

Jeffrey Eugenides wrote *Middlesex*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel that includes themes of American assimilation, attaining individualism, and a break from traditional gender stereotypes. I believe that Eugenides was influenced by several classic authors, such as Melville and his theme of fate, and Whitman's themes of self-reliance and individuality. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur wrote over two hundred years before Eugenides and heavily influenced the latter in his writing of *Middlesex* and made it possible for him to write about immigration and assimilation. While the authors were separated by two centuries, each expressed similar ideals and concerns. Both *Middlesex* and *Letters from an American Farmer* discuss the pride and patriotism that Americans often possess, establish the significance of the "American dream," and include a heavy emphasis on conforming to Americanism.

The American ideals expressed in *Middlesex* would not have the same impact upon the reader were it not for Crevecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*, written 220 years prior. Crevecoeur wrote about what it is to be an American and idolized the new world, establishing the American dream. Referring to the "enlightened Englishman," Crevecoeur wrote, "He must greatly rejoice that he lived at a time to see this fair country discovered and settled; he must necessarily feel a share of national pride." He raved about the great land of America as he urged the English to immigrate. His writing was pioneering and introduced the idea of American pride through literature. He inspired the longing for Americanism and the goal, now common to most Americans, to achieve a certain standard of living, as well as establishing the idea that America has a certain superiority to it.

The American dream is revisited in *Middlesex*, as the story describes the Stephanides family's assimilation and efforts to transform into the typical American family. These ideals would be less significant to the reader, were they not introduced by Crevecoeur whose audience were early immigrants. Desdemona and Lefty's cousin, Lina, is an example of a Greek immigrant who grew accustomed to America and eventually chased after the "American dream," dressing in the traditional 1920's "flapper girl" style. In Eugenides' description of Lina, he included, "she concentrated on the new fashions, or her Aeriola Jr., the radio she spent hours each day listening to, wearing earphones and manipulating the dial." Here, Eugenides is depicting Lina as a woman valuing the American trends, in addition to describing her trendy hairstyle that contrasts the traditional Greek appearance of Desdemona.