



The Great Gatsby and the American Dream

Sandra Kochan

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Seminar paper from the year 2007 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 2,0, University of Constance (Uni), course: American Literature and Culture, 10 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: Since the end of the Second World War the United States of America has been the most powerful country in the world. American power has included cultural power. Writing or talking about America means invoking the American Dream, which remains a major element of the national identity. The American Dream encompasses the myth of America: a myth defined by another familiar phrase - the New World. In its origins, America was conceived of as a new world, a new beginning, a second chance. The contrast of course was with Europe - the Old World - characterized by tyranny, corruption, and social divisions. The American Constitution guaranteed all Americans "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This is the heart of the American Dream. People believed that the American dream was, from the beginning, part and parcel of American history, culture and language, including the early colonial period. "America was born out of a dream." But the American Dream has come to mean at a popular level. It is to go to the West and become a millionaire. The American dream is conceived of in terms of success and of material success in particular: getting rich quick is what it is all about. But in its true sense it has never been limited to material success alone. So what do we actually understand under the term "American Dream" and what is the origin of this phrase? When did it first appear in the language? And how has the phrase itself evolved over time? Only during the time of political and cultural upheaval could the concept of the American Dream enter the national lexicon. The true origin of the phrase was first mentioned in 1931, by a middlebrow historian James Truslow Adams in his book *The Epic of America*. In this book, the phrase appears for the first time

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Cora Snyder:

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Alicia Romero:

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