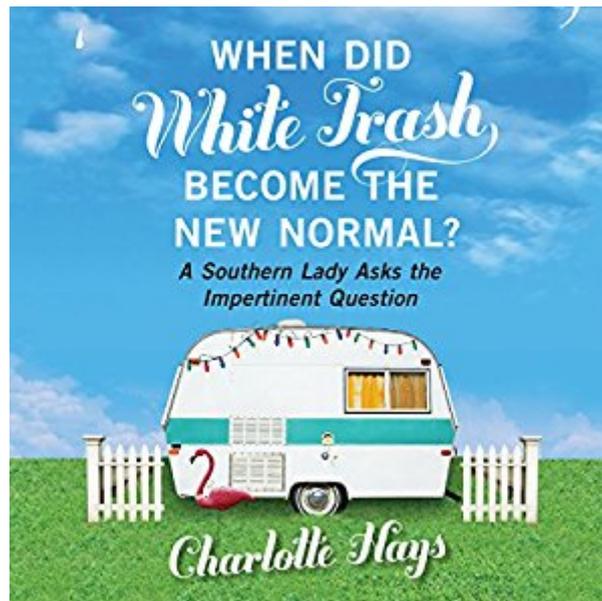


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When Did White Trash Become The New Normal?: A Southern Lady Asks The Impertinent Question



Synopsis

Tattoos. Unwed pregnancy. Giving up on shaving...showering...and employment. These used to be signatures of a trashy individual. Now they're the new norm. What happened to etiquette, hygiene, and self-restraint? Charlotte Hays, Southern gentlewoman extraordinaire, takes a humorous look at the spread of white trash culture to all levels of American society.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Our society no longer values honor, fidelity, discipline (self or otherwise), or delayed gratification. Every want is a right, every craving is to be indulged, every impulse to be acted upon, and everyone who dares to question what in the past would be seen as VERY questionable decisions, is met with indignation, an upraised middle finger, and profanity. Welcome to the new perpetually petulant adolescent fantasy known as America. If our founders were all exhumed tomorrow, their bones would be a jumbled mess from rolling over in their graves so many times it would look as though their skeletons had been break-dancing. When few desire to work hard to prove themselves, while many demand unearned respect, it's not hard to imagine why America's days as the dominant country on the planet are numbered. We are little more than "Lord Of The Flies" writ large...

I laughed most of the time I was reading this book, when I wasn't, it was because I was cringing at my own trashy behavior. Whether it's overeating, talking on a cell phone in public, or not giving up a seat on a bus, Charlotte Hays shows us we can all be guilty of being White Trash from time-to-time. After reading this book, you'll want to straighten up your act. Do not read this book if you find

yourself easily offended by things like common decency, morality, or good manners. You'll wish for a more civilized world after Hays traces the roots of our modern epidemic of trashiness.

Charlotte Hays, a long-time social-conservative humorist, from the deep south, writes deftly, in a style recalling Mark Twain's own social criticism and satire, about the degradation of American culture and mores. Targeting some of the more egregious, surprisingly successful absurdities of reality TV, such as Honey Boo Boo and the Kardashians, along with the general abandonment of manners, tattoo fetishism, McMansions dubiously rescued from foreclosure, and the relentless pursuit of Type 2 diabetes, Hays invokes Toynbee for the proposition that the present path will doom America. The premise is that the culture has long since been overwhelmed by what the author sees as the normalization of "white trash" values and behaviors taken to a higher level pervading not only general pop culture but the attitudes of the elites. Quick, fun read.

I'm not sure if it would be PC or non-PC to point out the book's ethnic limitations. It does not, for example, address African American trash. Surely Miss Hays should be forgiven for the omission. I cannot agree with her advice to send the kids to Sunday school, but I understand the impulse. And I take comfort in the kindness and good manners of the scientists I know. The lady wields a sharp pen, and I am taking hers scoldings to heart.

Hays makes completely valid points about the levels modern society has stooped to because we know longer have the collective will to sort our lives out properly and discern what is correct behavior from reprehensible irresponsibility. We have become a slovenly nation of ill-educated, ill-mannered rubes who have disdained our glorious cultural past in exchange for personal and immediate satisfaction, while also becoming slaves to the tyranny of political correctness. Thank God somebody had the class and courage to write it. Worth every penny.

An excellent book by an excellent writer. The exposure of the supercilious celebration of stupidity by Hollywood (smart people acting dumb to make millions) is long overdue. The old adage is trite but true: You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. The Beverly Hillbillies may have been silly, but it never pretended to be anything else. Today, idiots with a trailer-trash mentality from Kardashian to the hirsute duck call family are celebrated as cultural heroes, hawking millions of dollars worth of crap to a gullible American audience.

She asks the same things I've been asking my husband for years. One of her questions is an almost verbatim question of mine: Remember when teenagers wanted to act like adults instead of adults wanting to act like teenagers? Poor table manners, poor social skills, general rudeness, tattoos and piercings, out of wedlock births, and even the despised Bratz dolls are all addressed. This is not an academic investigation so much as a neighborly talk over coffee, yet the subject is important and is not treated lightly. It is comforting to know that my family is not alone in our concerns.

The author doesn't explore much more deeply than simple observation. If one is ordering this book they are already interested in the changes happening in American society. Class struggles and divisions are becoming clearer but what the implications of this are and will be for the future are not considered. The author is not an academic nor has she done any real research or interviewed anyone who has for this book. It is her opinions and take-aways from others (Charles Murray) rather than any statistical information, research or predictions. I enjoyed the book but it was a casual observation book (i.e., Americans are growing fatter, tattooed, hooked to cheap reality stars, etc.) One thing I did pick up from the 'Southern Gal' was a definite undertone of racism when she mentioned President Obama and Mrs. Obama. How ironic that the author's thesis is about the lowering of American society's family and personal values and yet she didn't exult the Ivy League educated First Family who have had their mother/mother-in-law living with them in a close knit respectable, educated and high achievement family. I can't help but think if it was President Kennedy and his glamorous wife there would have been heaps of praise.

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