

Evolution of the american dream assignment



The American Dream Is a fleeting hope that many Americans have clung to since It was originally brought to light In 1 931 . Because of the new outlooks and interpretations that Americans have presented in viewing this dream since then, it is now within the reach of anyone who pursues it. When one focuses on material possessions and advancing in social status, much like the old interpretation of the American Dream, this hope is lost and the Dream is unachievable.

However, when the focus becomes more modern and shifts to bettering oneself and working on his or re own Individual happiness, the American Dream becomes much more realistic and provides hope for all Americans. F. Scott Fitzgerald depicts a Blvd Image for his readers of this American Dream in his novel The Great Gatsby. He exemplifies the old interpretation of this dream and how it affects the characters' lives. But first, a general understanding of the American Dream must be gained. In order to understand how this idea of achieving the American Dream has changed over time, one must first understand where it originated.

This term was first owned during a time that wreaked havoc on the entire American population (Jakarta). America was In the midst of the depression- a time when the economy was failing and jobs were hard to cling to; this atmosphere caused the fresh idea of the American Dream to be based on every American's wildest dream: material possessions and high social standing. Now that the background has explained the basis for this term, it is easier to understand why the original focuses were so absurd. During this time frame class was strictly based on each Individual's social ND economic standing (" Class").

<https://assignbuster.com/evolution-of-the-american-dream-assignment-essay-samples/>

This was because the only Americans who were not completely devastated by the depression were those who were extremely wealthy and had lots of connections. The average Americans who did not have this security blanket of wealth and ties to influential people saw those who were still thriving and yearned to be like them. It was because of these secure individuals that the common people idealized that the original view of the American Dream was born - a dream that brought social advancement and economic gains to all Americans no matter where they started.

In his novel *The Great Gatsby* Fitzgerald sets his characters up for failure and makes the old American Dream prominent (Pearson 638). By creating characters such as George Wilson and Tom and Daisy Buchanan, he shows just how easily everything can come crashing down and all hope can be lost. Tom and Daisy appear to be happily married with a daughter and are extremely well off financially. However, they are not happy. Just years after the two are married Daisy finds out that Tom is running around with other women. In fact, he even received calls from his mistress while he was having dinner with Daisy and her guests. Unlike many other women, Daisy does not appear to be bothered by Tom's affair. She simply continues the dinner and excuses his phone call, although one of her visitors can tell that the call startled her. It is then that the reader begins to see that Daisy is not truly happy and so far as to say that she wishes that her daughter was a "beautiful little fool", implying that she does not want her to know the evils and hurt that the world holds (Fitzgerald 17). Through these characters Fitzgerald shows just how hopeless the American Dream is when Daisy focused on wealth and how others view her marriage.

Because she put the views of others before her own, she is never truly happy and wishes that her daughter would never know how evil and hopeless the world is. The reader also sees the American Dream ripped away from George Wilson. Wilson was also in a marriage where his partner had someone on the side; however, he was not aware that an affair was happening, unlike Daisy. George had stayed faithful to his wife and worked hard to build up his own business so that he could support her. Even though he did these things, his wife was unfaithful and therefore took away all hope of Wilson being able to achieve true happiness.

In doing so, Fitzgerald shows that there is no hope in his novel. Even when one works towards pure and practical goals, Fitzgerald puts a situation in his or her way so that they are never truly happy. However, there is hope in the real world. This hope is what led to the new interpretation of the American Dream. The old idea that every American should progress socially and economically no matter their background or individual situation eventually shifted to a new focus in which each person should simply better themselves and every American is able to achieve happiness.

Rather than prioritize material possessions and impressing others, this new view presents the hope of “social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain the fullest stature of which they are innately capable” (Sealy). Although many Americans could have theoretically achieved the old idea of the American Dream by becoming rich and achieving a high social class, if the individual is not happy then all of his or her accomplishments were for nothing.

This new interpretation helps to make this Dream more realistic for everyone by focusing on each individual rather than setting goals that were based off of generalizing the entire American population. Since it is much easier to be a part of the upper class if the individual is born into the upper class, the old view of the American Dream was not entirely fair or realistic for the less fortunate. With this new interpretation any American can achieve the Dream by simply focusing on themselves and what they need to work on or achieve.

There is no need to climb up the social ladder or become excessively rich unless that is what he or she wants to do. There are two specific individuals in Fitzgerald novel who do not have the right focuses when trying to achieve the American Dream and therefore fail. Gatsby and Slipperier both have very different goals, however they both have wrong focuses and fall short of the Dream. Gatsby main goal in life is to rekindle an old romance with Daisy Buchannan. He attempts to do so by advancing in social standing through connections with the police as well as becoming extremely wealthy through illegal equines.

Gatsby main way to attract Daisy to his house is by throwing lavish parties that bring people from miles around; however, Daisy does not like all of the noise and chaos, so Gatsby ceases to throw the parties. When Fitzgerald informs the reader that Daisy was not fond of the excessive parties, it hints that she may have come to going out of his way to attract her attention. This idea of happiness within oneself is the main focus of the new American Dream and proves that Gatsby could have possibly achieved it if his priorities had been in line. During one of Gatsby parties a harasser named Slipperier appears.

<https://assignbuster.com/evolution-of-the-american-dream-assignment-essay-samples/>

This man leaches off of Gatsby wealth but does not make any effort to befriend him. Later in the novel when Gatsby dies the only inquiry that Slipperier makes is asking for a pair of shoes that he left in the house. He never shows up at Gatsby funeral and never has any real friends. This character was set up to be happy, but he simply ignores the opportunity of friendship placed in front of him. Slipperier decides that his life goals are to simply survive and drift through life without attempting to make friends or build a meaningful life for himself.

If he had simply tried to be friends with Gatsby, his life could have taken on a new responsibility and meaning of having companionship and love. The examples presented from Fitzgerald novel help to show the importance of striving for true happiness when seeking out the American Dream. Although the Dream use to be twisted and focus on less important things such as wealth and high social standing, it has evolved for the better into a dream of happiness and hope for all Americans.