about a man who puts all efforts to embrace happiness. According to him, among the unalienable rights, the state can guarantee the other rights. But, happiness is so elusive that cannot be granted as such. According to Crust, the happiness is the matter to be pursued on our own. The hero in the film is the provider of family needs. It means he is seeking a better life that offers almost the all comforts of the modern world. Adding to it, Paul Arendt, a BBC commentator says, based on a true story, this tear jerking tale of a single father's struggle to rear up his son in the extreme poverty of the Regan era¹ serves as showcase of sluggish economy of early 1980s. He adds "it is a deeply political movie combining genuine sympathy for homeless with a resolutely conservative message: you too can become a millionaire, it whispers, you just pull yourself up your bootstraps" (8).

Muccino's plot in the film, like in many films, moves from lack of success to success. In fact, it is a "rags-to-riches" account as the many critics view it. In this regard, Brian Lowry, a film critic, opines that "the film could hardly be more finely tuned – offering a sympathetic view of those struggling to stay out of poverty as well as a 'pull yourself up by the bootstraps' message" (9).

One of the important aspects of the film is the relationship between father and the son. It is a love story in the purest sense, as Gardner tries to shield his child from the hardship they face. In this sense, Mick LaSalle, a chronicle movie critic, remarks:

The Pursuit of Happyness is an uplifting drama of a man who refused to give up on the dream of better life for his son. It is a tale of the human spirits' ability to withstand adversity, pain and suffocating catastrophe, a journey

¹ A periodization of recent American history used by historians and political observers to emphasize that the conservative "Reagan Revolution" led by President Ronald Reagan in domestic and foreign policy. Broadly based on conservative movement, it included ideas, whether good or bad, related to national policy making in areas such as taxes, welfare, defense, the federal judiciary.

showcasing how one parent's all love for his child can allow him to change both of their lives forever. (4)

The rags-to-riches story of happiness is, without a doubt, one of the inspirational tales, a fairy tale in realist drag. However, this is not the unique element about it that has not already been exploited in the past. Hence, the present research analyzes the movie from the distinctively different standpoint. It analyzes the movie with help of critical racial theory, class consciousness and African American status. In the film, it is argued that the fulfillment of the American Dream of the protagonist has been shaped and structured by the colour of his skin, his class and his social status of being an African American.

The protagonist is an African American from Louisiana, near Texas, America. He tries to pursue the American Dream in white sense – he pursues the dream as if he were a white. He does not understand the difference between a white and an African American; it will be so hard for him to pursue the dream as an African American. But, the situations and the atmosphere of the 1980s he finds not importune enough to carry out the dream so easily. The film shows the racial underpinnings that constantly distinguish the protagonist from the white race that is prevalent since the dawn of the American civilization and the rising of American Dream.

At the very beginning, the film shows the difference between, a white man who has a good car and the protagonist, an African American, who is black sells the bone density scanner to make his living. Similarly, in one scene, some white people pass by the Glide Memorial Church, cheering and enjoying in the sports car while so many destitute people are in the queue for a night stay. The protagonist cannot afford a football match show for his son and there are people like Mr. Ribbon who are living a sumptuous life. A cursory glance at the American society, as movies exhibits, gives a view that white and black people are not in mutual cooperation in many fields. In fact, people never choose to be poor, weak, ugly and

working class deliberately. But the African American people are forced to work under the poor and weak circumstances. So does the protagonist in the film. It is basically because of racial prejudice.

The term "racism" is often used in a loose and unreflective way to describe the hostile or negative feelings of one ethnic group or people toward another and the actions resulting from such attitudes. Race, in particular, is the classification of the human beings into distinguishable group that are based on physical characteristics (i.e. skin colour, hair texture, eye shape etc.). "There is no biological basis for distinguishing human groups along the lines of race, and the socio-historical categories employed to differentiate among these groups reveal themselves, upon serious examination, to be imprecise if not completely arbitrary" (Winant 172). Racism is misbehaviour of a group of people on the basis of colour. It is a blinker hatred, envy or prejudice. Racism is founded on the belief in one's racial supremacy over other. It involves a generalised lack of knowledge or experience as it applies to negative determined and therefore inherently unchangeable.

Defining 'Racism', Tzvetan Todorov says that the word racism, in its usual sense, actually designates two very different things. On the one hand, it is a matter of physical characteristics different from our own; on the other hand, it is matter of ideology, a doctrine concerning human races (Todorov 213). E. W. B. Du Bois in the essay, "Strivings of the Negro" in, *The Souls of Black Folk*, provides the bleak picture of the blacks living in white society. He suggests with the whites, the strife of the black while staying in society and studying in schoolhouse was so fierce. He further adds:

With other black boys the strife was not so fiercely sunny: their youth shrunk into tasteless sycophancy or into silent hatred of the pale world about them and mocking distrust of everything white; or wasted itself in a bitter cry. Why did God make me an outcast and a stranger in mine own house? The "shades

of the prison-house" closed round about us all: walls strait and stubborn to the whitest, but relentlessly narrow, tall, and unscalable to sons of night who must plod darkly against the stone, or steadily, half hopelessly watch the streak of blue above. (5)

According to him, to be black, in that sense, means to be so in exclusively white terms. A black living in the white society suffers from the 'double consciousness' – the double standards of a citizen, where one is, say, born an American but discovers that one is not fully a citizen by virtue of being racially designated black. Why, one asks, is being black treated as antipathetic to being an American? This leads to the notion of irreconcilable doubleness, where being black does not equal being an American yet much of what is original about being an American. Then, there occurs a crisis in identity and the self respect of the African American.

There are changes in the way the idea and the meaning of the race are rendered in recent times. As a result of changes that have occurred both inside and outside of the country, 'race' is rendered differently. The meaning and representation of race politics have been greatly changed and its strategic importance relative to other aspect of government has been formed. The theme of primal racial differences is not being articulated into political languages of nationality, culture and belonging in the simple exclusionary way that it was not so very long ago (Gilroy 227). However, the discrimination is operated through newer strategies and policies such as deployment of positive of images and ideological and hegemonic racism.

The protagonist in the film appears as the strong, hardworking, diligent and resolute. He is very positive towards change in his life and aspires for the better future. He has been portrayed as industrious, labourious, calm, sober and solemn. But the politics of story behind depicting in the positive way goes other way. That is, they are indirectly stereotyped and

lowly featured. Their own features are not highlighted. The meaning of the images does not change. Michael Omi and Harold Winant, in the article, 'Racial Formations', suggesting the operation of racial ideology, state:

The continuing persistence of racial ideology suggests that these racial myths and stereotypes cannot be exposed as such in popular imagination. They are, we think, too essential, too integral, to the maintenance of [the US] social order. Of course, particular meaning, stereotypes and can change, but the presence of a system of racial meaning and stereotypes, of racial ideology, seems to be a permanent feature of [US] culture. (Omi and Winant 26)

In the recent times, the racial ideology shows the African American people in a positive way so that they can fit in the democratic social order of the U. S. society. They are not treated physically as harshly as they were treated before. Now, in the cinemas and in the literature they are shown with the positive colour like having knowledge, courage and calmness. According to Bhabha, this way of treating the people with some positive images is an "identity politics" to keep the social order smooth.

The feel good story of the film features a homeless father, the protagonist, going to extraordinary ends to try to make it big in nearly impossible circumstances. The precariousness of his existence most of the time in the film is seen in the streets which provides a visual metaphor to the film. It is also the metaphor that characterizes his social status as an African American family. The film shows that for someone starting with nothing in America, it takes a ludicrous amount of talent and drive to pull oneself up. Getting out of the cycle of homelessness becomes an incredible struggle for the protagonist. A door-to-door salesman of expensive medical scanner that were promised to move like hotcakes but now seem to do little more than drag him down, Gardner barely ekes by with money to support his

increasingly distant wife and son. Class consciousness of the protagonist constantly threatens his attempts to acquire the American Dream.

The main project of the protagonist is to achieve economically sound status that in turn will turn out to be happiness. His homeless status is in no way going to help him to uplift in the social ladder. When the protagonist realizes that his sale of scanners will not help him, he enters into Dean Witter, a service selling company. His economically sound status will determine the other social phenomena. Hence, it is the "economic base" that is the foundation of everything. The education, health and so many other social realities are the produce of the socio-economic relation. A poor farmer, being pinched by intense hunger, cannot dream because he cannot sleep well. To dream about something, one should have sustainable status, treading upon which one can rise so as to dream. The notion of American Dream is high-spirited. And, in hierarchical social structure of a society, the American Dream in a way chooses the economically prudent. Hence the consciousness of an individual is not determined by one's intelligence, idea or skill but by social materiality. Regarding this, Marx gives sufficient point of departure: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (Marx 625).

Marx argued that all mental (ideological) systems are the products of real social and economic existence. The protagonist, in the film, always tries to shift from the homeless existence. He aspires to gain a sound economic status. He is not content with his existence because the socio economic base of the society he is living is hierarchical. He perceives a wide gap between him and the other happy crowd. So, he thinks that the only way to be at the higher rung of social ladder is the material success.

In the film, a reporter presents the report that the country's economics is not good and the country is running by almost \$80 Billion for this part of year. The economic effects of this recession come heavily on the protagonist family. The family suffers from economic

privation, has limited means of improving their lot. Gardner cannot sell his scanners and pay the rent in time. In sharp contrast, to the upper class and 'aristocrats' are economically privileged; they enjoy luxurious lifestyles are least affected by economic recessions, and have a great deal of financial security. In American society, most of the blacks fall into the underclass and lowerclass as they were discriminated since their arrival at New Land. Since then onward, their aspirations to clamber up a higher rung of economic and social ladder have been overlooked in terms of colour (Tyson 51). The original concept of the American Dream, believing reductively in brotherhood and fraternity, simply assumes the monogenesis structure of the American society, hence overlooks the diverse social realities – reality of minority, ethnicity, race, immigrants. Clarifying this reality, Lois Tyson, in *Critical Theory Today*, outlines:

[. . .] but what about members of middle class? Are they economically oppressed or economically privileged. They have more financial stability than the lower classes, yet they are often hard hit by economic recessions and usually have good reason to worry about their financial future; they benefit from institutionalized forms of economic security, such as good medical insurance and pension plans but they shoulder an enormous tax burden relative to their income. (51)

In a racist and discriminatory society, the culture and the aspirations of the working class are always undertheorised and subjugated. In her article "Consenting to Whiteness: Reflections on Race and Marxian Theories of Discrimination", Rhonda M. Williams concedes with the fact that there are two working class within the working class itself: the white working class and the black one. The jeopardy for the black working class is that it is doubly marginalized – one from the mainstream culture and other from the white working class. Many cultural Marxists like Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams celebrate that

working-class cultural production as an authentic expression of working-class interests, they tend to be critical of mass culture forms such as cinema which they believed were imposed on working class community from the outside (Willis 176).

In the first chapter entitled "**Egalitarian American Dream, Racial Shadows and *The Pursuit of Happiness***", following the Introduction of this thesis I have tried to document the racial issues while critiquing the American Dream. I argue that, even if, the official ideals of the American Dream talk of equality and notion like "all men are created equal", the reality is not as such. Still, in American society the influence of past racial prejudice is palpable. Moreover, in the sub chapter to it, I have tried to examine how positivisation of images and literal appreciations keep the people in illusion by lurking the essential African American experiences.

The subsequent chapter, "**American Dream, Class Consciousness, and Financial Security**", I have attempted to analyze how the poor people are financially harassed and challenged when they are in pursuit of a particular goal. In addition, I also explore the paradox of the American Dream. That is to secure a well financial status one equally has to be economically sound. I have tried to explore how the homeless existence of the protagonist obstructs the pursuit of the American Dream in the film. In the final chapter, "**American Dream and Family Values**", I have diagnosed the situation of the African American family in the long period of slavery through eighteenth and nineteenth century and shown how the film gives the corrective response to the mainstream culture by showing the protagonist's dedication in restoring the family values. Finally, I have come up with the conclusion that the movie shows the American society of the 1980s still delves much into the racial biasness. It has not been able to detach itself from the past. And similarly, the diabolical and ambivalent position of democratic America is explicit. The financial quandary stimulates the disintegration of the family values.

II. A Critique on the American Dream

2.1 Egalitarian American Dream, Racial Shadows and *The Pursuit of Happiness*

At the very beginning of the film, one can see an extract from the Declaration of Independence that mentions “The Pursuit of Happiness”. By using this as the first scene in the movie, Muccino foreshadows what the film will be about. With the American flag displayed on a public building and the stockbroker office, Muccino stresses that the dream is the American Dream. Besides, the office of the stockbroker and the skyscrapers emphasized in the very beginning of the film symbolize the financial prosperity is the part of the American Dream. The huge public buildings cast in succulent colour give a predictable impression that the movie is about the American Dream. Next, the people having different status are cast in the beginning like the man lying on the road, two men walking straight with their head high, a man playing a musical instrument. The movie shows multiculturalism in the streets and especially, the contrast between the homeless, on the one hand, and business persons, on the other hand.

The scene from 08.35 to 09.35 minutes shows the consequences of being black in the society. In the scene, Chris differentiates himself from the other common people in terms of happiness. While Gardner meets the stockbroker who has a good car at the parking. The two questions he asks are: "What do you do? And how do you do it?" When the white man answers that he is a stockbroker at Dean Witter, Gardner asks whether one has to go to college to be a stock broker. The answer is 'No'. Then, Gardner turns around and looks at building. A *low angle shot* does the task of making him around. The American Dream is shown in all its beauty. All the people around are smiling and there is an aura full of belief, success and happiness surrounding Gardner in a pavement. A *high angle shot* casts Gardner among the smiling people. A *medium shot* of Gardner contrast him from the other. Camera isolates him from the crowd. A *voiceover* comments “They all look damn happy to me. Why

could not I look like that?" This emphasises the turning point, also in his mind, because at this moment he is asking himself why he is not one of them and thus it strengthens his belief in the future. It is the realization of a person pursuing a dream that he finds himself isolated from the "goddamn happy crowd". This close observation unfolds that the happiness he refers to cannot incorporate him because he is a black.

By showing the double consciousness of the African American protagonist, the film criticises the American society. The film asserts that the African Americans have the double self that neither totally relates to the American nor does completely relate to the African self. He finds himself in dilemma, puzzling, to find himself at these cross-roads. What, after all, he is? He is an American or is he an African American? Can he be both? Defining this double consciousness, W. E. B. Du Bois in his article, *Strivings of the Negro People*, argues:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (5)

What Du Bois argues is double consciousness is a situation in which an African American sees his self from the perspective of an American. He finds two selves: American and African. And this "two-ness" leaves him in bewilderment. In the film, Gardner says that he was an 'A' student in the history class but he could never be 'among them'. In his words: "it was just when I was young I get an 'A' in that history test. Whatever, I get this good feeling about all the things that I could be, then, I never became any of them" (1.48.53-1.49.09 minutes). The good feelings about being equal to other whites in the class would be just a thought. But it never happened. Despite being an 'A' student, he was not among them because

in the class the African American history was not taught. Moreover, the paradox was that he was in the history class but he was not part of history. Not only this, perhaps there was no history to talk about African American people. When he utters these words, the camera uses *shallow focus* and isolates the protagonist from the other people to arouse the theme of African American pathos in the mainstream culture. That is, the African Americans are not the part of the history. With the use of *medium shots* and *shallow focus*, the camera foregrounds the protagonist to stress upon his saying. The *medium shots* taken with the *deep focus photography*² emphasize the depth of his feelings and the *shallow focus* accentuates on foregrounding Gardner.

The movie at times shows the hierarchical and unequal structure of the then society of San Francisco due to the racial prejudices. The movie asserts that the racism is conspicuous in the society that it developed in a context in which equality of some kind has been presumed. "First, there came the doctrine that the Crucifixion offered grace to all willing to receive it and made all Christian believers equal before God. Later, the more revolutionary concept that all "men" are born free and equal and entitled to equal rights in society and government entered into the American society" (Fredrickson 11-12). In the scene from 1.30.10-1.33.00 minutes, the camera casts many people in queue including Gardner, the protagonist, at Church to get the spot for a night stay. The movie portrays the people at church tussling and elbowing to get a space for a night stay more than a couple of times. Furthermore, in the queue the protagonist had to fight as another man tries to usher his seat. In the sharp contrast to it, camera also captures the *shots* of the young, cheering and smiling people in a sports car driving in their haute style pass by the line of the homeless at Glide Memorial Church. In the film, there is harsh criticism in contrasting young and smiling

² It is a stylistic choice of the director in which camera focuses some events with very slight movements of camera to give the meaning of the event being captured.

people in a sports car driving along the line of homeless at Glide Memorial Church. For some people life is the American Dream with success everywhere, whereas for many others it is a nightmare, yet some of them are still striving for success. Multiculturalism and poverty can again be found in the first scene which takes place in Chinatown, a run-down place showing the bitterness of 'the dream'.

Very significant passages in the movie are the scenes where Gardner refers to Thomas Jefferson and "The Declaration of Independence". Gardner sees the prospects of happiness, the mystical word Jefferson once used, in his life. He is wondering how Jefferson knew that he had to use word 'pursuit' in "The Declaration of Independence" and finally Gardner assumes that it is because we can hardly achieve happiness, no matter what we do. May be it is something people can only pursue; people can actually never have it. It is elusive. On the top of that, he remembers that Jefferson called the English, the disturber of the harmony; he wonders who disturbs his harmony. The *voiceover* comments:

Thomas Jefferson mentions Happiness a couple of times in the Declaration of Independence. They seem to be like a strange word. . . . He was sort of. He was an artist. He called the English a disturber of our harmony. I remember standing out there a day thinking about the disturber of mine. Questions I had ahead whether all this is good or I have to make it. Walter Ribbon in his specific bell pension money which was millions, he was on his way to another place (At football match). (1.14.10-1.14.47 minutes)

The fragments of dialogue cited above are a broad meditation on the themes of liberty and justice articulated in "The Declaration of Independence". In an ironic twist on Jefferson's conception of the role of government, Gardner quotes the language of the first draft of the Declaration (which ultimately was not adopted), that speaks about the "disturbers of our harmony." The greatest disturber of Gardner's harmony and the largest obstacle in his pursuit

of happiness turns out to be the government itself, when it seizes \$600 from Gardner's bank account for overdue taxes, leaving him with less than \$25. And at this point, in the story Gardner and son are finally evicted from their last hotel room and must seek refuge in the beds of the Christian mission's homeless shelter.

Gardner reflects on Jefferson's "The Declaration of the Independence" when he visits a white man, Ribbon (Kurt Fuller) in which he is taken along with his son to a football match. Gardner was there to apologize as he could not arrive at the appointed time last day to talk about the Dean Witter products. By seeing the life style of Mr. Ribbon, Gardner remembers the words of "The Declaration of the Independence". He figures out that he is "in another place" because he is white and possessed a lucrative job that yields him that massive amount of money even after his retirement. The nice house and the car he has are the evidences of it. On the other hand, despite the constant demand of his son to watch the football match, Gardner is unable to afford for it. Gardner thereby ponders to find out the answer what disturbs his 'harmony'. He ponders on his harmony and comes to realize both racial American society and the capitalistic pull that spoil his harmony. He cannot be complacent with his status. His can achieve harmony at the point when he gets financial security which he calls happiness.

Similarly, the movie shows the gullibility of the black people which is a kind of stereotype. It implies that black people are easily duped. Their innocence and complacency is exploited for the benefits of the white. The black people fully trust on the white and in return, they are used for the purpose of the whites and to serve the interests of the whites. Gardner in the film has been shown gullible. He simply trusts the people but he is deceived by them. In the scene from 12.00 to 14.06 minute, Gardner sets to get an application for the internship in Dean Witter, he feels odd to take the scanner which he aims to sell to make up his living. He trusts on a white Hippie girl (Joyrul Raven), a street girl who plays guitar and collects money;

he leaves the scanner entreating her to look after and drops one dollar, and promises to give extra money the moments he gets back. But ironically, he is easily duped; the girl flees away with the scanner which Gardner does not want to lose at any cost, for he has invested entire life's saving on it. The white girl, though Hippie, has confidence to cheat hardworking black man. Her confidence to cheat Gardner owes its strength to her whiteness. The scene shows the traces of racial discrimination in the American society even after it underwent significant changes over times.

In the film, the relationship between the whites and the blacks is hierarchical; the former is the superior and the later is the inferior. The white is dominant and the black is dominated. This relationship is revealed through Gardner's relationships with his landlords. In the film, Gardner rents in a white landlord's tenement. During the film, Gardner moves many times but none of his landlords happens to be African American. He is regularly asked for the rent the moments he was undergoing a severe financial depression. The landlord threatens him of eviction unless he pays the money within a week. In one scene, the landlord excuses that he needs the room painted in order to evict Gardner. Gardner takes the venture of painting the room himself. In the scene, Gardner is shown having a paint brush and pigment the walls before he is arrested for the evasion of parking tickets. He paints the room white. The selection of the colour of painting escalates pigmentation sharply. *The long focus photography*³ has been used to focus Gardner's act of painting (37.57-39.35 minutes).

Similarly, the interview committee in the film at Dean Witter comprises only the white members. Among the four members in the interview committee, no single black is involved. Those whites are shown in high rank interviewing a black. The four members of the interview committee nod down while the protagonist tries to greet them in his ragged

³ It is a stylistic choice of the director to focus something for longer time to create a tension. In it camera remains in its location with only slight camera movements for reframing.

appearance. They giggle at Gardner's mention that he was arrested for the failure to pay parking tickets. Particularly, Mr. Frohm (James Karen) seems unresponsive while Gardner tries to shake hand with him. A *close-up shot* casts him nodding down and being indifferent towards his concern. Moreover, the medium and sometimes close shots of Gardner feature him while he walks in for the interview. In the *mise-en scène*⁴, of many smiling cheering and busy white faces are shown in contrast. It is the situation that contrasts the plight of the two groups of people. The scene captures the two modes of lives: the lives of the whites and that of black.

The later notion of the American Dream believes in on 'Racial Darwinism'. The idea of the Racial Darwinism refers to the survival of the fittest race, leading racial supremacy. The Western imperialism, led by France, Britain, Germany, and ultimately the United States, began in the late fifteenth century climaxed in late nineteenth with scrambling Africa and the seizure of new possessions in East Asia and the Pacific was transparently racist (Fredrickson, 86). Rudyard Kipling summed up this ideology in the poem "The White Man's Burden" (1899), in the wake of the Spanish-American War, to encourage the victorious Americans to establish colonial rule over the Philippines (Fredrickson 107). The duty of the superior race, according to Kipling, was to take responsibility for "new caught, sullen peoples, half-devil and half-child" (Gordon Lauren 63). Kipling's tropes artfully combined a Darwinian emphasis on the competitive fitness of the white man with the suggestion of a pseudo-paternalistic mission to improve the natives who were coming under European or American hegemony. Racial Darwinism meant, according to Paul Gordon Lauren, that "nations and

⁴ It is movies theater arrangement of actor and scenery: the positioning of actors, scenery, and properties on a stage or movie set. It is also style of movie directing: a style of movie directing characterized by long scenes, little camera movement, and few changes of camera position.

races progressed only through fierce competition” and therefore “had no choice but to participate in the struggle for the survival of the fittest” (73).

In the film, Gardner's plunging into Dean Witter becomes mandatory to acquire the dream – the happiness, he is searching. He takes part in the internship programme. The internship programme at Dean Witter judges him in terms of his strength to survive and the meritocratic qualities. Within the office hour, he has to do all the assigned works of calling the clients, meeting them and introducing the Dean Witter products. Besides, he has to run extra to sell the scanners to make his living because the internship pays him no salary. The torture and the pangs he suffers during the pursuit are soothed by the moments after the completion of the dream he has envisioned. During the internship, he even does not take break between the calls he dials to his clients untiringly. Moreover, he even does not drink a glass of the water there to save the time as in his words:

I was not hanging up in phone between calls. I realise by not hanging up in the phone, I will gain another eight ten minutes to the day. I was also not drinking water. So I did not waste any time in bathe room. (1.04.52 – 1.05.19 minutes)

So, he survives to the point he keeps on struggling and proving his best. When he fails to become the best, he loses everything. He is the only among many black as such who has guts to chase after the American Dream and having a peculiar ability to surpass everyone other proving himself the best.

Importantly, this is always a story of a single lucky person. All men are not 'created' having equal strength. And the weaker ones are swallowed in their pursuit of the dream. Chris Gardner cannot be the representative of the whole American population. The American Dream as depicted in the US constitution is not really feasible for everyone in America. So, there are stakes in that Chris Gardner becomes able to fulfill his dream in the end.

During Gardner's internship at Dean Witter, the movie shows the power of the "professional stereotyping". "It is the professional ways of stating that blacks and Latinos are socially and culturally inferior to whites" (Solorzano 12). The power of stereotypes to cause people to confirm stereotyped expectations can also be seen in interracial relationships. Having adopted stereotyped ways of thinking about another person, people tend to notice and remember the ways in which that person seems to fit the stereotype while resisting evidence that contradicts the stereotype (Snyder 325). The ideological function of images is similar to the stereotyping the black buddies in the cinema. All citizens regardless of their colour can follow law and order when they are put together in an institution. All of them have equal responsibility to serve for both the institutional and personal growth. But, at Dean Witter, only Gardner is asked for errands for the boss while he was engaging in his work. The internship head, Mr. Frakesh (Dan Castellaneta), always orders Gardner sometimes for coffee, sometimes for water and sometimes even to look after his car. In a scene, when Gardner fixes an appointment with Mr. Ribbon to talk about the Dean Witter products, Mr. Frakesh, the head of the internship asks him to look after the car whether it is parked at the right area or not. The head says:

Chris what's up? Hey man! Do you have five minute. I have no minutes. I am supposed to present commodity report. Could you move my car? That really helps me out. It is Samson's, half locked. Just move it together side with other Samson. There are spaces. Hang on to this (showing and giving the key). And you have to give me that (key). (1.06.15-1.06.49 minutes)

It is because he had to spend time doing personal favours to his that Gardner misses the appointment. His positive image of obedience within an institution gives room someone to exploit him. He already has so many burdens to carry on, and he is added with some extra burden. The subtle thinking behind the image of obedience affirms the cultural stereotyping

of black servitude. The head's ready assumptions about Gardner's willingness to carry out personal favors display racial prejudices.

The racism in the Western society, especially in U.S. is rooted in the enslavement of black and colonial domination of people of color; it is reflected in the trauma of capitalist modernisation. This racism now entices the individuals into the mechanism called capitalism. The capitalism forces an individual for a lavish living style and to achieve financial security (Fredrickson 146). In order to get a better status, an individual is to seek the opportunity and the moments. Gardner in the film struggles hard to meet his demands and needs in American society. When he tries to keep pace with capitalistic development, he faces his tough luck. In the scene from 1.00.03 to 1.02.22 minutes, he gets ten minutes leave from his non-salaried job of internship. And yet, has to go to sell the scanner to make his living. On the way, he is hit by a white man's car; he loses his shoe. He gets back to the work with his one foot bare. His one bare foot is contrasted with others and startles the other staffs. Despite the white man's desire to wait for the police and investigation, he leaves the spot. If he does not get in the office on time, he is likely to lose the hard earned seat at Dean Witter. This scene is pathetic and has a sardonic humour about how the capitalism makes the lives of people of lower social order so complicated.

Ambivalence is one of the explicit features of democratic American society. It is cruel to some and while it is sympathetic to some other."It is uniquely in the West that we find the dialectical interaction between a premise of equality and an intense prejudice toward certain groups that would seem to be a precondition for the full flowering of racism as an ideology or worldview" (Fredrickson 12). In this, Fredrickson argues that the west is more likely to fall into the ambivalence of promise and delivery. The film also equally shows Gardner is not denied with the opportunities, but he has limited resources to carry out his dream.

2.1.1 Positive Images and Political Positioning

After a lot of suffering years of negative media stereotyping, most black viewers aspired to have a show that portrayed African American as intelligent, sensitive and successful. As a result, cinemas and literature began to show the blacks with positive colour. Now, the miserable, asexual, treacherous blacks were represented as stud, brave and calm. Although such portrayal countered the longstanding stereotypes, the politics and the ideology was to hide the black experiences and feelings. The problem with this response is that it embraces the assumption that positive image is prosperous image. This dubious equation means the African Americans are trapped into a position where any reflection of more black experiences was always hidden (Lewis and Jhally 138-39). The black experiences were never foregrounded and highlighted in a true sense. The present film, *The Pursuit of Happyness*, films the protagonist with positive images in an attempt to show how his struggles and experiences are invisible in the American society. The film portrays Chris Gardner as a person who has boldness and energy to face adversity. He aspires a dream, and for the sake of fulfillment of it, he does not waver from the root. Such positive portrayal of Chris Gardner hides what is his value and identity in the society. Does he really have such a favourable environment in the society as depicted in the movie? It is a manipulative strategy to veer his essentially black experiences.

Recently cinema, like early works on representation of women, has stressed the issue of the positive image. This tendency of filling the character with positive images, though not, wrong, is inadequate and full with the methodological dangers. Though the positive images do not come up with bearing so much wretchedness and dejection, still they catch the same political lead as the earlier image would do. According to Leo Brady and Marshall Cohen:

The exact nature of positive first of all is somewhat relative: black incarnations of patience and gradualism, for example have always been more

pleasing to whites that to blacks. A cinema dominated by positive images, characterised by a bending-over-backwards-not-to-be racist attitude, might usually itself has no illusions concerning its own perfection. (884)

Hence, it is the change in the way and tendency not in the essence. The black American experiences are always pleasing whether they are inscribed in positive or negative images. This hails to the American history that has never become able to evade the discriminatory nature. This shows the wrongs in the underlying mechanism itself.

One of the most striking elements in the film is the running for the better life, which Muccino emphasizes by making Chris Gardner always "run" in the movie to show that people move differently in the desperation. There is hardly any scene where Gardner is not running to achieve something or where he is not running away from desperation. The capacity to run all the time owes itself to black stamina for which they are basically known for the American society. Moreover, the act of "running" when associated with blacks uncannily brings blacks' memory of slavery. And it means "running" away from slavery and running for the better life. There are many sequences of his running. He is cast always running. For example, runs to attend interview, to get the scanner back from the Hippie girl, to get in the buses, to get the spots in Glide Memorial Church, when he does not have enough money to pay the taxi fare and so on.

The *sequences* of his running *shots* feature Gardner that he is tough guy ever untiring by running. This is certainly a positive thing to show as the spectator will applaud his diligence. But the story behind such depiction goes other way. It is the politics of the white society to hide the essential black experiences. Moreover, the "running" in the film is significant to the idea of racial Darwinism. Gardner always runs because he has to prove himself "the fittest", otherwise, he would not be taken in the company. He has to prove himself the best. The reality is that if a black dreams something in this type of society, then

he has to run always breathlessly to get it. Otherwise, it will remain just a dream without bearing any fruition.

Then, in the final moments of the movie, Gardner slowly walks down the street with his son, a smile on his lips, and passes by the real Chris Gardner. He turns around noticing which extraordinary person 'he is well on his way to become'. A significant aspect Muccino mentions is that you have to be a foreigner to understand the American Dream with all its beauty. Then, you have a different view being a white and a black by colour.

Gardner's pursuit of dream is highlighted by the sequences that show positive qualities in him: diligent labour, intelligence, hard working. Muccino restages the scene of Rubik more than a couple of times. It was an overnight success that appeared in the shops in 1980. It was a puzzle of 'speedcubing' with 43 trillion different combinations. First, in the kitchen it is cast as gift Christopher got from his friend. It is riddle that any person hardly succeeds to solve it by arranging the same colour in each side. Subsequently, a television programme tells about its history. It was in vogue at the time to play with toy as we see both the cab driver and Mr. Jay Twistle having it. The smartness of the protagonist is shown when he solves the puzzle while he shares a ride with Mr. Twistle to Alley valley. The scene actually overshadows things that Gardner actually wanted to ask with Mr. Twistle. Actually, he shared the ride because Mr. Twistle denied when Gardner asked about the application he dropped a month ago. Saying that he is busy, Mr. Twistle said him to ask next time. Then, he shared the ride. Even if he is smart, his smartness goes in vain without bearing any fruit.

Muccino again focuses on the "running". When he does not have enough to pay a cab, he runs again. At this time the running has dual implications: the white cab driver and that of Gardner. The cab driver chases him for the money and Gardner runs to escape from him, for he does not have enough money to pay off the cab bill. Gardner surpasses the cab

driver and ultimately exceeds him but he has to lose his one scanner. He cannot make his hand in holding the scanner as the door of the locale train closes. Then, he remembers Thomas Jefferson:

It is right then. I started thinking about Thomas Jefferson. In the declaration of the independence, he talks about our right to life liberty and pursuit of happiness. I remember thinking how did he know to pursuit part in there, and maybe happiness is something that which we can only pursue or maybe we can actually never have it, no matter what, how did know that? (31.55-32.25 minutes)

The mention of the word "we" comes in the movie symbolically. It may symbolize either the whole humanity or the black and economically challenged people only. He makes the sense that the idea of happiness is so elusive that people never have it actually. Or it may connote that it is elusive only to the people who are black by skin and the people of lower economic rung like Gardner himself.

His smartness, similarly, appears in the interview scene of the film when he dares to face up the interview in those ragged clothes stained with the painting. Spending a night in custody, the following morning he timely attends the interview and conducts it nicely answering the questions tactfully. While attending the interview too the "running" has been emphasised. His night stay in jail becomes gloomy by the feeling that he could not take his son home from the daycare centre. When it becomes mandatory to stay at jail, he has to call Linda who is no more with him to take Christopher from the daycare centre. He unevenly speaks in the phone with Linda. The staggering tone is subject to the fact that he has already asserted that he is only person he can give him the best parental caring not the mother, and the feeling of an odd to speak with the departed wife. The gloom night stay in jail has been cast with the use of *transition* in which the sunlight fades away and the electric lights begin to

lighten. He rushes to Dean Witter to face up the interview. The rapid running shots present Garner like a smart athlete. The *editing* of the shots is also rapid. The pace and intensity of both the *editing* and the *shots* collocate the desperation and rush of Gardner.

There are, of course, circumstances in which a well qualified black person will receive an 'equal opportunities' image. However, it is also another politics of making the things way around. Exploited positive images in what was ultimately a confined version of African American history. The idea is very subtle which casts black as just another immigrant group making its way toward freedom and prosperity in democratic America. The positing and recognition of these stereotypes has been immensely useful. It enables to detect structural patterns of prejudice imbricated in society. The tendency of positivising the images in the situation wherein blacks involve again becomes 'too white' in nature. This idea prevents the way to expose the true feelings, understandings and experiences of black people. Instead, it paves the way to what Leo Brady and Marshall Cohen call the privileging of "characterological concerns" (to the detriment of other important considerations) and also to a kind of essentialism (884). This means decorating the character with the positive colour which in the way that helps as blockade to other important considerations. According to them, the idea of portraying the positive images hides the essential and true features of the blacks. It is the obstruction on the way to their true feelings. The idea of exploiting the positive images in media, according to them, is not free of the politics. It is another way of stereotyping the black images and detriment to the real essence of African American culture and experiences. So happens with the case of Gardner in the film.

2.2 American Dream, Class Consciousness, and Financial Security

Set during the 1980s of the San Francisco, the film can be seen as the chronicle of American Dream at a point in the nation when capitalism's promise of economic opportunity for all seemed at its peak of fulfillment. Settings of the film during the Regan era provide the

sense of economic down of the nation that affected the mass, especially the middle class people. The movie also approves that the real battle lines in society are drawn between the two classes of the given society – ‘the haves’ and ‘the have-nots’. In other words, the evolution and the progress of the society is the class struggle between the bourgeoisie – those who control the worlds natural, economic and human resources, and the proletariat – the majority of the global population who live in sub-standard conditions and who have always performed the manual labour, the mining, the factory work, the ditch- digging of the rich. The film assesses the American Dream through its unflattering characterisation of those on the top of the economic ladder and its trenchant examination of the ways in which the American dream not only fails to fulfill its promise but also contributes to the declining of personal values. The film outlines the class consciousness and financial quandary as the keystones to the pursuit of American Dream. Film stands as a scathing critique of American capitalist culture and the ideology that promises it.

In the case of the American Dream, then the question for the Marxist analysis is: how does the American Dream enlist the support of all Americans, even of those who fail to achieve it in promising the interests of those in powers? The answer, at least in part, is that the American Dream, much like the state lotteries or the big-bucks sweepstakes opens the possibility that anyone can win and like gambling addicts, people cling to that possibility (Tyson 58). Gardner clings to this possibility hoping that he will one day find himself on the top of the pyramid of success which is the happiness in American sense. His aspiration to be an employee in Dean Witter is the promise and allurement of the American Dream. Dean Witter is the agent that supports the ideology keeping the American flag in front of it. The camera keeps on focusing Gardner's steps towards the Dean Witter building for more than thirty seconds (from 18.20 to 18.57 minutes). Gardner enters into Dean Witter to drop the

application for the internship. In front of the company the flapping American flag is shown along with the towering building.

The building covers a huge space. It is so much high. The greater portion of the space of the camera shots is covered by the building. Its spacious coverage, mountainous height, capacious interior and lavish furniture and the decoration symbolise the American dream. It is the product of financial success. Gardner is featured with his head held up and eyes looking high towards the flag and the building. A close-up shot of his neck is taken to show the audience that it is from the protagonist's point of view. This suggests the enticement of the company. His entrance into Dean Witter marks his formal association with capitalism.

The rift between the rich and the poor or the middle class people as the film shows, has been a great problem for the one pursuing the American dream. Throughout the film, the contrast between the haves, such as an executive from Dean Witter who lives in a luxurious house with all the accompanying manifestations of a successful upper middle class life, and the have-nots, such as the long lines of homeless people waiting for a chance to have a bed to sleep in for one night, is disturbing.

Mr. Ribbon, one of Gardner's clients, is a high ranked person. When Gardner goes over there in his house to apologize for missing the other day appointment, he and his son are startled twice by the surroundings and the beauty the residential area has: before and after they meet. Before he and his son reaches the house of Mr. Ribbon, they stopped for a while and watch out the appearance of the house. The camera focuses the house's exterior and the water splashing the garden. The surprise has been shown with *the shots* of glimmering rays of the sun and the meticulous environment it has and the flora the yard have detached them. Gardner stretches his eye brows to handle the situation and they proceed ahead. It is the realization of the class barriers. The nice white house is zoomed in nearer to show the effect on Gardner. Even after they depart from Mr. Ribbon after watching the football match

together, Gardner and Christopher look back at the house. The scene has been cast misty; it has been capture from the point of view of Gardner to suggest his inability understand what is there that makes difference between them.

A continual effort in maintaining these divisions is a class system that keeps most people in 'their place'. Investigating any social phenomenon of racial divisions in the US society must acknowledge the existence of class barriers that ensnare the majority of black people. In this sense, "The American Dream is a fantasy that the few can or will ever realize. It is an idea sustained by anecdotes that focus on the exceptions not on rules" (Lewis and Jhally 135-36). According to Lewis and Jhally, the fulfillment of the American Dream rests more on exception rather than it being feasible to everyone. There are the few people who can achieve it. Those who acquire the American Dream are the exceptions in the society not the commoners.

In the film, the economic laws of free market, capitalism keep the class barriers in place with a cavalier efficacy and that makes the protagonist's living so tough that he can neither quit his living nor can he have a sufficiently importune atmosphere to nurture his dreams. Though United States has declared itself nonracist, and invited its black citizens to compete alongside everyone else, it is not aptly implemented. Regarding this, Lewis and Jhally say:

The game of monopoly is instructive here. If three white people begin a game of monopoly, a black player who is invited to join them halfway through enters at a serious disadvantage. Unless blessed by an unlikely combination of good luck and good sense, the black player will be unable to overcome these economic disadvantages and compete on equal status. (Lewis and Jhally 135)

In the film, Gardner is a member of the middle class family. He is the very lucky fellow that he becomes able to fulfill his dream with a combination of good luck and good sense. But he

fulfills his dream at a high price. The price he pays the price of family disintegration and cultural loss. When he decides to join the internship programme, his wife Linda leaves him and their son. She also satirizes the idea of stockbroker he mentions by saying "why not an astronaut". Similarly, he decided to pursue his dream he has to leave his locale place of Texas and assimilate himself to the urban life of San Francisco. His desire to join in the internship programme is the allurements of the American Dream. This is how US has treated most of its black citizen: it offers the promises of equal opportunity without providing the means to fulfill it. When they are allured by the idea of equal opportunity, they are to pay the price.

Every family wants to own its own home, its own land is a capitalist ideology that sells itself as natural by pointing, for example, to the fact that almost all Americans want to own their own prosperity, without acknowledge that this desire is created in them by the capitalist culture in which they live. Similarly, the protagonist, in the film, promises and struggles to make his familial atmosphere standard. Familial tumult appears evident from the beginning in the film due to the family's financial crisis. Gardner meets his wife at the laundry and a squabble takes place between them concerning the issue of paying tax. Linda is featured for the first time in the film, surrounded by the clothes in the laundry. His determination to family is evident in the following dialogue:

Linda: Do you remember that rent is due this week? Probably not!

We are already two months behind.

Next week we will be three months.

I have been put to double checks for four months, Chris.

Just sign what is in your contact and get outta your business.

Chris: That is what I am trying to do.

That is what I am trying to do for my family, for you and for

Christopher.

What is the ideology that blinds the middle class to the socio-economic inequalities in contemporary America? In long part, the middle class is blinded by the belief in the American Dream, which tells them that financial success is simply the product of initiative and hard working. Therefore, if some people are poor, it is because they are shiftless and lazy. In the country, people believe that it is natural to want to “get ahead” to want to own a ‘better house’ and wear ‘better clothes’. “Better” not only refers to ‘better than I had before’ but also ‘better than other people have’. It what the protagonist realizes in the film. The family in the film comes from the middle class of the social ladder. Linda is not simply happy. She wants to leave and go to work in New York. Gardner is in an attempt to prosper his family life style. Linda explicitly reveals the fact that she is not happy with life in the street when she decides to leave Gardner:

Linda: You know! I am not happy anymore.

I am not just happy.

(Irritatingly)

Chris: Then, just go get happy Linda! Christopher lives with me.

Another one of the most notable facts about the American Dream the film suggests is that it celebrates the individualistic efforts to mark one's own success. It relates itself with the rugged individualism, one of the cornerstones of the American Dream, which romanticizes the individual who strikes out alone in a pursuit of a goal not easily achieved, a goal that often involves risk and one that most people would not readily undertake. It believes on in that a human being is capable of pursuing an efficient and economically sound life. It is principle of being somebody (Tyson 57 and 59). According to this principle, if someone remains shiftless and lazy and cannot uplift himself, he is simply an egoless person. The torture and the pangs the protagonist suffers during the pursuit are soothed by the moments after the completion of the dream he has envisioned. That is to say, he undertakes the venture

of being financially prudent with an 'Ego'. During the internship, he keeps on calling his clients, meeting them and introducing the Dean Witter products. A *shot* of lady drinking water contrasts busy Gardner in calling the clients. He even does not take break between the calls nor does he drink a glass of the water there in order to save the time. He says:

I was not hanging up in phone between calls. I realize by not hanging up in the phone, I will gain another eight ten minutes to the day. I was also not drinking water. So I did not waste any time in bathe room. (1.04.52 – 1.05.19 minutes)

He works in the office with complete devotion and commitment. He makes the maximum utilization of the time the other interns spend in taking the breaks between the calls and drinking water and gossiping. He even utilizes the ten minutes break by spending it on reading the given book and counseling about his scanner.

Similarly, when he fails to sell a scanner picked up by the white homeless guy. In the movie we find him working at stairs where light is available. Subsequently, the camera takes the shots of electricity cut-off, and Gardner standing against the wall and reading the internship book in the light that penetrated through the small holes of the window. The light comes here with the symbolic connotations. The light may suggest that protagonist is desperate to secure future. Moreover, the assertion of the individual efforts is also clearly evident in the words of the manager while he conducts the lecture among the interns. He says:

Some of you guys are here because you know somebody. Some of you guys here because you think you are somebody. There is one guy here is gonna be somebody. That person gonna be the guy who can turn this (showing a book) into this (bill-books) into \$800 dollars. (57.56 – 58.57 minutes)

In the lecture to the interns, the manager suggests that it is their individual competence and latent that can make the luckiest fellow to be employed at Dean Witter Investment Company.

Capitalism on the institution called culture industry that “refutes objection made against made it just as well as that against the world which it impartially duplicates. Only choice [the individuals have] is either to join or to be left behind” (Adorno and Horkheimer 145). That is to say, capitalism holds the individual life in such a way that the individuals have choices but no objection. After the interview in his ragged clothes stained with paint, he wants to quit the offer, for it pays no salary. The circumstances have changed as his wife has left him and he needs money to survive. There was no salary, not even the reasonable promise of job. But he cannot quit it because the moment he quits he is ‘left behind’ and his dream urges him not to ‘be left behind’. The head of the resource, Jay Twisle convinces him to continue. With his wincing face he returns and the slamming doors of the lift are focused with *extra move* of the camera mainly because it suggests the blockade of the other alternatives except to embrace it.

The film explores the operation of structural inequalities prevalent in the society. What is remarkable about the society the film shows is it refuses to acknowledge the existence of class structures and how they influence racial inequalities. And, yet, at certain moments, those structural inequalities are accepted as obvious. Generally, it is expected rich white children to do better than poor black children; they will go to better schools be brought up in more comfortable surroundings and be offered more opportunities. The children who succeed in spite of these odds are glamorous figures in the culture precisely because they defy these expectations. In the film, from scene 1.10.30 – 1.10.50 minutes, while riding bus to church with his father, Christopher looks outside the window, and watches a white boy equal of his age playing basket ball at the yard, the yard is so panoramic and green. On the other hand, he attends a poor daycare centre whose walls are filled with the rough words like "fuck" and where the spelling of the word ‘happiness’ is misspelled as “happyness”. The *shot* of the dazzling rays of the sun provides the transit point to distinguish between the two

classes of people: Christopher and the playing boy. Contrasting silently, he realises his situation and nods down his head at Gardner's shoulder. This fact tells us a great deal about the way class is represented in cinema.

One of the effective ways the film criticises the capitalist economy is by showing the worthiness of Gardner in terms of his efforts to produce something that has an economic value. The human value is that what value it can exchange for. As consequence, the importance of the individuals within the economic life is drastically reduced. The regulations and the management of economic systems by the state and corporations brought to its fullest development that tendency what George Lukács calls "reification" (Seldon 106). It means that the object produced by the worker replaces the individual. Pursuant to the above proposition, the human value of Gardner is worth when he becomes able to transform the given book, named *Security Analysis* (the manger calls it their Bible) into the bill-books and eventually to the dollars. Manager is cast with a book in his right hand and a ledger in his left, and commands the interns that the company is seeking the guy who can transform the book in to excel of the dollars in the company's pockets. Hence, the human value is reduced to the exchange value it can barter.

Financial security is another impediment that constantly obstructs the protagonist's pursuit of the dream. The protagonist's family comes from the middle class of the social rung. His survival in the San Francisco of the 1980s is tough because of the financial anxiety. In this sense, Wilkerson argues "unlike the most middle class whites, they [the blacks] live with daily personal reminders of the poverty and desperation they are trying to put behind them, as the loved ones back home who have not fared so well turn to them for help with rent, use of a car, a place to stay" (Wilkerson 114) In the film the first conversation occurs between Gardner and Linda concerned about the paying tax, Linda vexes at Gardner. Gardner walks

out to sell the scanner to the doctors. The moment, a car is shown, being inspected by the white cops. A *voice over* accompanies his walking:

You see that car.

That's mine.

There is no parking in the Hospital.

That is what happens when you are always in a rush. (05.2-05.35 min.)

In no time the car is dragged out by the cops and they take it. According to Gardner, he needs to sell at least two scanners a month for the rent and daycare centre, and one more to get his windshield wiper. The financial quandary becomes so engraving that it does not let him move his mind to think keenly for other things. After the car is taken by the cops, Gardener is shown with grim, smirking face, with tears staggering at the edge of his eyes, merely looking at the motion of the dragged car. Moreover, the initial scene of the kitchen is shown poor and miserable. There again occurs a squabble about the paying tax. At the same time, Linda insults her husband as he mentions that he is applying for the stockbroker with her words “why not Astronaut”. The quarrel ends when Linda leaves for her work. With the grim face, Gardner plays with Rubik and tries to fix the riddle.

At the same time, along with the family financial problems, the film also reflects the economic troubles of the nation. The TV in Gardner's apartment displays the news concerning the then economic depression of the American society. A reporter reports the economic condition:

A few days ago i was presented with a report, comprehensive order if you will, in our economic condition. You do not like it, I did not like it. But we have to face the truth. Then go to work, return the things around. And make no mistakes about it. We can turn them around. The federal Budget is outta control. We face run away deficit almost \$80 Billion for this part of year, with

Sep. 30th. That budget is larger than the entire Federal project in 1957. (From 07.25.00-8.5.00 minutes)

The above quotation outlines the economic condition of the American in 1980s. The economic condition is depressing. Along with this, Gardner with bleak face, playing with the Rubik (little cube), prostrate in position is a perfect parallelism that indicates the financial depression of the time. The atmosphere is captured with yellowish-gray colour. Gardner is featured in *medium shots*, focusing his to effect the economic anxiety of his family. The financial problem does not go easily, it haunts days and nights. We are taken in a night scene (from 14.50 to 14.55) where we encounter Gardner and Linda in their bed. But, Gardner cannot close up his eyes despite his wife's request to sleep that it is late. The scene suggests nights are awake in the financial gloom.

Muccino emphasizes the fulfillment of dream becomes difficult when there are the ups and downs in one's financial status. When Gardner seems to overcome the financial problem by selling the rest of the scanners, he is shaken again when the government takes away almost all the money from his account as tax. His primary means to earn is to sell at least two scanners a month. The only way to surpass non-salaried duration of the six months is to sell the remaining scanners. He finishes up selling all the scanners and thinks that he will overcome the monetary problem. He also fills up some cheques and sends money to bank. Before he realizes the financial security collected by much his toils and sweats, a letter comes from commission of tax sweeping all his deposit except \$23.33. Gardner says:

After four months we sold all our scanners.

It seemed we are making it.

Seemed, we were doing good until one day.

That day, a letter brought back me to the earth.

This part of life is called paying tax.

If you did not pay, the government gets stuck its hands into your account. And take your money, no warning.

Nothing.

There was only \$21.33 left in my bank account.

I was broke. (From 1.16.55-1.17.56 minute)

Medium shots present Gardner in public telephone booth, making grudges with the tax collector. He speaks with uneven dialogues and incomplete sentences suggesting the audience the feeling of the financial harassment. After this, the camera pans down to show equally grim and harassed face of Christopher just back of his father. The pursuit to land on a secure standard lifestyle is paradoxically threatened by the same financially insecure position.

More miserable situation of financial timidity is shown when Gardner tries to consult to Mr. Jay Twisle about the submission of the application. He proposed to share a ride to Alley valley as Mr. Twisle did not have leisure to answer his inquiry. They share a ride. During the ride, Gardner tries to influence him by mentioning when he was in a navy he worked for a doctor who loved to play golf – hour and hours every day. “I would actually perform that medical procedure when he leaves me in the office. I am used to be in a position where I have to make decisions.” This is the time when he solves the riddle of the Rubik. When the destination comes, the cab driver announces of 17 tons of the cab fare. Mr. Twisle simply says it was not he to pay the fare. Notwithstanding, he has to welcome it. In no time the camera moves to focus the face of Gardner. He says the driver to take him a couple of blocks back; the meter in the cab shows the fare 18 tons, he checks his wallet and finds that he does not have sufficient to pay off. The only choice he has is to runaway. A fight occurs between them when he tries to escape without paying the cab fare and he becomes able to beat the driver and he escapes by running hard. It costs his one scanner as he cannot make himself enter fully with the scanner before the door of the locale train closes. The hand

holding scanner is left outside and he has to abandon the scanner which is recently picked by a homeless white man seeming mentally retired (from 24.20-35.42 minutes). Concomitantly, he mentions about Thomas Jefferson:

It is right then. I started thinking about Thomas Jefferson. In the declaration of the independence, he talks about our right to life liberty and pursuit of happiness. I remember thinking how did he know to pursuit part in there, and maybe happiness is something that which we can only pursue or maybe we can actually never have it, no matter what, how did know that? (31.55-32.25 minutes)

This weak status makes him to reflect on the idea of happiness Jefferson mentions in "The Declaration of the Independence". Gardner thinks that the happiness mentioned in the document does not belong to him; it is only to pursue and people like him never get it. Muccino perfectly collocates this of happiness with his *close up shots* of the grim and sad face and the running *shots* of Gardner. Gardner is shown in phone booth, raining outside, calling his wife as he cannot make to the daycare in time. The camera features some coins on above the telephone set before he narrates Thomas Jefferson's words. The *closes up shots* feature Gardner's face black, fatigued and the drops of water dripping down through the cheeks in bus. Concomitantly, he is running as Linda had mentioned that she is leaving him taking their son too. *The shots* of the running are again emphasised.

At first glance, this film appears to be merely telling the classic "rags to riches" story. The film does more than suggest that with hard work and determination anyone can become Chris Gardner. However, it also emphasises that contrast between the rich and the poor in the society and illustrates the tenuous grasp large numbers of people in society have on the American Dream and how this impacts family life. In many ways this is a difficult film to watch because it so realistically portrays the agonizing struggle Chris goes through when he

reaches for something better only to face another roadblock that sets him back once again. Despite the complications of his circumstances, he wins the coveted job at the end of the internship experience. The happy ending of this movie, however, is illusory. The film leaves audience thinking long after it is over, about how things could have turned out much differently. The film also illustrates the structural conditions that continue to make it more likely that certain groups in the society will struggle for a living wage. The economic slowdown since the 1970s has extensively cut manufacturing jobs and African American men, in particular, who did not have college educations found their economic prospects plummet. It is both the structural obstacles that Gardner encounters, as well as the challenges of everyday living that he meets along the way, that illustrate how easy it is for people in our society to be a paycheck away from poverty.

While this view of human endeavour may seem to most Americans at least quite natural and proper and we can certainly point to the success of self made man like Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln to underscore its apparent fairness. Marxist analysis reveals that the American Dream an ideology, belief system, not an innate or natural way of seeing the world. And like all ideologies that support the socio-economic inequalities of capitalist countries in which the means of production (natural, financial and human resources) are privately owned and which those who own them inevitably become the dominant class. The American Dream blinds the middle class people to the enormities of its own failure — the widening gulf between American's rich and poor, the growing rank of homeless and hungry, the enduring socio-economic barriers against the people of colour. In other words, the success of the American Dream – the acquisition of a wealthy lifestyle for a few rests on the misery of many. And it is the power of ideology, of the belief in the naturalness and fairness of this dream that has blinded the middle class to the harsh realities it makes.

2.3 Family values and the American Dream

The film explores the importance of the family values in relation to the American Dream. The film shows the importance of the family values like family integration, financial status, future prospectus of the children, father-son relationship etc. The family in the film is an African American family migrated to San Francisco in search of the better future from Louisiana, near Texas. Gardner, the family head, constantly struggles to keep the family intact. He takes on every responsibility and adverse situation to keep his family's financial status prudent. Moreover, he is very much conscious about the parental caring and the future prospectus of his son. How he tries to allocate enough time even in critical situation of his struggle to keep the family integrated and financially well is an important issue to deal with in the African American family tradition. The protagonist in the film departs from family disintegration during the long period of slavery and the 'absentee fatherhood' in eighteenth and nineteenth century of African American life that historically characterise the African American. He tries to restore the family values which are essential in the American Dream. Moreover, he gives a counter response to the mainstream culture's idea about the African American family.

Family integration is one of the family values that Muccino emphasises in the film. Although Linda, Gardner's wife wants to leave him because she is not happy in this family, yet, he tries to keep her stay. When it becomes impossible to keep her, he finally lets his wife go because he realises that he cannot give happiness to her as per her desire. His son is the most important for Chris. He keeps struggling for the better future of the family. He acts both as the father and mother for his son. He never lets his son become sad; his son also understands what kind of life they are living. In the high individualistic society, family is also important because it is where heart is bounded just like what Chris experiences. It is not the kind of family with house in which house is the final destination, but what Chris experienced

is the close relationship with family which makes him to keep it and to go for his life.

Maintain family in a proper way is also a Puritan value.

Regarding the African American family tradition, Moynihan argues that at the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of African American society is the deterioration of the African American family. It is the fundamental source of the weakness of the black community. In essence, "the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is so out of line with the rest of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole" (Moynihan 1965:5, 29). Moynihan argues that African American family believes in the matriarchal structure and it is the cause of their regression. Moynihan's point is that mothers work inside the house and fathers do outside the house.

During the period of servitude, African family traditions, which varied according to national origin and religion, could not be replicated in the New World after Africans were forced into slavery. The slave trade was responsible for breaking up African families, and husbands, wives, and children were liable to be sold separately because U.S. law did not legally recognise their families. Enslaved Africans were denied a secure family life. Because enslaved men and women were property and could not legally marry, a permanent family could not be a guaranteed part of an African American slave's life. They had no right to live or stay together, no right to their own children, and it was common for slave parents and children to live apart. Parents could not protect their children from the will of the master, who could separate them at any time. About one-third of slave families suffered permanent separation caused by the sale of family members to distant regions (Klepp 2008).

Even after slavery was virtually abolished after 1852 in the Northern states which meant that African Americans could legally establish families in the North, African American families in the North faced discrimination and poverty, and worried about being kidnapped by slave catchers, they had problem of maintaining their family ties. Mothers and fathers both

worked so their children could become educated. Only, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the ideas of affectionate marriages and loving, sentimental relations with children become dominant in African American family life. These attitudes first took hold among the urban, educated wealthy and middle classes, and later spread to rural and poorer Americans. This change was due to the growth and increasing sophistication of the economy, which meant that economic issues became less pressing for families and production moved outside the home to specialized shops and factories. (Jarrett 31)

The economic transformations of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century brought about further changes in men's and women's roles. Work was less likely to be done in the home, as fewer and fewer Americans lived on farms, and men left the home to work in offices and factories. Men assumed sole responsibility for the financial support of the family, becoming the breadwinners, a term coined in the early nineteenth century. Married women were not supposed to work for wages, and were considered too pure and innocent to be out in the working world. Women were supposed to devote themselves to domestic duties, and children were seen as young innocents who needed a mother's protection. Fathers had less and less to do with raising their children. Most of the time fathers were absent in the family due to their work outside the homes. This basically characterised the African American families who were substantially backward because of the longstanding slavery upon them.

By the nineteenth century, romanticism and sentimentality put more emphasis on emotional attachment and the cultivation of feeling in the family. New ideas about human equality and liberty undermined older notions of hierarchy and order. Americans applied the political ideal of "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" espoused in the Declaration of Independence to family life. Husbands were to rule, but with affection and with their wives' interests at heart. Wives obeyed, not out of force, but out of love. Parents sought the affection of their children, not their economic contributions. This was the new ideal, but old habits died

slowly. Authority, inequality, and violence declined but never entirely disappeared (Klepp 2008). The film recounts the family values and ties and considers them as an essential element in the African American life.

Despite various political perspectives expressed on "family values," one thing remained clear — "family values," however, counts central to national well-being and keeps the possibility of the American Dream intact (Hill Collins 62). According to Patricia Hill Collins, the term family values "constituted a touchstone, a phrase that apparently tapped much deeper feelings about the significance of ideas of family, if not actual families themselves, in the United States" (Hill Collins 62). On the one hand the idea of family values keeps lingering on, and on the other, the very efforts to keep the family values alive are threatened by the racial underpinnings. In the film, the protagonist struggles hard to keep the family in harmony, respects the family integration and feels the parental responsibility.

The notion of "absent fatherhood" in the black families even in 1980s is bleak. In 1987, 16% of all white children and 50% of all black children in the United States lived with single mothers (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1988). Data from 1981 National Survey of Children document shows that almost half of the children in these families had not seen their fathers at all in the previous year and only one-sixth of them saw him as often as once a week. Among those who begin parenting young in life, the probability of the women raising the children without the father's involvement is even higher. While information on the role played by these absent fathers in teen mother families is very sparse, what is available indicates that fathers are much more likely to live apart from adolescent mothers in general. In addition to father's absence, early childbearing is associated with and possibly a determinant of a number of problematic conditions, of which the developmental risks for the children are perhaps the most pernicious (Danziger and Radin 636).

However, Gardner does not want to fall into the category of absentee fathers who have to detach themselves from the family ties owing to the different economic and financial causes. He delivers his sole efforts to keep the family solidarity. Early in the scene from 10.41 to 11.26 minutes, when Linda is opening out so much grudges on the subject of paying tax, Gardner tries to console that he is going to apply for the stockbroker. She banters this statement saying "why not Astronaut!". Feeling much humiliated with it, he suggests her not to talk with him like that. She again mentions that the rent is due this month and he does not know it, she is doing her double shifts at laundry. In response to this, he clarifies his determination to his family: "This is what I am trying to do this. This is what I am trying to do for my family, for you and for Christopher." The repetition of the sentence and his intensity of answering her question escalate his high concerns for the family values.

The American "Negro" family has been characterized as a matriarchy so often that the assertion is widely accepted as a truth rather than a proposition still in need of empirical evidence and critical analysis. The fact is indisputable that father-absent families are relatively more frequent among Negroes. The conception, however, usually implies that even when a father is present, the mother is the dominant member of the intact Negro family (Hayman and Reed 35).

However, the birthday scene of the film scene comes with the protagonist's intense feelings for family relationship in which Gardner seems much happy; pretty gay even though he cannot offer his son a precious gift but a basket ball as son had already made in list. He tells him to open it up whether it can be microphone or earphone. On the other hand, Linda does not seem happy because she has become obsessive with that he has returned with one more scanner that he was supposed to sell. She leaves the room and we meet her in terrace, Gardner following her. By knowing that she is incensed with the return of the scanner, he tries to coax her. She cannot retain her dominant her role as mother she was supposed to do.

Though she retorts with aggression, Gardner tries to calm down her. She accuses him of always coming with "some damn story" when he tries to tell her the reality about the stolen scanner. She wants to leave him; he catches her by hand and says:

Gardner: We are gonna come outta this.

Everything gonna be fine alright.

Linda: You said that before.

When I was pregnant, it will be fine.

Chris: So you do not trust me now.

Linda: Whatever, I do not care.

Moreover, at the moment, he even scolds Roy, a neighbour, for puffing off the dust from his mat while they are talking and tells him to stop because the dust his covering his apartment. The facts stated above manufacture a strong argument that the protagonist is highly concerned with the family values despite his financial scenarios are weak and pathetic.

Family values and property values become are keys to the family prosperity. Homes in American society become important investments. The traditional family ideal shows the family not only occupying a home, but owning it. According to Patricia Hill Collins "ensconced in tax policies that provide lucrative benefits for homeowners, for many Americans, the single family home as a tangible symbol of wealth remains central to the American Dream" (Hill Collins 65). When the white landlord demands rent and he cannot pay off the rent in time, he even becomes ready to paint the apartment himself. Here out, the apartment serves as home for him and he does not want to lose it. His homeless status and his constant striving for the home (apartment) show that his wants to give the family a good shelter. His landlord wants him to leave the room as he has not paid the rent in time. His words – "I would paint the room myself. How am I supposed to outta here tomorrow? I got to have more time; I have got my son over here" – show his life dedicated to family security.

While he says these words with the landlord he slams the door lest Christopher would not listen to the conversation and have negative effect on him. The *close up shots* of both Gardner and the landlord establishes the conversation scene and camera focuses the wrinkled forehead with pangs and stretched eyebrows of Gardner. Moreover, when he gets in his apartment from the interview, he impatiently waits for his son and Linda. In *full shots*, Gardner is featured moving up and down, coming to the street and looking for them and peeping through the window. A transition of dissolution of the day is used to show that it has turned out evening and his long wait to them. The moment he sees his son Linda carrying and coming, he excitedly says "I got him" twice. His impatient wait for his family members to come exhibits his desperation for the family care. This shows he does not want to lose his family while he pursues the dream.

The scene from 49.30 to 51.38 minutes which establishes bargain between Linda and Gardner about who is going to keep the son, Linda makes her views clear and asks Gardner that what he will do for money. She meant here how he is going to rear up the child as he does not have any reasonable job to earn enough money that is needed to survive and for the future prospect of his son. Linda here is talking about the future of the family. For Linda, "wealth matters because, if one adheres to rules of marriage and childbearing, it is directly transferable from generation to generation" (Patricia Hill Collins, 73).

In addition to this, when he know that she is going to leave him taking their son, he runs to stop her. He desperately runs, hurriedly enters and calls her name. He passionately searches them in every nooks and corners. He checks out the wardrobe and the cupboards to make sure whether they have actually left or not. His running has a symbolic meaning. Here, he runs for family unity. Meanwhile, the telephone rings, he rushes to pick it up in the least expectation that it was from Linda. But, unfortunate to him, it was from Mr. Twisle to fix up his interview. When he picks up the phone his becomes haphazard, stumbles with stuffs

around and the wire of telephone is stretched. This rush and distraction symbolize his fear of family disintegration. He moves down humming the number given him by Mr. Twisle to contact next morning, asks with Wayne and shopkeeper if they have seen Linda and his son. This high tense desperation comes only for the family values he wants always to keep himself. This shows how he is anxious to meet them.

By exploring the theme of 'absentee father hood', the film gives a corrective response to the mainstream culture which thinks African American family values and the parental care along the line of matriarchal structure. According to this, "a child identity is determined through the line of the Mother" (Slippers 65). Father is absent in the family, for he has to go for the external works outside the family. According to Hortense J. Slippers, it seems clear, however, that 'family', as the people practice and understand it in the West - the vertical transfer of a bloodline, of titles and entitlements, of real estate and the prerogatives of "cold cash," from fathers to sons and in the supposedly free exchange of affectionate ties between a male and female of his choice – becomes the mythically revered privileges of a free and freed community. Slippers further adds:

In that sense, African peoples in the historic Diaspora had nothing to prove, if the point had been that they were not capable of family, since it is stunningly evident, . . . , for instance, that Africans were not only capable of the concept and the practice of "family," including "salves," but in modes of elaboration and naming that at least as complex as those of the "nuclear" "in the West".
(75)

According Slippers, in the African American family tradition, child rearing is viewed in terms of motherly devotion. And the male are supposed to take on the other external burdens. But Gardner reverses the formulation takes the burden of rearing the child and promise of nurturing a good future for his son. Gardner is also shown with the positive action of

devotion to family and parental care. There are so many sequences in the film that justify Gardner's devotion to family values and parental care. Many times from the very beginning to the end of film he is shown to have been to daycare centre to drop and take back Christopher home. The overtly repeated scenes of Gardner at daycare centre with his son affirm his family devotion and fatherly care. His corrective response to the culture is explicit when he says: "I met my father for the first time when I was 28 years old. And I made up my mind as young kid when I had children my children were gonna know who their father was" (03.36- 03.48 minutes). Moreover, the line is the testimonial to highlight the image of broken family in African American culture. He counters the matriarchal structure of African American family values and gives a counteractive response to defy the mainstream logic about African family values.

The desperation in Gardner's character is as much a result of his devotion to his son and his valiant efforts to meet his parental responsibilities as anything else. When Gardner's wife leaves the family for New York, he repeats emphatically of his son, "Christopher is staying with me."

Despite great odds, proof of the solidarity of the African American family is evident in the film. The protagonist in the film does not want his wife to leave him and the son. He time and again consoles her and tries to convince her that they will come out of this financial and family trouble soon. Among the scenes that are prominent to the solidarity of the African American family, *the sequences* of selling blood to feed his son and to buy a light for the maintenance of damaged scanner is more poignant and appealing. Gardner is seen more than just a loving and devoted father to his son caring best for the future of his son. He has to sell the blood as there remains no alternative to gather up money to feed his son and make his survival. His circumstances leave no more options for Gardner. This is the positive image of the African American family members to which what Littlejohn-Blake and Darling call

"family strengths of African American family" (463). This shows his strong desire for family solidarity and security.

The ethos of parental caring becomes focused when film cast the father and son in a *mise-en-scène* of basket ball court. In this scene, the film reiterates the classical depiction of the common filial bond in a father's attitude toward his son, showing, the affection comes straight from the heart of all fathers. It justifies the saying about the father – "You are the only man of all men whom I would wish to surpass me in all things". So much of what Gardner does in the film is aimed at the welfare and betterment of his own child. Thus, he proudly tells young Chris, "You got a dream, you gotta protect it. People can't do something themselves, they wanna tell you that you can't do it. You want something? Go get it. Period." Gardner motivates his son to have a dream in life and protect it. He suggests him not let somebody that you cannot do something. In his words:

Hey! Don't ever let somebody tell you.... You can't do somethin'. Not even me.
All right? You got a dream... You gotta protect it. People can do somethin'
themselves, they wanna tell you, you can't do it. If you want somethin', go get
it. Period. (55.21-56.00 minutes)

Beside this fatherly motivation, the reality is that he actually wants to teach his son that the society they are living is not like as he the innocent child imagines "all is well". The survival in such type of society is complicate. They are not in equal footing with other. The wincing face that the camera shows to the audience is the response to the society he is implicitly explaining. The idea that they are living in the white society is not free of worries. It is just a susceptible integrationism. It suggests the integration is just the norms for the formality. According to Littlejohn-Blake and Darlin, this is the strong point of 'socialization' in the African American family tradition. They argue that African American parents who were taught to 'stay in their place' also learned to socialize children to obtain the best from

both worlds through survival techniques. African American parents and their children remain strong in the face of adversities. It is the dream of African American parents to have better living conditions for their children. Therefore, parents will exhaust their resources to provide entry for their children into the economic and political structure (Littlejohn-Blake 463).

The film shows that Gardner fulfills the duty of "responsible fathering".

"Responsible" suggests an "ought," a set of desired norms for evaluating fathers' behavior.

The term also conveys a moral meaning (right and wrong) because it suggests that some fathering could be judged "irresponsible." It means that the father establishes his legal

paternity if and when he does make a baby (Doherty, Kouneski and Erickson 279). In the

film, the father dedicates his sole efforts for son's caring. For instance, when they are evicted from their previous apartment and had to search a church centre to spend their night, he takes

his son always with him. In the night scene at the Church, Gardner is shown making his son

bath and drying him. He lovingly wraps him in warm clothes and kisses him on his forehead

utters three words: "You Got to Trust me". The following conversation imparts the warmth of relationship between the father and the son:

Gardner: What is your favourite colour?

Christopher: Green.

Gardner: In green, what you like?

Christopher: Trees

Gardner: What else?

Christopher: Christmas tree.

(Light goes off)

Christopher: What is that?

Gardner: I guess they want us to go to sleep? I am gonna make you warm.

Can you breathe? You go to sleep. I gotta go to my scanner.

Christopher: Don't go.

Gardner: I am gonna be right there outside the door. Alright! I will leave the door little bit open so that I will be able to hear you if you call me.

Christopher: I wanna go home.

Gardner: Yeah! That is why I have to work on that scanner? I am gonna out there. I will leave the door open. I will be right up there at the stairs. I will be able to hear you if you call me. (1.33.15 to 1.34.12 minutes)

The text cited above tells much about the fatherly intimacy that Gardner tries to keep with his son. He also supplies the supposed motherly care, love and affection like bathing and making the child sleep etc. the word "green" mentioned in the dialogue connotes the lively, smooth relationship between the father and the son. By adopting both fatherly and motherly responsibilities and obligations, he gives the corrective response to the mainstream culture's idea about the African American family values that defines the African American family as being inclined in a matriarchal structure.

Despite his troublesome and hectic moments he devotes time for his son too. He even surpasses the other interns competing with him. He is selected as stockbroker at Dean Witter. He has a great deal of trouble when he decided to enroll in internship. His wife left him, he was evicted from the apartment, and he has to sell his scanner to make his living and pay the bill of car even if he does not have it any more and the fee to daycare centre. He did not renounce the challenges, rather embraced them. He had to acknowledge them. He seems to be managing all these simultaneously and it was not the sweet cup of tea for everyone. The tasks he undertook seem ideal in daily life. But he does fulfill them. He comes on the top of these hurdles and is selected for the stockbroker of the year.

The movie demonstrates how the values, perception and attitudes significantly change over time. This shift reflects a better understanding of the importance of an ethnic reality in the study of the family. Then, African American family values become more relevant.

Gardner acknowledges the shift from the family values understood in the period of slavery and family patterns in nineteenth century America. In the film, according to the context demands Gardner spends his most impressionable years and plays a double social role: first, he transforms biological entity into a human being, and by instilling in him the values endorsed by his culture it prepares him to meet the demands that his society will make upon him; second, he serves thereby to convey that a father can contribute the motherly values across a critical gap in the social continuum. This basic double function is performed in ways that are most appropriate to the values of the culture in question.

III. Ironic Happiness: The Stakes in Pursuing the Dream

The film asserts that the protagonist's quest for the American Dream. By exploring the racial shadows, class consciousness and family values, the film critiques on the American Dream. The protagonist, Gardner, in the film undergoes arrays of attempt in the film to fulfill his dream of success. The dream of success does not appear so much feasible and easy for him as he had dreamt when he migrated to San Francisco in early 80s. He wants to have secure life that is financially secure which he counts as happiness with the spelling 'i' not 'y'. The film, moreover, shows that the pursuit of happiness means having a good family and well financial status. The film concludes the happiness lies in financial success in the American society. But the happiness earned by the blacks, people of low economic social strata, is different from the happiness earned by the white ones. Their happiness is the happiness with spelling 'y' not the spelling 'i'. Hence, the spelling of the word 'happiness' has been spelt as 'happyness'. Gabriele Muccino deliberately changes the spelling of happiness

Firstly, the film shows how blacks suffer from the racial biasness in American society. It is also obvious that white men instigate a sense of hatred in the hearts of black people which forces blacks to suffer in the white society. The meritocratic white society does evoke the sense of doubleness in the lives of the African American people. They live with the 'two selves': one that of being American and the other is not being the American in original sense. Though the law and constitution of the nation does not permit to do so in the society, it is so explicitly plain in the reality. The lip service of American officials speaks out that there is not black America and white American and Latino American and Asian America. For them it seems to capture a vision of America finally freed from the past of Jim Crow⁵ and slavery

⁵The Jim Crow laws were state and local laws in the United States enacted between 1876 and 1965. They mandated racial segregation in all public facilities, with a supposedly "separate but equal" status for black

and cultural conflicts and tensions and that America fulfills the promise that people be judged not by the colour of our skin but by the content of our character. But," almost every single socioeconomic index from infant mortality to life expectancy to employment to home ownership, black and Latino Americans in particular continue to lag far behind their white counterparts" (Obama 275). Gardner, the protagonist suffers at times from this racial biasness embedded in the American society of the 1980s. However, the bestiality does no longer exist in the modern American society but the American society has not been able to detach itself from the biased past. It deploys the renewed forms of discourse to keep the dichotomy intact. The positivisation of the images is one of them.

The present film deploys abundant positive actions and images associated with blacks to critique the notion of the American Dream in the American society. The exploitation of the events and situations in the film keeps the pure experiences and the feelings of the black people at bay and more importantly overshadows the harsh and bitter realities of the black life-world they live in. Muccino strategically applies this notion to show the real reality in the society of the then time. Gardner has been cast at several times with the positive colour. He has a good understanding; he is devoted to his family values. He is well aware about the parental care and responsibility. He even does not hesitate to sell his blood to feed his son and survive. Muccino has shown that how the society use the positive images to hide the essential features of the black people. Though the blacks and the white seem in equal footing in the society, the politics behind it remains the same as it was before.

The director cleverly shows that along with the successful results of American initiatives, racial and ethnic pathos also emerge. The myth of American dream could not come up with the egalitarian notion and premises as it was supposed to have come. The

Americans. In reality, this led to treatment and accommodations that were usually inferior to those provided for white Americans, resulting in a number of economic, educational and social disadvantages.

search for a financially secure life which means success, happiness and everything in the materialistic society of America is essentially threatened by the same unsecure financial status. When Gardner decides to hold a well-to-do family status, he has to undergo many economic troubles. He is evicted by landlords; his wife leaves him. The government inserts his money for tax. He loses his car and has to walk and run all the times. Being evicted from the tenement house, he has to run at times to secure the spots in churches for night stay. The American Dream lives up with this paradox and illogicality.

In San Francisco, he comes to know that he has tough luck as an African American, he falls prey to the hierarchical structure of the society. For him it is unbearable to continue his identity as an inferior man, yet he determines to live. He wants to live a life of dignity, but all the time he is denied this dignity of living because of his colour. Thus he becomes one with white men because of his strong determination to hold a financially secured life. He is an African American, yet, he pursues the Dream in white sense. It adds fuels to his upward mobility that invites further suffering. He still remains loyal to American Dream as he is at the opening of the story. With the development of the society the character also slowly moves from hope to anticipation to the fulfillment to gradual achievement. The progression of the story charts out the map of the American dream from its initiation to ultimate situation. The protagonist's progression is also charted out in similar lines. He is the successor of the old generation, descendent of black race, forced to learn survive and quest his dream. The privilege to white and the underestimate to the blacks is the generational problem. It is because after all they represent the new white generation that is not essentially loyal to American Dream.

Perhaps the most representative situation of the paradox, of dream ideal and nightmare reality, is the discrepancy between dream and actuality. Here, Americans must live with the paradox that the dream is essential and yet will never make a complete one on actuality

because Americans do not dare to surrender the dream and yet are unable to surrender themselves to it. It is because they do not want to admit the failure. The class consciousness explicit in society, the racial shades, the skin priority and pigmentation on ethnic and minorities completely impede the society in full implementation of the dream and to be loyal to it.

Muccino complains that hard labour, skill, determination are only not enough for the society to prosper. The society needs other aspect too like mutual cooperation, understanding and collaboration. In this sense, American manifest destiny of dream is misconstrued because American providence is in the flux of the change and American society has not been able to realise the change while being too obsessive to the technological and scientific advancement. Not all the Americans have lost their hopes of succeeding it. But, there are some who observe that America is engulfed in the quicksand of racial prejudice and class conflict. Because of this of paradox between manifest success and latent asocial behaviours of new American generation, American dream has turned into whimsical hope. American dream was for all Americans and newcomers in the new found land; its defoliation began with slavery, racism, and counter racism, intervention in foreign affairs and growing bestiality in American white culture of present.

To sum up, the film critiques on the American Dream and strongly argues that the achievement of the American Dream is not everyone's cup of tea. It demands heart-wrenching efforts and toil. Though the official claims render the dream as egalitarian, the reality is simply deceptive. It is not always feasible and practical to everyone. Moreover, it was found that the people who are following the American Dream in the white sense suffer the most. What the American Dream in the society of 1980s meant was a financial success and security. It implies that the ones who are financially prudent are only happy, the rest are the leftovers. Chris Gardner at the end of the movie cries being overjoyed. For him, to have an

economically sound life is the happiness. In this sense, the possession of the vast amount of materialism is happiness. Hence, the American Dream is not a religious egalitarian idea; rather, it is a material prosperity that believes in meritocratic efforts.

The question is would it be equally difficult to Gardner to pursue the dream if he were a white. Certainly, it would not be. He pursues the American Dream in the white sense. The African American protagonist living in the white society dwindles between to selves, the film shows. He is neither an African because he is a legal citizen in America, nor is he an original American because he is not treated as citizen. He suffers from this type of to and fro. Similarly, as the film suggests, it is very tough to pursue the American Dream to the ones who come from the low strata of the social ladder and those economically challenged. Despite the fact that mainstream culture since the period of slavery the African American family is tied in the matriarchal and extended family structure, and "absentee fatherhood", the film asserts that there are also so many strengths of the black family to be acknowledged.

Works Cited

- Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as the Mass Deception." *Intellectual History*. Ed. Birendra Pandey. Kathmandu: M. K. Publishers, 2005. Print.
- Atwater, Deborah. "Senator Barack Obama: The Rhetoric of Hope and the American Dream." *Journal of Black Studies* 38.2 (2007): 121-129. Print.
- Bhabha, Homi K. "Race, Time and the Revision of Modernity." *Post colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffith, and Helen Tiffin. USA and Canada: Abingdon and Oxford, 1995. 219-224. Print.
- Braudy, Leo and Marshall Cohen. *Film, Theory and Criticism*. New York: Oxford Press, 2004. Print.
- Braudy, Leo and Marshall Cohen. *The Film Medium: Image and Sound*, sixth ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Print.
- Brenston, Gill. *Cinema and Cultural Modernity*. Buckingham: university Press, 2000. Print.
- Brenston, Gill. *Issues in Cultural and Media Studies*. Ballmoor Buckingham, 2000. Print.
- Danziger, Sandra K. and Norma Radin. "Absent Does Not Equal Uninvolved: Predictors of Fathering in Teen Mother Families." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 52.3 (1990): 636-642. Print.
- Dick, Bernard F. *Anatomy of Film*. New York: St. Martin Press, 2004. Print.
- Doherty, William J., Edward F. Kouneski, Martha F. Erickson. "Responsible Fathering: An Overview and Conceptual Framework." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 60.2 (1998): 277-292. Print.
- Du Bois, W. E.B.. "Strivings of the Negro People." *The Atlantic Monthly* August (1897): 5. Print.

- Fredrickson, George M.. *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000. Print.
- Gilroy, Paul. "There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack." *Post colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffith, and Helen Tiffin. USA and Canada: Abingdon and Oxford, 1995: 227-229. Print.
- Hills, Patricia Collins. "It's All in the Family: Intersection of Gender, Race and Nation." *Hyptia* 13.3 (1998):62-82. Print.
- Honig, Bonnie. "Immigrant America? How Foreignness" Solves Problems" *Social Text* 56 (1998): 1-27. Print.
- Hyman, Herbert H. and John Shelton Reed. "'Black Matriarchy" Reconsidered: Evidence from Secondary Analysis of Sample Surveys." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 33.3 (1969): 346-354. Print.
- Jarrett, Robin L.. "Living Poor: Family Life among Single Parent, African-American Women." Spec. issue of *Social Problems* 41.1 (1994): 30-49. Print.
- Keller, Jürg P. *The American Dream Gone Astray. Critical Realism in American Fiction, 1920-1940*. Berne: Peter Lang AG, European Academic Publishers, 1995. Print.
- King, Martin Luther, Jr.. *I Have a Dream*. Lincoln Memorial: n.p., 1963
- Klepp, Susan E.. "United States People." *Microsoft® Encarta® 2009*. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008. DVD.
- Lewis, Justin and Sut Jhally. "Affirming Inaction: Television and the New Politics of Race." *Marxism in Postmodern Age: Confronting the New World Order* .Eds Antonio collar, Stephen Cullenber and Carole Biewene. New York: Spring Street, 1995. 143-141. Print.
- Lincoln, Abraham. "The Emancipation Proclamation." *Race, class and Gender in US*. Ed. Paula S. Rothenberg. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. 280-283. Print.

- Littlejohn-Blake, Sheila M. and Carol Anderson Darling. "Understanding the Strengths of African American Families." *Journal of Black Studies* 23.4 (1993): 460-471. Print.
- Littlejohn-Blake, Sheila M. and Carol Anderson Darling. "Understanding the Strengths of African American Families." *Journal of Black Studies* 23.4 (1993): 460-471. Print.
- Lowry, Brian. "Over-earnest Message can't Sell 'Happyness'". Rev. of *The Pursuit of Happyness*, dir. Gabriele Muccino. *Variety* 11 Nov.2006: 9. Print.
- Madden, David, ed. *Introduction of American Dreams, American Nightmares*. Amsterdam: Southern Illinois Up, 1997. X-XL. Print.
- Marx, Karl. "German Ideology." *Critical Theory since Plato*. Ed. Hazard Adams. New York, Orlando, Austin, Toronto etc: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publisher, 1992: 623-625. Print.
- Moynihan, Daniel P. "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action." Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965. Print.
- Obama, Barack. *Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*. New York: Vintage Book, 2006. Print.
- Omi, Michael and Harold Winant. "Racial Formation." *Race, class and Gender in US*. Ed. Paula S. Rothenberg. New York: St Martin's Press, 1992. 26-33. Print.
- Rev. of *The Pursuit of Happyness*, by Kevin Crust. *Loss Angels Times* 15 Dec 2007: 13. Print.
- Rev. of *The Pursuit of Happyness*, by Mick LaSalle. *Moviefreak* 15 Dec 2006:4. Print.
- Rev. of *The Pursuit of Happyness*, by Paul Arendt. *New Yorker* 11 Jan.2007: 8. Print.
- Rutland, Richard and Malcolm Bradbury. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*. New York and Hudson Street: Penguin Books, 1991. Print.
- Salomon, Frank. "Native Americans Today." *Microsoft® Encarta® 2009*. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008. DVD.

- Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson, Peter Brooker. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. New Delhi: Pearson Education, 2005. Print.
- Snyder, Mark. "Self-Fulfilling Stereotypes." *Race, class and Gender in US*. Ed. Paula S. Rothenberg. New York: St Martin's Press, 1992. 325-331. Print.
- Solorzano, Daniel G. "Images and Words that Wound: Critical Racial Theory, Racial Stereotyping and teacher Education." *Teacher Education Quarterly* Summer, 1997: 1-16. Print.
- Taskar, Younne. "Black Buddies and White Heroes". *Spectacular Bodies, Gender, Genre, and the Action Cinema*. New York, London and Canada: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- The Pursuit of Happiness*. Screenplay by Steve Conrad. Dir. Gabriele Muccino. Perf. Will Smith, Thandie Newton, Jaden Smith etc. Miramax, 2006. Film.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide*. 2nd ed. New York and London: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Tzvetan, Todorov. "Race and Racism." *Post colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffith, and Helen Tiffin. USA and Canada: Abingdon and Oxford, 1995: 213-216. Print.
- Wilkerson, Isabel. "Middle Class Blacks Try to Grip a Ladder While Lending a Hand". *Marxism in Postmodern Age: Confronting the New World Order*. Eds Antonio Collar, Stephen Cullenber and Carole Biewene. New York: Spring Street, 1995: 112-120. Print.
- Williams, Rhonda M.. "Consenting to Whiteness: Reflection on Race and Marxian Theories of Discrimination." *Marxism in Postmodern Age: Confronting the New World Order*. Eds Antonio collar, Stephen Cullenber and Carole Biewene New York: Spring Street, 1995: 301-308. Print.

Willis, Andy "Cultural Studies and Popular Film". *Approach to Popular Film*. Ed. Joanne

Hollows and Mark Jancovich. New York: Manchester University Press, 1995. Print.

Winant, Howard. "Race and Race Theory." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 169-185.

Print.