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**ЛІТЕРАТУРІ XX СТОЛІТТЯ**

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Department of Philology**

# **THE AMERICAN DREAM IN TWENTIETH CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE**

Bachelor's Thesis

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## INTRODUCTION

The American dream is a widely used term in the United States of America and other English-speaking countries. The reason for this lies in the concept's complexity, as it builds up of several notions such as personal freedom, fulfilment and hard work for a better and happier life. However, on the other hand, it is not only about these ideas, but about material success, luxury and good financial status. The disputation of what the American dream is and what it has become or how someone can achieve it, depends on whom we are questioning. Everyone comes from a different country, a different society, a different family, and from a different situation, and that is why the American Dream is so complex and so diverse for each person.

Through the years and decades, the American Dream has influenced literature, art and also politics. When James Truslow Adams first mentioned it in 1931, every American picked up on this concept. From that moment, the American Dream became more and more popular. It gave hope for the ordinary people, and it was a spark of light in their dark days.

The aim of this work is to get acquainted with the concept of the American dream. Although the sense and meaning of it exist, people do not recognise the name that stands before the idea.

The main purpose of this thesis is to get familiar with the concept of the American dream, find out where its roots are coming from and see what kind of influence it has made on politics, the arts, but first of all, on the literature.

The subject of this thesis is the American Dream in the literature of the twentieth century.

Another aim of this research paper is to inform the reader about the idea of the American Dream, to give an utterly sheer definition of this idea using references that are already existing. According to the research, the following tasks can be emphasized:

- getting to know and writing down the concept itself, the historical, literary and social background of the American Dream and the reasons for its development.
- searching for the causes of the American Dream's development during the years and finding out why it is so vital for the American's (and other nations).
- describing and analysing F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*, in the light of the American Dream.
- finding information about the American Dream in modern literature. Analysing *The Great Gatsby* as the negative criticism of the American Dream. Highlighting those parts in the novel, where the reader can meet with the idea of the "dream".
- analysing Jay Gatsby's fictional character in the light of the American Dream.
- writing a summary, which includes the primary symbols, themes and the plot of *The Great Gatsby*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald.
- doing a research among higher education students, on the topic of the American dream; asking relevant questions.

The theoretical value of this thesis lies in all the collected pieces of information that are connected to the idea of the American Dream.

The practical value of this work lies in the research, which was completed in the form of a questionnaire. With the help of the research questions new information and data could be compiled about student's opinions and thoughts on the American Dream.

The present paper consists of an introduction, three parts with each of them being divided into sub-parts. Furthermore, this work contains a conclusion, references, summary in Ukrainian and the appendix. The first part includes basic theoretical information about the American Dream, the historical, social and literary background of this idea. The second part contains a short analysis of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*, as the critique of the American Dream. Additionally, the second part contains a short analysis of the novel's main character in the light of the American Dream. The third part of this thesis includes the empirical research. In this part, the questionnaire's analysis can be found. It was made up of the answers collected by the questionnaire, which was this paper's research instrument.



## PART 1

### THE ESSENCE OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

When a person hears or reads about the concept of the American Dream for the first time, it is not so clear what it means exactly. Since everyone interprets this idea in another way, it is more difficult to define. In order to understand this complex concept, researchers and ordinary people made up several questions with the hope that if they are able to find the answers to those questions, they could understand the real meaning of this dream. There are many aspects to the American Dream and many factors contribute to the existence of this idea. By factors we mean social, historical and literary factors. There are more questions like: what is the dream, where does it come from, does everyone means the same when it comes to the American Dream, why is this dream so important for the American nation or why is it concretely American people's dream? In the next chapters we can find the answer to all of these questions.

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#### 1.1 Historical Background

We may encounter the concept of the American dream in the twentieth century, but before exploring the meaning of the concept, it is necessary to look at its origins. Everything has an origin, even the concept of the American Dream has one. Someone first used it, and then the idea spread across American society, until eventually the whole world was aware of it. Politicians, novelists, dramatists, journalists, economists and historians started to think, speak, talk and write about the idea of the American Dream.

The American dream began with sailing to the New World. It was a new beginning and a second chance. A group of sailors in the ship *Arabella* started sailing in order to find a "City Upon a Hill". This thought was created by John Winthrop, who was the leader of the sailors. They thought that the most important thing was the "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness". We believe that this is the heart of the American dream (Su, 2016).

According to the Gale Student Resources the beginning of the American Dream's idea can be traced back to the Founding Fathers. They started by declaring their independence from England. The reason behind this was their faith in unalienable rights. The Founding Fathers believed that people could inherently possess the rights to life, freedom and the pursuit of happiness, so they tried to create a country where people could break free from the chains of society, from class restrictions and pursue the life they would like to choose despite the circumstances in which they were born (Gale, 2016).

The meaning of the concept varies in different periods of time and in several circumstances. Until the nineteen sixties the American Dream was associated with material success, and just a few years later, it changed into something completely different. Americans started to give up on following the ideas of the conventional, conformist society, instead they have began to reach for

new ways in order to pursue happiness and self-fulfilment. These shifts resulted in several changes in the American society. According to Meri Laitinen:

This abrupt change in dream conceptualization and societal rethinking sparked new forms of popular culture: the new decade left an indelible mark on music, literature, journalism, and film. These aspects of popular culture, especially the vast generation of young people who wanted to change the course of their lives, were captured and left for future generations to explore. Only by looking at what people have created and eaten in a given era—what they have articulated of their hopes and aspirations in cultural records—can the continuous relocation of the dream be tracked (Laitinen, 2009).

This "dream" is very significant for the American nation, because this is the templet form their lives, however, the American dream is dangerous in itself. The American Dream is a deep and complex notion that is really difficult to explain or codify, most obviously because there is little comparison. Other nations do not have an archetype to look for in the way that Americans do. The American Dream is crucial because it continually keeps them in check. Pursuit of the Dream keeps consumerism alive and at the same time, Marxists argue that this fanatical consumption of the Dream is dangerous in itself (Horning, 2013, pg. 40).

The American Dream is a concept that appears to have arisen with the historian James Truslow Adams (1931), who circumscribes this idea as: "Life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement" (Adams, 1931, pg. 214).

In his incredibly popular history of America entitled *The Epic of America*, which published in 1931, James Truslow Adams was the first to mention the term "the American Dream." He noted it several times in his works that the American nation centralizes this idea, this Dream.

In the last century, it has attracted tens of millions of people from all over the world to our shores. But it has not only been a dream of material abundance, though that has undoubtedly played a role, it has been much more than that. In his mind it has always been a lifelong dream to be able to develop fully as a man or a woman, free of the barriers that had slowly developed in previous cultures, free of social orders that had evolved for the benefit of classes rather than for the basic human being of each and every class. That dream has come true more thoroughly in real life here than anywhere else, although imperfectly, and among ourselves (James Truslow Adams, 1931, pg. 405).

This idea represents the state of mind of the American nation, which can be best described as enduring optimism and hope. James Adams Truslow maintained that the American Dream was like a glue that helped to keep the country together: "We have a long and arduous road to travel if we are to realise the American Dream in the life of our nation, but if we fail, there is nothing left but the eternal round. The alternative is the failure of self-government, the failure of the common man

to rise to full stature, the failure of all that the American Dream has held of hope and promise for mankind” (Adams, 1931, pg. 416).

Wars are most likely the strongest changing forces. The First World War brought many changes in the participant countries, and it was not different with America. The sense of the American Dream became so much more important for the American nation. The First World War left people with misery and destroyed many things. It also affected the country’s economy, the politics, the psychology of people, and the personal life of each and every family. The First World War left the country with disappointed people, people with the loss of mental conditions. Finally, when World War I ended, a whole generation remained in a state of misery and disappointment. Those families and individuals left with disappointment were no longer the same; they lacked the psychological and mental health and fitness that they had before, as a result of the hardships, harshness, and cruelty they had to endure, which caused them to lose sight of the sense of their lives, and they believed that they would never be as happy as they had been before the First World War.

When a war is finally over, it is possible that the people who were poor before, can easily become rich, but on the other hand, rich people may become poor. The rich people from the higher classes often lost their ventures that used to generate their income and everything they could make a living out of was destroyed completely. They could come on the perish overnight and find themselves on the street. This period meant the perfect chance for corrupt people from the lower classes to take advantage of the opportunities. After the First World War most of the things took a turn because many people who never were part of the upper class and never imagined to socialise with the rich people of the higher classes, at that time by choosing an easier but an unquestionably wrong path. They could become financially stronger and could reach to a better position and could get the chance to socialise with upper class people.

The post world war era brought much enthusiasm for the Americans about the countless possibilities. The American nation was carving for the most extravagant way of living and social positions in order to achieve and accomplish their goals. They imagined the American Dream as a gift, and they wanted this gift to contain uncloudy bliss for the rest of their days, and without it their life would be meaningless (Saika, 2014).

Several idea may arise in the case of description of the main point of America. Freedom, wealth and vitality are the first concepts that might come to mind. These are the elements that Americans find the most satisfying. However, the main essence of America is considered to be the American Dream. This idea represents the USA, its state of mind, the soul and the heart of the country. According to M.Robert the American Dream has always played an important role: it is like a compass to Americans, it was, and it is still a well-known game to play and its rules are familiar to the American nation. The rules are simple: those, who are willing to work hard and do not let go of their opportunities, but take advantage of them, can expect a happy and fulfilling life. This theory

shows itself during the second half of the nineteenth century. Horatio Alger wrote dozens of true stories about young street urchins who were able to fight themselves out of poverty-stricken circumstances through hard work and moral sturdiness that led to eventually finding wealth and satisfaction in their lives. The success of these stories was enormous throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and this particular pattern of achieving success has remained in their national consciousness ever since.

“The American Dream has served as a road map for the way we often envision the course of our lives. The rules of the game are well-known, as is the bargain that is struck. For those willing to work hard and take advantage of their opportunities, there is the expectation of a prosperous and fulfilling life. The United States has long been epitomised as a land of equal opportunity, where hard work and skill can result in personal success and fulfillment, regardless of one's station in life. While the specifics of each dream vary from person to person, the overall vitality of the American Dream has been fundamental to the nation's identity“(Rank, Hirschl, Frost, 2014, pg. 1).

In many aspects, the American Dream has been rooted in the concept of an adventure –an adventure to a new place, an adventure across generations and a journey within people's life. In M. Robert's viewpoint all of this is about making progress, making a move, it is about optimism, and it is about finding success and fulfillment along the way. However, the circumstances under which American people have sought this Dream have been filled with many risk and uncertainty. In the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries the settlers have gone through enormous risks coming to the new world, most of the times arriving with just a little more than the clothes on their backs. There was not much in the way of help from the government or financial assistance. The only ways were self-reliance, rugged individualism, and determination, which seem to be the keys to prosperity.

”And yet, in spite of the risks and struggles, the American Dream has been, and continues to be, a guiding force reflecting the manner in which we see our lives unfolding. Turn on the television, listen to the radio, surf the Internet, or pick up a magazine while waiting in an airport, and the images of the American Dream are ever present. From the solidly middle class couple engaged in their careers and lifestyle, to the rags to riches superstar making millions of dollars each year, the American Dream is portrayed as attainable, as long as we commit ourselves to hard work and perseverance in striving toward our goals” (Robert, Hirschl, Frost, 2014, pg 2].

The concept's definition changes over time and in diverse circumstances. Until the 1960s, the American Dream was identified with financial prosperity, but it has changed significantly over the years. They stopped pursuing the ideas of a traditional, conformist culture and began looking for new ways to achieve satisfaction and self-fulfillment. American people formed new ways and methods in favour of creating subsistence and prosperity.

These are the components that make up the American Dream, some of which are more powerful than others. Without considering these elements that have shaped, and continue to shape,

American culture, the concept cannot be fully grasped. The American Dream, on the other hand, encompasses more than the aspiration for upward mobility, equality, and material wealth. Understanding the dream also requires knowledge of the ideas and values that support the American mentality and way of life. One thing is for sure: we can meet with the American Dream all over the world. The American Dream is one such idea that has pervaded cultural texts and popular culture for decades, if not centuries. It has since done so not only in the United States, but all around the world. The American Dream has come to represent the world's desire for liberty, success, and the prospect of a better life (Laitinen, 2009).

The American dream clearly became a part of history during the years. The concept was created in 1931 by James Truslow Adams, and according to Cal Jillson it lasts up to this day. It is now an object of every life especially in the USA and this is sure when we see that different books, poems and songs are inspired by this idea. Cal Jillson wrote a book (Jillson, 2016) about the American dream's role in history and politics with the title *The American Dream: in History, in Politics and Fiction* in 2016. In his book he wrote that the American dream was first recognized truly in the beginning of the twentieth century. It is because that was the age when the television, the radio and movies became parts of every life, so the advertising started off. We can say that it became really popular (Horning, 2013).

The idea itself comprises a few aspects, and each and every person understands and projects it in another way. For some it means an open door, where they can walk through, for others it might be a closed door that awaits to be opened. Tubah Saika composed these thoughts in his thesis "The Failure of the American Dream: The Great Gatsby". In his paper he manifests that the Dream has dissimilar effects on diverse individuals. On one hand, for some people, it implies that one can achieve whatever one desires by living this dream, which will lead to one's desired goals. On the other hand, to others, the American Dream is an open door that everyone wishes to enter through, and if they do, they will be able to taste the delights of the American Dream at that particular moment (Saika,2014).

## **1.2 Social Background**

In 1938 the sociologist Robert K. Merton wrote about the meaning of the American Dream in an influential essay called "Social Structure and Anomie". Merton referred to the Dream not with Adams' unsteady words about "a better, richer, happier life" but with success, particularly pecuniary success. Robert K. Merton also pointed out that this was the leading purpose of the American culture.

Everything began in the worst period of the Depression that was an age in the American history, when people could not afford too many things; even buying a new book was considered to be a luxury.

The Great Depression started in 1929 with the Wall Street Crash, which was a famous stock market. The effect of this happening was that the prices started to collapse. The Great Depression lasted for 12 years and without exception, affected all Western industrialised countries (Brandt, 1981)

We can separate two aspects when we talk about the discussions on the American Dream, because there is an understandable line of controversy between idealists and sceptics. In idealists realisation the American Dream is an effort that requires hard work. It does not matter what circumstance you are born into and what social class you belong to. Then again sceptics believe that the American Dream is about a neverending quest for material things. However, James Truslow Adams thinks that the American Dream is about much more than “motor cars and high wages”.

Researchers experimented with studying how the American Dream appears in practice and what impression it has on the American individual. They realised that they have to take a step and look at the individual and the dream’s economic correspondence. Whether the dream is about having the ability to buy something expensive like a house and a car, or if it is in deed about our personal fulfilment and freedom. In either case, it looks like that the American Dream leads to people spending a lot of money (From, 2013).

The American Dream is supposed to mean that by working hard and being strong and steady, even the poorest people can make it to the middle class or above. (Hargreaves,2014)

The political scientist Jacob Hacker (2006) found that American people’s income volatility was significantly greater in the 1990s than it was twenty years earlier in the 1970s. Most of this volatility was downward mobility. It meant that Americans were at personal risk when such changes occurred in their income. Peter Gosselin (2008) marked that income volatility and income swings have dramatically increased during the past thirty years.

Americans were alone and on their own concerning their financial protection and well-being. This resulted in a vast number of American lives that were marked by progressing economic turmoil and strife. This is reflected in increasing concern about the ability to achieve the American Dream.

A national survey was carried out in America several years ago by the Brookings Institution (2008). One of the questions was if people it is becoming harder or easier these days to achieve the American Dream or the same as before. The results were surprising as three-quarters of Americans felt that the American Dream was becoming harder to achieve as time went by. Moreover, 69 percent felt that the American Dream would be even more challenging for the next generation to achieve in comparison to the current generation. Only 15 percent of respondents said that the next generation would be economically better than today's generation. ”Similar results were obtained in a 2013 Washington Post poll that asked if it was more challenging to get ahead financially today than in the past (Washington Post-Miller Center, 2013). For the vast majority of Americans, there is a sense that attaining the American Dream is becoming more difficult. In addition, a number of recent books have appeared with titles such as American Dream Dying (McClelland and Tobin,

2010), *Who Stole the American Dream?* (Smith, 2012), or *The Betrayal of the American Dream* (Barlett and Steele, 2012). Many of these books discuss the economic and political conditions that have led to the deterioration of the middle class and their ability to achieve the Dream over the past 30 years” (Robert, Hirschl Frost, 2009, pg 6).

When Ronald Reagan campaigned for the presidency in 1980, he often emphasised that the government was not the solution to their problems but was itself the problem. Reagan’s attitude has been perpetuated and continues to be a principle of faith of governors at every level (Horning, 2013).

According to the Center for American Progress (CAP) there is a huge divergence between the ideal and the present-day reality. The research shows that a typical middle class married couple with two children, the combined costs of health care, day care, housing and savings for college and retirement increased to 32 percent between 2000 and 2012.

In conclusion, it has become really troublesome for middle-class families to satisfy only the most basic needs, including having a place to call home. The cause of this problem was that housing costs overly increased. In this situation it was difficult to purchase and sustain a home. Fewer and fewer families could afford being luxurious this way.

The CAP established that owning a house has become almost impossible for the American middle class, but renting one house produces a financial hardship as well. More than half of the renters in America spend more than 30 percent of their earnings on housing, which means that less money remains for other necessities; moreover Americans are also struggling to save up enough money for their children's college education. (Horning, 2013)

There is a comparison between the world’s two greatest superpowers about the quality of life. In the European Union there are more physicians per 100,000 people than in the United States. The average lifetime of a person in the 15 most developed EU countries is now 78.01 years, in the United States it is only 76.9 years. Children in Europe rank higher in mathematics and scientific literacy than their American peers. When it comes to the wealth we would think that the USA is way more rich. However, we find something very different in statistics. More poor people live in America than in the European nations for which data are available on the internet.

However, Jeremy Rifkin wrote that Americans never gave up on their American Dream. Regardless of what others might think about America, the American Dream has stood the test, in good times and bad. He believes that they never lost hope in their dream, not even in the darkest hours. He wants to know if Europeans will be able to say the same about their own evolving dream. (Rifkin, 2004)

In his paper ‘The Access of the Different Social Classes to the American Dream at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century’ Jehan de Champeaux wrote about the impacts that the American Dream made on the American society in the 20th century. He also wrote about how different social classes failed or succeeded to achieve the American Dream itself. In his opinion the idea of the American Dream is beneficial for the society, because the idea motivates them to work

harder and not to give up on their dreams and wishes. That is why a great number of people migrated to America with the determination to try their luck and find success and material wealth in the exact moment when their feet touch the ground of the New World.

According to Simon Kuznets, the beginning of the twentieth century was the period when the middle class appeared in the American society. Before the twentieth century they could only talk about the upper classes and lower classes. This meant that lower and middle-class families did not have the chance to catch up with upper-class families. Although, the American Dream promised something else: that it does not matter if you are a man or a woman, were born to a wealthy or a poor family, you can achieve your goals and find happiness.

Therefore everyone was trying to live their lives to the fullest and work as hard as they can, hoping that they could succeed in the economic situation and social circumstances in those days. According to Jehan de Champeaux most of the middle class was similar to Nick Carraway, who plays a vital role in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby*. Nick wanted to learn the business because everybody he knew was in the business (Fitzgerald, 1925) and it was a very well-paid job. This was the kind of influence that the American dream had on the lower and middle-class families. From the social classes, the middle class was the most encouraged by the American Dream, and they absolutely believed that if they work hard, they can become exceptional people. They were inspired by the immigrants, who came to the new world of America in order to get wealthy and find their way in life and their goals and dreams seemed to become true. If they could do it, the middle class could do it as well.

"The hope in this ideal was maintained by the immigrants who could reach the middle class. They strongly believed that everything was possible in the United States and that wealth was within their reach. It was by the way what made them go to America in the first place." (Champeaux, 2015, pg. 3)

### **1.3 Literary Background**

Attempting to define and analyse the concept of the American dream in modern literature is particularly hard because the term hardly fits with any other discipline.

In the early American literature can be found some of the initial and most fundamental political narratives that shaped American ideals. For example, through the early political essays of John Smith, John Winthrop, and Benjamin Franklin, it is easy to find some of the early principles which would come to construct the American Dream.

The topic of the American Dream hides in most of the greatest masterpieces of the American literature. In most cases, it is not unambiguous, but observing a little bit closer, it can be found. It is a really widespread subject-matter, particularly in this modern world. As the world has reached its twentieth century, the American Dream has transformed into something new.



The wide-eyed optimism and historical tradition of achieving the American dream became equated with social status, material possessions, and financial wealth at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly during the 1920s. However, in an era when there were seemingly endless possibilities for success and wealth, some works of American literature sounded a note of caution, implying that the American dream was becoming corrupted by materialism and excess (Izaguirre, 2014).

Almost all or at least most of the pieces of the American literature contain some elements that show the idea and the value of the American Dream, without specifically referring to it. It is unconventionally really difficult to examine the idea of the American Dream without taking a look at the American literature. Fredrick Carpenter gives the following explanation about the American literature and the American Dream:

”The American dream has never been defined exactly, and probably never can be. It is both too various and too vague: many men have meant many different things by it...But “American Literature” has been defined more exactly and has been outlined in courses and embodied in anthologies. Most men agree that it is something very different from English literature, and many have sought to describe the difference...American literature has differed from English because of the constant and omnipresent influence of the American dream upon it” (Carpenter, 1995, pg. 3).

From the very beginning of America’s national literature, it has always been about personal feelings and the issues of identity. Everything changed during the Revolutionary period, where American people started to feel the depth of nationality and American culture. It was all about searching for the answer to the question: what it means to be an American? Besides all the political writings- which were dominating at that time- there was still some place left in literature to discover the identity of the new country and a new culture, which was just being crafted and defined (Izaguirre, 2014).

Several works in literature refer to the American dream without explicitly mentioning it, but the value and the elements of the ”dream” can be found between the lines. John Izaguirre phrased this thought like that: ”The various voices and multitude of perspectives within American Literature, without specifically referring to the American dream, inherently all have elements of the values that define the dream” (Izaguirre, 2014, pg. 5).

From the nineteenth century in the American literature there was a new literary style, the American Literary Renaissance. From this period writers were inspired by the unique culture and the new ideals, so the American dream was the basis of the nineteenth-century literature completely.

During the nineteenth century, many literary voices emerged from the Revolutionary Period's new spirit of American individualism and identity, establishing the American Literary Renaissance. Writers including Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman published works that distinctly defined and constructed a literary tradition in the United States rooted in the ideals of individualism, nature, and self-reliance, in response to a new and rapidly expanding American culture. What would come to be known as the American dream served as the foundation for American Renaissance writers' development of a narrative of the American

character and experience during the nineteenth century. "Most notably, the works published by Ralph Waldo Emerson epitomized the emerging idea of the American dream and solidified many prominent American ideals first characterized in the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. With themes rooted in what would later be characterized as the American dream, Emerson's literary works allowed for American literature to reject the European literary aesthetic by asserting that inspiration and intelligence developed from individuals and their experiences rather than from any longstanding national customs or traditions" (Izaguirre, 2014, pg. 19).

Tyson disputes the case for literature as an important tool for the analysis of the psychology of the American Dream since literature can reveal aspects of a culture's collective psyche, an understanding of how ideological investments reveal the nature of individuals' cognitive relationship to their world (Louis, 1994).

In the nineteenth century, there was a famous posy which said that no one can find themselves outside themselves. The only place where someone can seek their identity is in themselves. This was the period where the truth, self-reliance, divine spirit and intuition created the American individual, and with these features it was possible to fulfil the American dream. The desire for wealth and social mobility, an essential part of the Dream, has been a constant driving force in American politics and literature.

During the 1920s, the optimism and tradition of fulfilling the American dream became equated with social status, material possessions, and financial wealth. More straightforward, it was all about the money and it was clear that material success meant everything. Against all of this, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* gave a powerful critique to this society, which was obsessed with material possessions and financial wealth. This work was published in 1925 and tells a story of the fictional character Jay Gatsby. In his study, John Izaguirre paraphrased that Jay Gatsby symbolises the promises of the American dream.

"In the novel, Fitzgerald uses Jay Gatsby to personify the romantic promise and disillusionment of the American dream. In the course of the novel, we learn that Jay Gatsby was born in the Midwest as James Gatz—a young man without money or an education. His desire to break out of the poverty and limits of his upbringing demonstrates a fundamental principle and belief of the American dream: that one can achieve anything through hard work and perseverance. Reinventing himself as Jay Gatsby, he is eager to get out of the small farm town he was born into and make a name for himself" (Izaguirre, 2014, pg. 46).

Based on the quotations and statements above it can be said that the American Dream has a really close association with the American literature. Benjamin Franklin's autobiography is a piece of literature that established a foundation for the American Dream in the American literature.

Franklin tells the "rags-to-riches" story of a tenacious young man who came from nothing but still made something of his life through hard work and perseverance in his autobiography. Franklin described himself someone whose idealism and success could be imitated and obtained by all Americans, with the goal of defining himself as the idealised American and as the promise for

which America truly stands. "If much of American literature serves as a vehicle for constructing and sustaining the aesthetics of the American dream where individualism is celebrated, self-actualization is promoted, and self-reliance is encouraged, then Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography serves as the preliminary narrative that establishes the foundation for the American dream in the national literature of America" (Izaguirre,2014, pg 7).

The American Literature very much influenced the American society. In the past it meant an improving force for the American culture, nowadays it is considered to be just a materialistic mirage of the American past. Kristian Nielsen has the following thoughts on the American dream: "Through great works of literature we learn that any dream can be deceptive if we dream so vigorously that we forget about the boundaries of reality" (Nielsen, 2014, pg. 70).

Several studies have revealed that the American Dream had an enormous influence on literature, on society and last but not least on history.

## PART 2

### THE GREAT GATSBY

As people teach little children to learn their lesson from kid's books, adults also have the ability to learn from adult's books. The sense of the American Dream is not an easy one to understand, however, it is part of our every day life and we have to be careful with that. That is why it is so significant to learn from the extant literature and books. On one hand those books, novels, stories have been written in order to give pleasure to the reader. On the other hand their aim is to be beneficial, because if we are able to pay attention on what we read, we can surely learn enough from that. Within the theme of the American Dream the most outstanding novel to read is *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The novel straightforward presents the assets and drawbacks of the American Dream.

#### **2.1 F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* as the criticism of the American Dream**

Many pieces of literature refer to the idea of the American Dream without directly mentioning it. The story of *The Great Gatsby*, however, sincerely writes about that. The main character of the story, Gatsby, represents the American dream as self-made wealth and happiness. The reason why we can say that his wealth and happiness was completely self-made, because he earned more than his parents ever did, and he did it all on his own. He felt that he was chasing after the perfect dream, Daisy, who for him embodied the elements of perfection and complete success.

Although Jay Gatsby did great, Dan Cody, who was Gatsby's mentor, was the ultimate embodiment of a self-made man. He made a huge impact on Gatsby's life and career, and besides Daisy, he was the most influential person in Jay Gatsby's life (Horning, 2013). However, when Gatsby realized that he could never win Daisy's love, he continued on pursuing the American Dream with Dan Cody's guidance. Derogatory for the American Dream Jay Gatsby gave in to the temptation of corruption and started to follow the get-rich-quick schemes like gambling and bootlegging in order to achieve his goals. This story of Fitzgerald's mirrors the loss of the ideals of America in the 1920s (Horning, 2013).

The novel includes the story of Jay Gatsby's desire and pursuit of his lost love, Daisy Buchanan. He believes if he gets rich and will reach a higher status, he could be in her heart again. "Gatsby believes that by re-inventing himself and becoming a man of wealth and status, he can win her back. We find that Daisy is the motive for Gatsby's success and his metaphor for the Dream" (Horning, 2013, pg 32).

The main character, Jay Gatsby gets the greatest opportunity of his life when he gets to know a man named Dan Cody. He introduces and educates Gatsby to the world of illegal trades. Dan Cody helps Jay Gatsby to discover multiple abilities to provide himself all the material and financial goods in the quickest and simplest ways possible. He wants to have more than he has, and wants to be more than he is.

The readers can realise that Gatsby got into the trap of the American dream (Izaguirre, 2014). It is clear that it became more important for Gatsby to become successful and achieve his version of the American dream than to live by the morals, values and standards in which he was raised when he was younger. It does not matter to him what methods it takes to achieve his material goals. By choosing to go against the morals and principles that once guided his life, Jay Gatsby demonstrates how he becomes a victim of a corrupt American dream that views financial wealth and materialism as a true fulfilment.

From Nick's point of view, Gatsby is a "mythic character who embodies the conflict between the illusions and realities of wealth and materialism at the core of the American experience during the 1920s" (Izaguirre,2014, pg 49).

In Gatsby's American dream, there is a place for love. His gullibility makes him think that material and financial wealth is on the same level with love. As the novel progresses and more of Gatsby's past is revealed, we realize that everything that was once pure and noble in his Franklinian and Emersonian dream of self-realization has been corrupted by his pursuit of material and financial wealth in order to win Daisy Buchanan's love. Because Gatsby genuinely believes that material and financial wealth can buy anything, including Daisy's love, Fitzgerald uses Gatsby's pursuit of achievement and fulfillment as a metaphor of a corrupt American dream. "Nick slowly reveals that most of the lavish and opulent parties Gatsby throws are not to make friends or socialize but to attract Daisy. Gatsby's misguided perception of material and financial wealth as a path toward personal fulfillment is a product of his misconception of the principles that define the American dream" (Izaguirre,2014, pg 53).

Daisy and her husband Tom Buchanan are the perfect examples in the novel that achieving the American dream is not equal with happiness and fulfillment. While they have their place in the highest social class, and they are extremely wealthy and modest, they are consistently depicted as useless and unhappy people:

"Nick perceives them to be heartless and careless examples of the damaging and emotionally deadening effects that excessive wealth has on anyone who lives without principles other than materialism. Their focus on appearance and monetary value demonstrates that achieving power and wealth does not result in happiness" (Izaguirre, 2014, pg 55).

Fitzgerald wanted to show his disappointment in the American dream and that is why he wrote this novel. He thought that the American dream was corrupt and deceitful in itself. The dream seems to be great and fulfilling, but in the reality it is the opposite of this.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald's vision of a corrupted and decayed American dream makes one wonder whether the seemingly timeless notion of the American dream is corrupt and deceitful in and of itself, or if the society manipulates and alters the original principles and values of the American dream. F. Scott Fitzgerald criticizes a materialistic society and the negative effects it can have on the American dream and experience. "The American experience, as Fitzgerald's views it,

may be one of aspiration and failure, but in that it is also open to critique and renewal, it is ultimately one of hope” (Izaguirre,2014, pg 57-58).

However, *The Great Gatsby* is not completely critical of the American dream; moreover it supports the idea of it in many ways. Tyson (Louis,1994) points out that in two points. The first point is that Nick is under a spell by the dream Gatsby represents for him, and his narrative attracts many readers into collusion with Gatsby’s desire. The second is that the language, which used to describe the physical setting of this world of wealth, makes it really appealing despite people like the Buchanans who populate it. Tyson also writes that “The Great Gatsby does not portray the American dream as an absolute positive value of pristine origin that somehow gets corrupted. Rather, because it is a commodity—in this case, a sign invested with the desire for consumption as the principle mode of production—the American dream itself is a source of corruption” (Louis, 1994, pg 41).

According to Arthur Miller, the play is not completely a criticism of the American Dream. Rather, it is a critique of the Dream's commodity or material side while advocating for its spiritual side. While criticizing the consumerism of the American Dream, Arthur Miller writes in his play that the health of American society depends on the spiritual system’s renewal (Horning, 2013, pg 37).

*The Great Gatsby* puts the highlight on the middle of the twentieth century and presents the circumstances in America after the Post World War and Jay Gatsby’s pursues and failures of the American Dream. The appearance and failure of American Dream both were influential. The example of the lost generations in the *Great Gatsby* provides the reader with the idea that how a few changes could influence people’s lives economically, rationally and in every other possible way. Fitzgerald considered the American Dream to be a brutal reality of people’s lives and it shows the society’s conditions and circumstances, where people became lost because of the several impacts of the Great War. Those impacts are corruption and brutality, which results in a structural change in society (Saika,2014)

## **2.2 A Short Summary of The Great Gatsby**

The plot of *The Great Gatsby* is the following: Nick Carraway, who is the narrator of the story, has just returned from the war and decides to go to East to work. Through flashbacks Nick introduces the reader to the story of Jay Gatsby, who is his next-door neighbor, but he realizes this a little bit later. The story includes nine chapters and around seven parties that are impregnated with flashbacks. After moving to West Egg, Nick’s first thing is to visit Daisy Buchanan, his second cousin and her husband Tom, who is a fellow Yale graduate for dinner. During the dinner party Nick gets to know Daisy’s friend from Louisville, Jordan Baker, who reveals the affair between Tom and Myrtle Wilson. She is the wife of a garage owner in the Valley of Ashes. Nick is flabbergasted by the lack of morality in their family. He does not understand the gap between the

nouveau riche, and those with no money at all. However, at the second party, Tom introduces Nick to Myrtle, who invites Catherine (her sister) and the McKees, in order to complete the guest list, to a hotel where the party will later take place in New York City. At Gatsby's very first party in West Egg Nick Carraway gets to meet a great number of high-profile guests. Although most of those guests were not invited, none of them cared about the regulation concerning prohibitions. According to the narrator of the story the atmosphere was much like an amusement park.

The next party was a lunch party with Meyer Wolfsheim. This character is one of Gatsby's business mates and it was obvious that he was an "underworld character." Furthermore, Tom and Daisy attended one of Jay Gatsby's parties. Gatsby has used Nick (his next-door neighbour and Daisy's cousin) to arrange a date with this young lady (Daisy), the lady he wanted to marry five years ago. Unfortunately, Daisy had already married to a wealthy man, who owned an immense amount of money, namely Tom Buchanan. However, Gatsby had managed to gain a fortune greater than Tom's over the years, and he idealistically and firmly believes that Daisy will leave Tom for him.

At Gatsby's mansion, there was the next party, which included Tom and Daisy and a great number of other guests. The final party was a catastrophic party at the Plaza Hotel in New York. This party provided Tom the opportunity to confront Gatsby about his mania with Daisy and his obvious underworld activities.

As Daisy was driving home from New York City, she accidentally hit and killed Myrtle Wilson with Gatsby's gorgeous yellow car. As Gatsby was sitting on the passenger's seat, he took upon the accident on himself. That night Jay Gatsby stood under Daisy's window. He was waiting for her to give him a sign, but he did not realize that while he was waiting, she was sitting at her kitchen table, they were working through all their differences with Tom. However Nick sees Gatsby through the window, but he does not want to tell Gatsby about it, and he was not surprised when Gatsby was shot at his own house by Myrtle's husband, George Wilson, who got Jay Gatsby's name from Tom the day after the accident. It is a very much tragic finish to a long love story.

Nick Carraway, the narrator of our story, stays just a short time in West Egg to arrange Jay Gatsby's funeral. Although, he invites his supposed "friends" to attend it, none of them really come, but Nick does get to meet Jay Gatsby's father, Mr. Gatz. Nick describes him as "a solemn old man" who thought the world of his son. Mr. Gatz showed a book to Nick where a young Jimmy Gatsby wrote down his daily schedule and his determination to drink less, to save money and be a little bit nicer to his parents. Seeing this, Nick finally understands how he (Jay Gatsby) could be taken in by the dream of wealth, money and status. It was the clearly the desire that led him into the wrong path in his youth, and of course, the man named Dan Cody, who offered him this tempting, underworld job. In the novel's final lines, our narrator, Nick, speculates on Jay Gatsby's life and his inability to shape his own life and future, concluding, "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." In this story the American Dream is rather a failure, than a chance for the better (Fitzgerald, 1925, pg., 193)

### 2.3 The Character of Jay Gatsby in the Interpretation of the American Dream

The protagonist, the hero and the main character of the novel is Jay Gatsby. The reader sees him in a spotlight almost all the way in the novel. His quest for Daisy's attention and love represents his American Dream. As the story progresses it turns out, that Gatsby knew Daisy way before and fell madly in love with her. This is the reason why he is on a quest to find her again. His parties were designed only with one single aim: to attract her attention. However, his plan was not entirely successful, so he spent many nights staring across the water at the green light at the end of her dock. She seemed to be so close, yet in reality she was so far away. Only at his funeral does Nick realise and observe that Gatsby's dream of Daisy and recapturing the past was corrupted by money, just like his great American dream. Gatsby's pursuit of happiness in the shape of Daisy and his pursuit of individualism has turned into an apparent quest for wealth and money. His dream was quite a bit surreal and large, so he could only achieve a part of it (Michaela Píchová 2014).

His quest for Daisy, on the first hand, is a lovely and romantic gesture, however, in another sense, it demonstrates that he is living according to a childish illusion. Furthermore, by focusing on his dream of Daisy, he moves further and falls deeper into the fantasy world he created. Gatsby is not able to deal with the reality which sets him outside the norm. Eventually, it is only getting worse, which leads to a tragic end. The result of holding onto his American dream leads to his death. At the end of the novel's seventh chapter, Gatsby stands like a guard outside of her loved one's house. He is still unable to realize that his dreams of Daisy are not the reality, so he is just standing and waiting outside for a sign from her. Overall, Gatsby sees himself and what he is doing as noble, honorable, and purposeful. The reader, on the other hand, sees the meaninglessness of actions.

As the reader follows Jay Gatsby's life in the novel, it can be clearly seen that the story of his life is similar, almost identical to a classic tragedy. When the reader first meets with Jay Gatsby, he is an enormously wealthy man who throws enormous parties. His character is rather a mystery, and there are many complications in his life. It is unknown to the reader who he is. What he does for a living is a mystery. There is barely any information about him and because of these unknowns, the readers are not sure what to think about him as the protagonist of the story. The only thing that helps the reader to figure it out is the title: *The Great Gatsby*. We automatically expect him to be great, so he could meet our common expectation of what a protagonist should be. The readers expect him to be sympathetic, someone successful, clever and handsome at the same time. After all, the reader does feel sympathy and liking for Gatsby.

It becomes obvious through the reader's desire for him to be able to get Daisy's attention. On one hand, F. Scott Fitzgerald created a heartfelt character in Jay Gatsby, and on the other hand, he made Tom into such a villain that the reader is unable to blame Gatsby, even if he tries to steal



someone else's wife. We sympathize with him, because it is his most significant „dream”, and for this dream he could do anything (Shmoop, 2010).

In conclusion, the reader had the chance to get to know the not so bright side of the American Dream on the example of Jay Gatsby, the main character of *The Great Gatsby*.

## **PART 3**

### **EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

#### **3.1 Introduction and Hypotheses**

The aim of this research is to get some information about how much students in higher education know about the concept of the American. Another aim is to compare their opinions and to see how many of them is actually acquainted with this concept. Finally, to find out if the American Dream is worth to become a topic in an English lesson. All questions from the questionnaire can be found in the Appendices.

We can mention the following hypotheses:

- Most of the people do not have a thorough knowledge about the notion of the American Dream.
- Most of the respondents got acquainted with the concept of the American Dream outside of the classrooms (e.g. through the internet, films and music).
- Respondents may think that the American dream is completely about the material success.
- Students learning on language-specific courses most likely know much more about the concept of the American Dream.

#### **3.2 Research Instruments**

The research instrument chosen for this research is a questionnaire. Questionnaires provide a relatively cheap, quick and efficient way of collecting large amounts of information from a large sample of people. The questionnaire can be carried out face to face, by telephone, computer or post. The present research's questionnaire was carried out through an internet-based application form. The questionnaire was carried out in Hungarian language, furthermore, the responses came both in Hungarian and English languages.

#### **3.3 Participants**

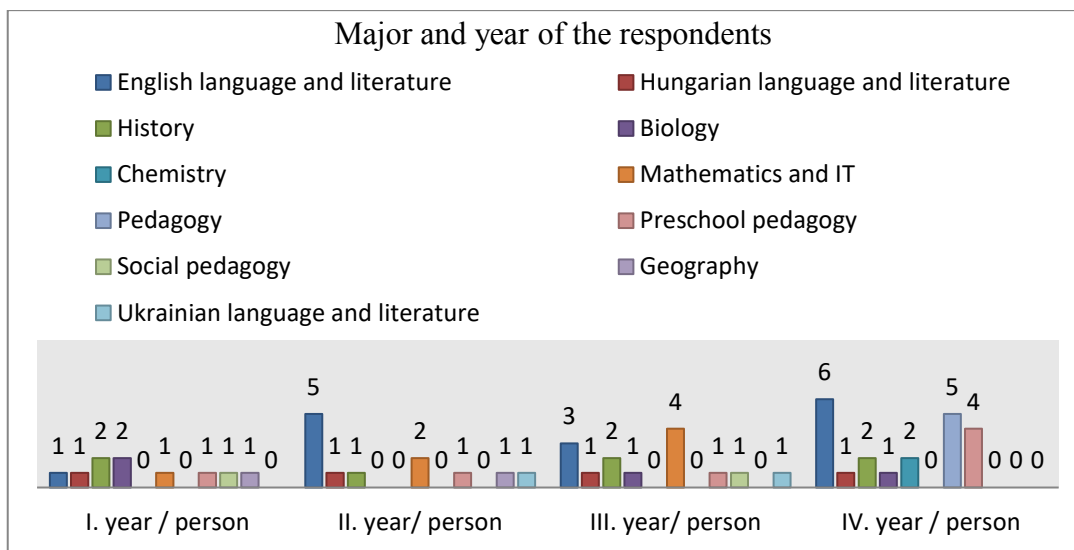
The questionnaire was filled in by fifty-seven participants in total. All of the respondents were students studying in higher education (vocational high school, college). The questionnaire could be filled in by anyone irrespectively of their gender and age. The questionnaire was shared through e-mail with the participants. The questionnaire was anonymous.

### 3.4 Findings

The first two questions were asking basic information about the respondents, such as their gender, major and year. The majority (47 person) of the respondents were women (85,5 %), and the minority of the respondents (8 person) were man. Out of fifty-five there were two respondents who did not answer this question.

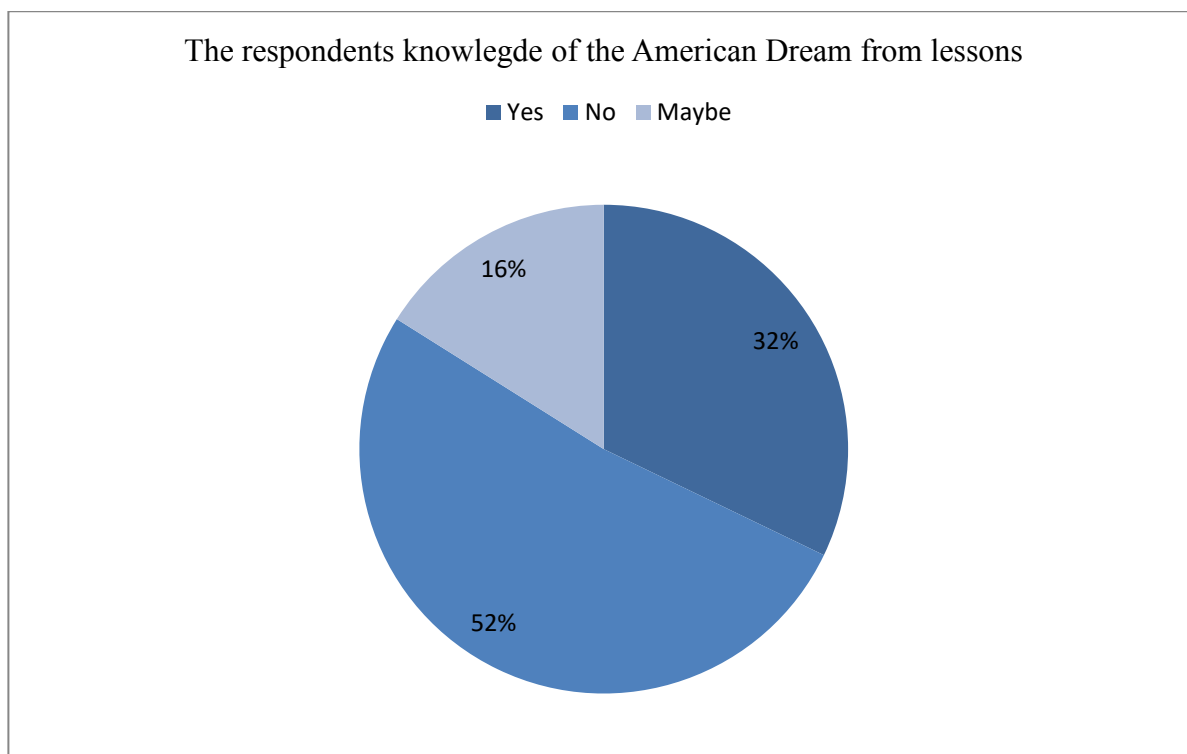
The second question intended to ask the respondents major and year. Among the participants there were students from every year and every speciality. The results of this question can be viewed on Diagram 3.4.2

**Diagram 3.4.2**



The third question of the questionnaire contemplated to find out if the participants have ever heard of the concept of the American Dream before. This question was a close-ended. The results show that the vast majority of students have never heard of the concept of the American Dreams concept before. Out of fifty-seven responses twenty-nine (51,8 %) was negative and eighteen (32,1 %) was positive. The remaining nine response (16,1 %) was undetermined. The results of this question can seen on Diagram 3.4.3

**Diagram 3.4.3**



The fourth question intended to find out if the students have ever heard of or met with the concept of the American Dream outside the lessons (e.g. on TV, on the internet, social and other media). Most of the students did hear about the American dream from the following sources: television, the internet, movies and novels, elder people and friends and also from music.

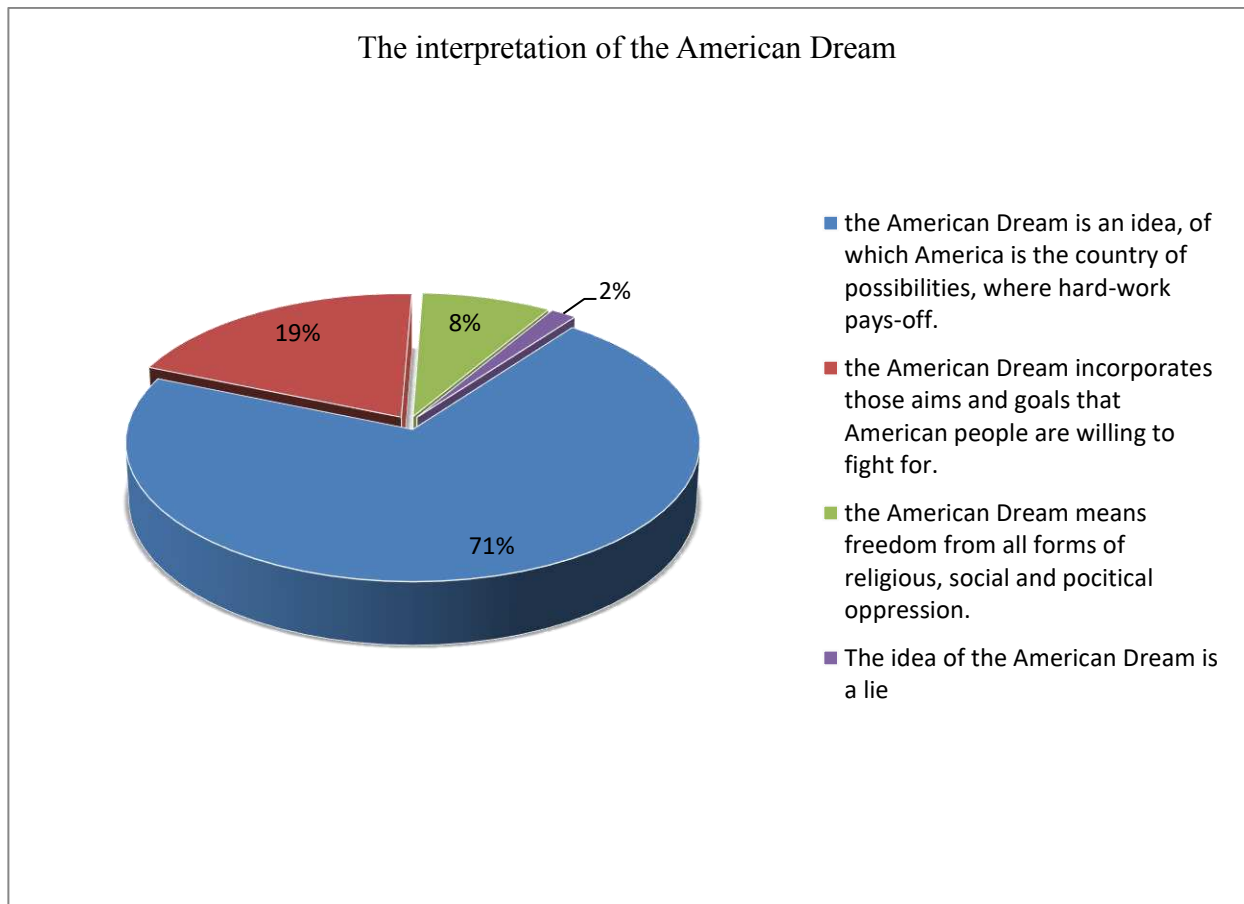
The fifth question intended to find out what students think the American Dream is. The respondents could choose from the following options:

- the American Dream is an idea of which America is the country of possibilities, where hard work pays off.
- the American Dream incorporates those aims and goals that the American people are willing to fight for.
- the American Dream means freedom from all forms of religious, social and political oppression.

Excluding the previous answers, one of the respondents gave a unique answer to the question. According to him/her: "The idea of the American Dream is a lie for my part. It was just a

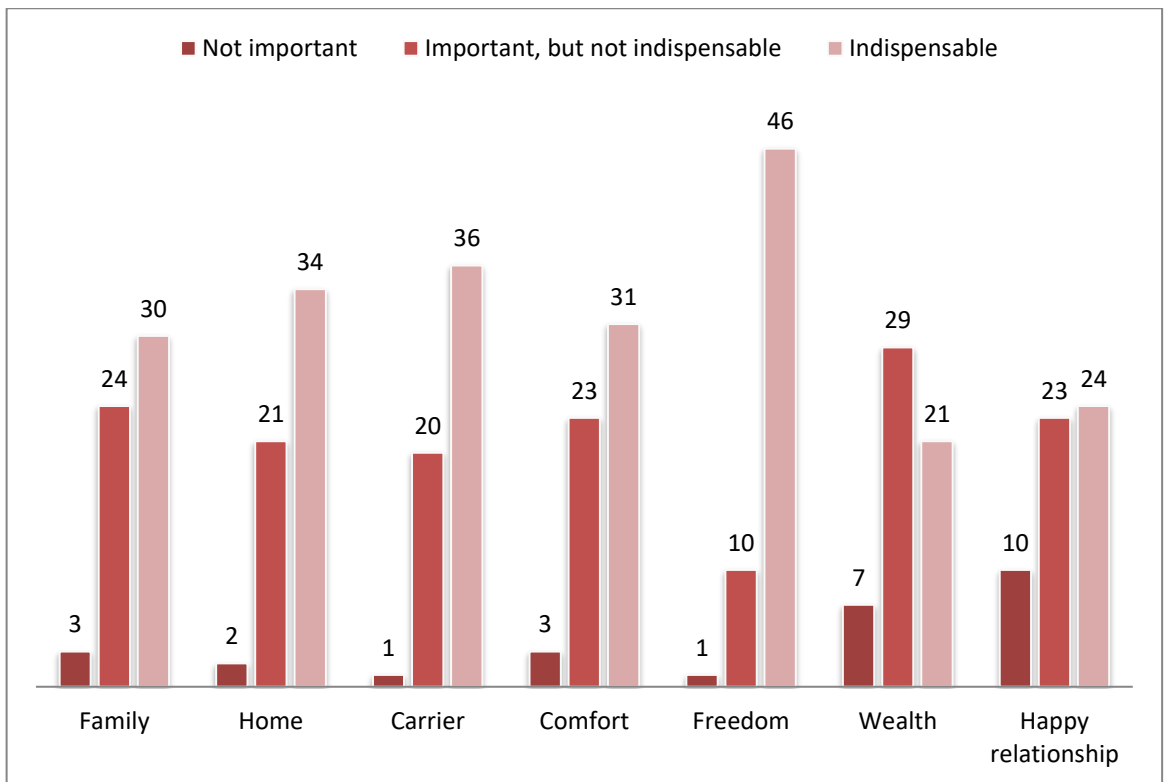
commercial back then, but it has lost its meaning, it does not exist nowadays”. The respondents choices from the options of this question can be seen on Diagram 3.4.4.

**Diagram 3.4.4**



The sixth question of the questionnaire meant to get to know the participants’ opinion about the following matters: family, home, career, comfort, freedom, wealth and happy relationship. The respondents had to put these matters into different categories according to their level of importance (i.e. not important, important, but not indispensable and indispensable). The results show that freedom is indispensable according to the majority of the respondents. This result is not surprising, as the paper’s theoretical part shows that freedom is considered to be the most significant notion of the American Dream. Further results to this question can be viewed on Diagram 3.4.5.

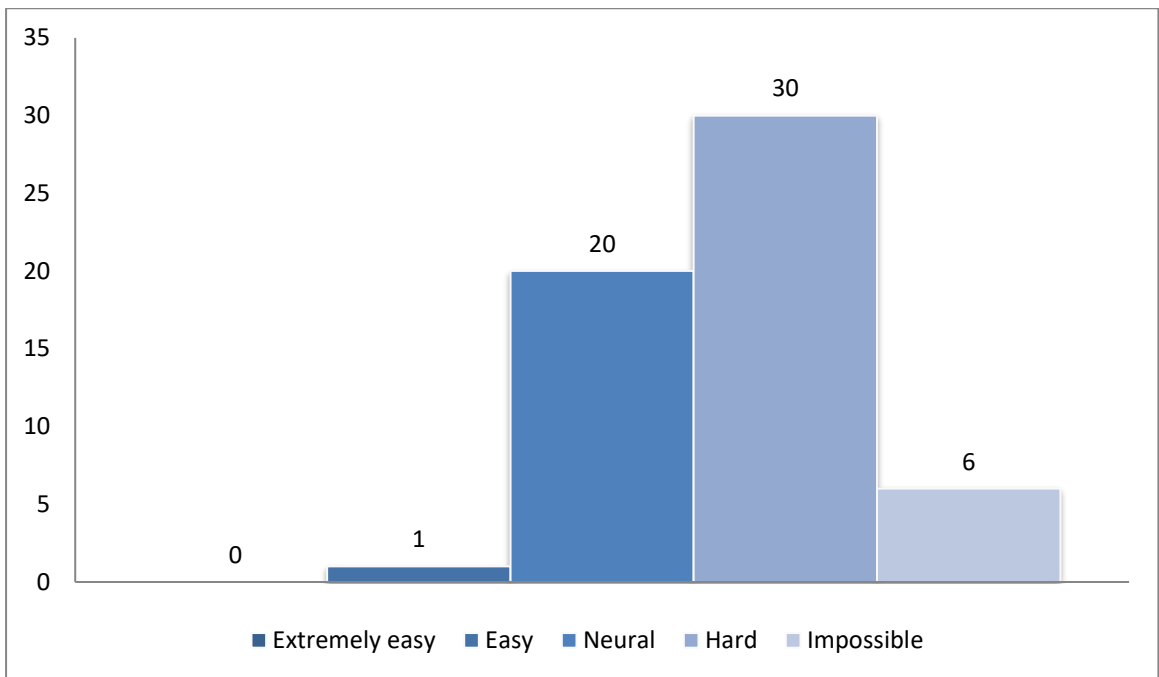
**Diagram 3.4.5**



The idea of the American Dream exists in other countries besides America. The seventh question intended to find out the respondents opinion's that which countries strive to achieve the American Dream the most. This was an open-ended question where students could express their subjective thoughts. The most common countries among the responses were: Germany, England and other Western European countries. The results to this question were not surprising, sith the most common answers were Western European countries where the living rate is really high.

The eighth question is intended to find out whether it is hard or easy to achieve the American Dream in our society. The answers to this question were gathered with the help of the Likert scale. The possible answers were on a scale from 1 (being really easy to achieve) to 5 (being impossible to achieve). The results show that the majority of the respondents think that in our society it is rather hard to achive the American Dream. Further results of this question can be seen on Diagram 3.4.6.

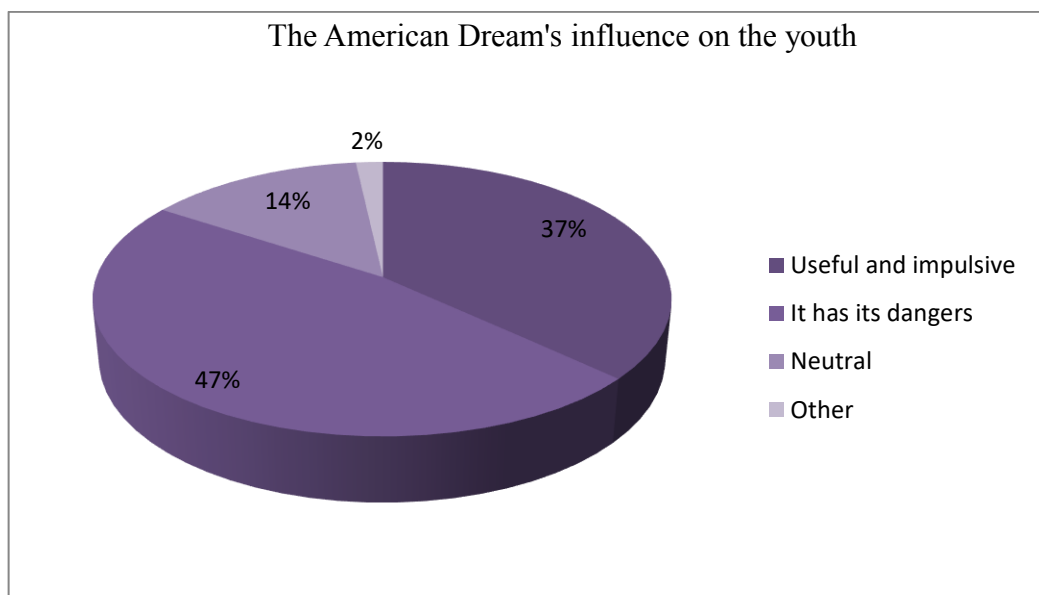
**Diagram 3.4.6**



The ninth question intended to ask about the American Dream’s influence on young people’s lives. The possible answers were the following: it is useful and impulsive, it has its dangers and it has neutral influence.

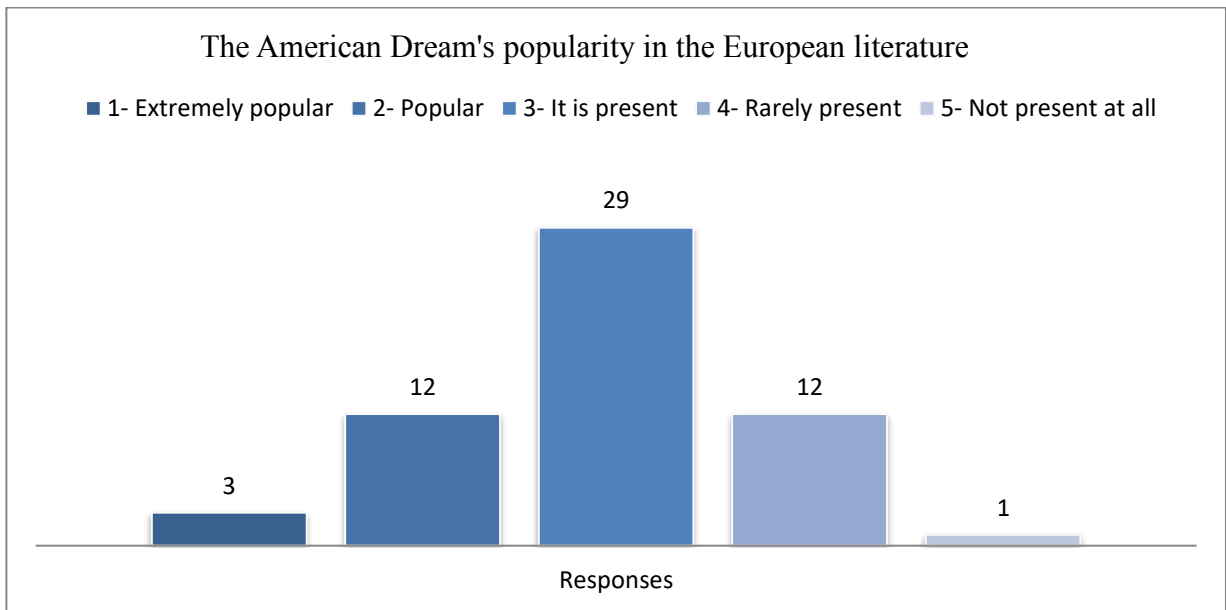
According to the majority of the respondents (47,4 %) the American Dream has its dangers. However, a good amount (36,8 %) of respondents said that it is useful and impulsive. The remaining 14% has a neutral opinion about the American Dreams influence. According to these results, the American Dream is rather a positive notion, which has a positive influence on the youth. A detailed result can be viewed on Diagram 3.4.7

**Diagram 3.4.7**



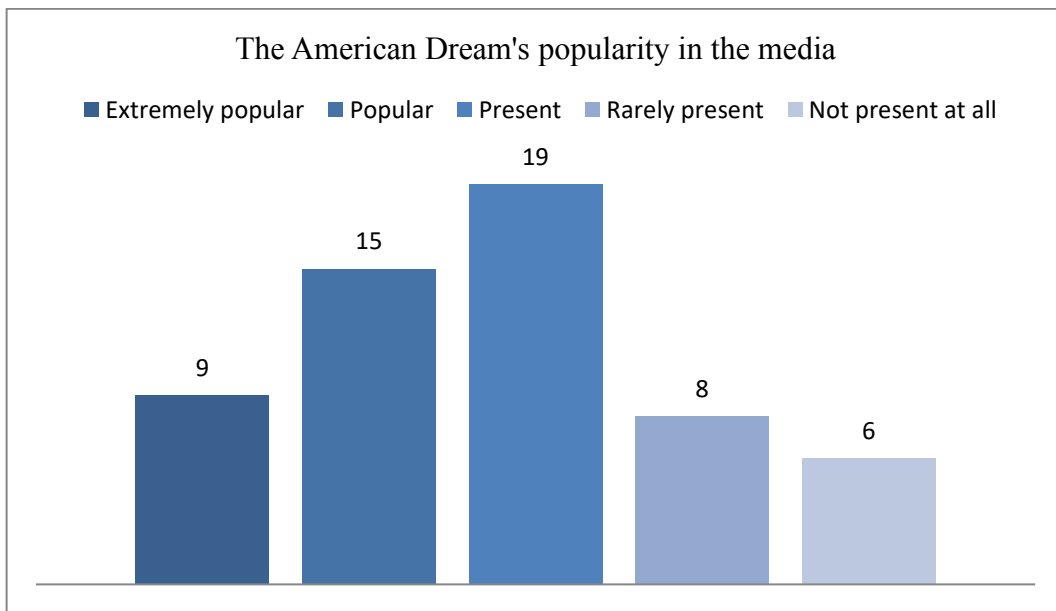
The tenth question of the questionnaire is intended to find out the popularity of the American Dream in the European literature. The respondents could choose on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being absolutely popular and 5 being the least popular or not present at all. The results show that the idea of the American Dream is present in the European literature, however, it can not be considered to be popular. The results can be viewed in detail on Diagram 3.4.8

**Diagram 3.4.8**



In the eleventh question the respondents were asked to place the popularity of the American Dream as a theme in the media, somewhere in a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being extremely popular and 5 being not present or popular at all. The majority of the respondents said that it is obviously present, however it is not very well-known. In contrast to the previous question, the idea of the American Dream is much more popular in the media than in the European literature. A possible explanation for this might be that media plays a much more important role in young people's lives, than literature. Further results of this question can be seen on Diagram 3.4.9

**Diagram 3.4.9**



The twelfth and final question of the questionnaire was an open-ended question, which intended to find out the overall opinion of students learning in higher education about the idea of the American Dream. The respondents were asked to express their opinion on the American Dream in a really short sentence, or tell if it is a negative or positive idea. Most of the responses show that the American dream can be positive and negative at the same time. The results can be explained by the phenomena that everything has an advantage and a disadvantage. The reason for this is that



American Dream is a complex concept which builds up of several positive and negative characteristics.

Additionally, is significant to draw a paralell between the tenth and eleventh questions: European literature and the media. The results showed that most students got acquainted with the idea of the American Dream through the media. This suggests that students do not hear much about the idea of this concept on the lessons. This theory can be supported with the results of the fourth and fifth questions from the questionnaire.

## CONCLUSION

The American Dream is a well-known concept in the American nation. This idea was born in 1931, when James Truslow Adams first mentioned it. Although, this is a complex term is it not impossible to circumscribe. The American Dream is a combination of personal fulfillment and material success. When the concept was created, lots of politicians, artists and literateurs were inspired. It is now an object of everyday life especially in the USA, and this is sure when we take a look at different books, poems, and songs inspired by this idea.

In Christopher Jenks's (Jenks, 2008) opinion there are two ways to accomplish the American Dream. One of them is by working hard and the other way is by waiting for the possibility to come, and sometimes by doing illegal things. C. Jenks was disappointed in the American Dream. He thought that people should not think about what they can do for themselves anymore, but they should think about what they can do for other people (Jenks, 2008).

The definition of the concept shifts over time in different situations and circumstances. The American Dream was associated with financial prosperity until the 1960s, but it has evolved significantly since then. Americans abandoned the ideas of a traditional, conformist culture and began searching for new ways to achieve happiness and fulfillment.

However, the American Dream is not only America's and American people's dream. There are several nations and countries on the Earth, and in some of those countries people dream the same or at least a similar dream to the Americans. For example, Europe has its own dream, but we call it in another name: as the European dream. The idea behind both dreams is almost the same. It is common that both want to reach a higher level of everything, including material possessions and financial status. The American Dream puts the focus on economic growth, personal wealth and independence. Then again the European Dream emphasizes a sustainable development, quality of life, and interdependence (Rifkin, 2004).

The idea of the American Dream hides in most of the greatest masterpieces of the American literature. In most cases it is not unambiguous, but observing a little bit closer it can be found. It is a widespread subject matter particularly in this modern world. As it was mentioned before, in the modern literature lots of authors were inspired by the idea of the American Dream.

During the 1920s, the tradition of fulfilling the American dream became equated with social status, material possessions, and financial wealth. More straightforward, it was all about the money, and it was clear that material success meant everything. Against all of this, F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" gave a powerful critique to this kind of society, obsessed with material possessions and financial wealth. Fitzgerald wanted to express his dissatisfaction with the American dream, which is why he wrote this book. He believed that the American dream was inherently corrupt and deceptive. The dream appears to be wonderful and fulfilling, but it is the polar opposite in reality. The novel was published in 1925 and tells a story of a fictional character, Jay Gatsby. His character is especially significant, because he is the perfect and most

ideal example of how the American Dream can influence one's life and how can a little spark of hope make someone do everything out of nothing.

Finally, the third part deals with an empirical research. The research instrument is a questionnaire, which was carried out in the form of an application form through the internet. From the answers, it turned out that most of the students have heard of and are familiar with the concept of the American Dream, but the majority is not sure about its actual meaning. The opinions differ from each other. The vast majority of the respondents believe that the American Dream is two-sided. On the first hand, it is positive and it can be impulsive; on the other hand, it can be dangerous, because it is an idealised idea which can not be achieved by everyone. Furthermore, the results show that the American Dream is present in our society and in European literature as well.

In summary, it can be stated that the American Dream is not very well-known in our society. That means that teachers need to start talking about it more often in their English lessons, in order to be familiar with the meaning of this concept.

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## РЕЗЮМЕ

Американська мрія - відома концепція в американській нації. Перша згадка про цю ідею датується 1931 роком, коли про це заговорив Джеймс Труслоу Адамс. Хоча це комплексний термін, проте все ж можливо його описати. Американська мрія - це поєднання особистої самореалізації та матеріального успіху. Коли концепція була створена, багато політиків, художників та літераторів надихалися нею. Зараз це вже є частиною життя багатьох, особливо в США, і це переконливо можна стверджувати, коли ми заглядаємо в різні книги, слухаємо вірші та пісні, які надихалися цією ідеєю.

На думку Крістофера Дженкса, є два шляхи досягнення Американської мрії. Один з них - це наполеглива робота, а інший – очікування шансу, можливості реалізувати себе, а іноді й робити незаконні речі. К. Дженкс насправді був розчарований в американській мрії. Він вважав, що люди повинні б думати не тільки про те, що вони можуть зробити для себе, а навпаки, вони повинні думати більше про те, що вони можуть зробити для інших людей.

Доктор Мартін Лютер Кінг добре знайома постать для всіх. Його також надихнула ідея американської мрії, тому він вирішив виступити з промовою на цю тему. Він вірив в американську мрію і дуже вірив у свободу всіх чорношкірих, які живуть в рабстві, в поневоленні. Кінг також проголосив кілька пропозицій до американської нації щодо змін, які необхідно здійснити. На жаль, найбільшу протидію він отримав від власного уряду.

Американська мрія - це не лише мрія Америки та американців. На Землі є декілька націй і країн, в багатьох з яких люди мають такі ж мрії, які як мінімум, схожі на американську. Наприклад Європа та європейці також мають свою мрію, але ми називаємо її європейською мрією. Суть обох мрій майже ідентична, вони дуже схожі. Загальним є те, що в обох випадках люди хочуть досягти вищого рівня у всьому, в кожному аспекті власного життя. Американська мрія ставить акцент на економічне зростання, особистий добробут та на власну незалежність. Європейська мрія також наголошує на постійний та сталий розвиток, на покращення якості життя та особисту незалежність.

Ідея американської мрії прослідковується в багатьох всесвітньовідомих шедеврах американської літератури. У більшості випадків це, можливо, не наяву, чи не формулюється відкрито на сторінках твору, але аналізуючи його глибше, її можна віднайти. Це дійсно надзвичайно поширена тема в мистецтві, особливо в цьому світі.

Як згадувалося раніше, у сучасній літературі багато авторів були натхненні ідеєю американської мрії, але один із них створив щось дійсно надзвичайне, видатне. Роман Марка Твена «Пригоди Гекльберрі Фінна» змальовує труднощі та перепони, які

перешкоджають людині бути дійсно вільною. Книга була опублікована у 1885 році, і багато критиків вважають цей літературний твір найбільшим шедевром в американській літературі.

Протягом 1920-х років традиції досягнення американської мрії ототожнювалися з підняттям соціального статусу, отриманням матеріальних цінностей та досягнення фінансового добробуту. Тобто мова йшла тільки про гроші, і всім американська мрія – це матеріальний успіх. «Великий Гетсбі» Ф. Скотта Фіцджеральда озвучив потужну критику такому суспільству, котре було одержиме бажанням здобути та володіти матеріальним цінностями, фінансовим багатством. Цей роман був опублікований у 1925 році і розповідає історію вигаданого персонажа Джея Гетсбі.

Третя частина моєї роботи – це аналіз дослідження. Інструментом дослідження було використано анкетування. З відповідей респондентів зрозуміло, що більшість людей знайомі з поняттям «Американська мрія», проте більшість не впевнені, у чому її реальна сутність. У багатьох позиції стосовно «мрії» відрізняються одна від одної в значній мірі. Лише меншість респондентів читали літератури стосовно теми «Американська мрія».

Підсумовуючи дослідження, слід зазначити, що американська мрія не дуже відома нашому суспільству, або ж її не розуміють достеменно. Отож вчителям варто залучати елементи, які розкривають цю тему, до своїх уроків англійської мови, щоби учні дійсно правильно розуміли ідею американської мрії.

APPENDIX  
Questionnaire

1. Gender

- Male

- Female

2. Major, year

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3. Have you ever heard of the concept of the American Dream in the lessons?

- yes

- no

- maybe

4. Have you ever heard of the concept of the American Dream outside the lessons? If your answer is yes, where?

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4. In Your opinion the American Dream is:

- an idea, of which America the country of possibilities, where hard work pays off

- the American Dream incorporates those aims and goals that American people are willing to fight for.

- the American Dream means freedom from all forms of religious, social and political oppression.

5. Out of the following ideas, which are important, important, but not indispensable and indispensable:

- family

- home

- carrier

- comfort

- freedom

- wealth

- happy relationship

6. The concept of the American Dream exists in other countries as well. In your opinion, which countries strive the most to achieve it?

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7. How difficult or easy, in your opinion, to achieve the American Dream in our society?

From 1 to 5 (1- extremely easy, 5-impossible)

8. In your opinion how does the American dream influences the youth?



- Useful and impulsive
- It has its dangers
- It has a neutral influence

9. In a scale from 1 to 5 how popular is the idea of the American Dream in the European literature in your opinion? (1-extremely popular, 5-does not exist)

10. In a scale from 1 to 5 how popular is the idea of the American Dream in the media? (1-extremely popular, 5-does not exist)

11. What is your opinion on the American Dream on the whole? Is it positive or negative?

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## NYILATKOZAT

Alulírott, Tóth Enikő angol szakos hallgató, kijelentem, hogy a dolgozatomat a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskolán, a Filológia tanszéken készítettem, angol nyelv és irodalom tanári diploma megszerzése végett.

Kijelentem, hogy a dolgozatot más szakon korábban nem védtem meg, saját munkám eredménye, és csak a hivatkozott forrásokat (szakirodalom, eszközök, stb.) használtam fel.

Tudomásul veszem, hogy dolgozatomat a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskola könyvtárának Kézirattárában helyezik el