

Collapse of American Dream by James Truslow

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Introduction

The [American Dream](#) was defined by James Truslow Adams who stated that “life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement” (Callahan 250). Furthermore, the American Dream can be described as the socio-political condition where all citizens can achieve the quality of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (Kamp 2009). Therefore, it can be stated that the achievement of the American Dream is only justified when it is pivoted around social norms, values, and ethics rather than financial stability, personal satisfaction, and individual gain/happiness.

Problem Description

The definition and description of the American Dream can be elaborated further by observing the life history of Benjamin Franklin. Rather than that, it would be more accurate to say that Franklin was the personification of the true spirit of the American Dream. He not only made himself self-sufficient to achieve monetary, financial, and Psychological satisfaction, but he also achieved spiritual success and satisfaction by performing his utmost duty toward the state of his origin i.e. America. One of his fellows, James Madison describes that “he never passed half an hour in his company without hearing some observation or anecdote worth remembering” (Callahan 250), showing that Franklin was well aware of his duties towards the state and the rightful demands of the state. And he never intended to waste his time on something other than useful for his society and country.

Even though this entire concept of the American dream and satisfaction seems to originate from the lands and the times of America; the true origination of the concept can be traced back to the era of De Tocqueville when the kings and royal systems of governing ruled over the world. At such times, he presented the idea of justified and ethical liberty that not only grants the permission to attain self-satisfaction but also binds the individual to perform obligations towards society and play a constructive part in the region he is living in. He further states that “I have a passionate love for liberty, law, and respect for rights, I am neither of the revolutionary party nor of the conservative. . . . Liberty is my foremost passion” (Powell 520). Stating this he shows that the entire concept behind the formulation of the American Dream is pivoted around the concept of liberty, law, rights, and social bonds.

Solution

The first thing I think of changing is the interpretation of the 'American Dream.' The American Dream has often been interpreted as the phenomenon where the achievement of financial, personal, and sociological success is the ultimate goal. Even though these are the ends, the means to meet these ends are nowhere to be discussed in the interpretation of the American Dream. This is why fraudulent activities for financial gain and illicit activities for personal bliss are being observed widely in America. If it had to be redefined, then I would have defined it as the adoption of justified, ethical, and moral means, no matter what the ends are.

The second change I want to bring to American society is the integration of patients. The recent incidents of racial segregation, Muslim stereotyping, domestic violence, violence against women, etc. are all the results of impatience and inability to tolerate. Therefore, I would like to bring psychological change to American nationals for the extensiveness of tolerance and patience.

The majority of the American nation is also suffering from an intense addiction to technology-based leisure, gadgets, and cell phones. Such an addiction is not only having a negative impact on the health and psychological state of the users but is also widening the gap between the social classes, hence creating more discrimination by financial status. Therefore, I would recommend limiting using technology and gadgets to the ages and other social factors.

Another issue that has engulfed American society at large is the media impression of the 'Perfection.' This includes being perfect in the body shapes, facial features, color tones, etc. Having deteriorated and plastered figures of the models as the ideals in Hollywood movies has indulged teenagers and young adults into the inferiority complex that is leading them towards health issues such as being anorexic and drug addicts. Therefore, there is a need to put constraints on what the media is showcasing.

The fifth change that I want to see in America is in the political stances. In recent decades, the American Government has bombed several countries including Afghanistan and Iraq. Recently, Pakistan is under drone attacks by the American basis, while Iran and North Korea are already on the hit list. This shows the American high headedness on their stock of the weapons of mass destruction. Even though the reasons might be logical, the so-called 'collateral damage' was too much to be categorized as the 'Collateral Damage.' America must change its military, political, and strategic policies and stances.

Furthermore, the American Government is also observed to have an economic system that has already been proven as unsatisfactory and rejected by the American Nationals. The recent turmoil and unrest observed under the 'Occupy Wall Street' label has shown that the civilians do not want the current economic system. Therefore, the change must be brought within the economic distribution, or the gap between the "99%" and the others will continue to widen (Callahan 255).

Conclusion

Conclusively, it can be stated that the American Dream is not only a fantasized idea of leading an ideal life in America; instead, it is an entirely philosophical concept of leading a life in a rightful way within the general society. As proposed by Adams and explained by B. F. Skinner, the true spirit of the American dream is to “associate a culture with a group of people” (Skinner, n.d.). The same idea was practically implemented and practiced by Franklin who became one of America’s best individuals of all time with the development of a sense of responsibility, ethics, logic, and morality.

Works Cited

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