

Jkk

Literature, Russian Literature



JKK AP Language and Composition Rhetoric in *Of Mice and Men* During 1929, many farmers lost their farm because of economic pressure, ending the American Dream for most people. Throughout the novel, *Of Mice and Men*, written by John Steinbeck, reflects on farmer's lives; their difficulties, hopes, and the want for a new start in California. This time period did not just effect farmers, it affected everyone--every man, every woman, every race.

Steinbeck shows the reader that many people have dreams, but they do not reach them because they accept the position they are in. Steinbeck's particular rhetorical styles develop his point of view, the impossibility of the American Dream, through the use of parallelism, syntax, and personification. Steinbeck portrays emotional situations in the farmer's lives explaining why they can not reach the American Dream through the use of parallelism.

During the beginning of the novel, George, a farmer, describes the common life of farmers and people, and why they can not reach their dreams. He states, " Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place. They come to a ranch an' work up a stake and then they go inta town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch. They ain't got nothing to look forward to" (14). He uses parallelism to show and emphasize that the people realize they can not get farther in life because of all the troubles they face. Their basis in life is the need to work to survive; making their dreams unreachable. Besides using parallelism to portray reasons the farmers have nothing to look forward to, making it impossible to reach their dreams, Steinbeck also uses long sentence; syntax to represent the impossibility of reaching the American Dream. The use of long sentence

syntax reflects on the impossibility of an African American man having the ability to reach the American Dream. Crooks, a black man, who already struggles with reaching his dreams because of his skin color also can not reach them because he is crippled. Crooks is a permanent member on Curley's farm because of his injuries. Steinbeck portrays Crooks as a permanent member on the farm by describing his room, " scattered about the floor were a number of personal possessions; for being alone, Crooks could leave [leaves] his things about, and being a stable buck and a cripple, he was more permanent than the other men, and he had accumulated more possessions than he could carry on his back" (66). Reflecting on Crooks' possessions shows that he has accepted that his injuries will hold him back from succeeding further in life, making it impossible for him to strive and reach his dreams. Just as this uses long sentence syntax to reflect how Crooks accepts the position he is in and does not change the way he lives, holding him back from reaching the American Dream. Steinbeck also uses personification to portray the impossibility of reaching the American Dream. Steinbeck's use of personification creates a vivid picture on an impossibility of the American Dream. Mrs. Curley, the wife of a farm owner, talks about her many dreams, but never pursues them. She says, " I tell you I ain't used to livin' like this. I coulda [could have] made somethin' of myself. " ... " maybe I will yet. And then her words tumbled out in a passion of communication, as though she hurried before her listener could be taken away" (88). The use of personification, giving a non-human object human qualities; " her words tumbled out in a passion of communication, " shows that she can talk about what she wishes and dreams about. But if she does

not strive to accomplish them, then she will not reach the American Dream. The use of personification by the way Mrs. Curley expresses her dreams shows that she is constantly imaging her future, but she is accepting the position she is in and not striving to reach her dreams. In every case, accepting and being content with the situation the people are placed in denies them of their ability to reach the American Dream. All seen above, Steinbeck incorporates rhetoric in order to portray the impossibility of reaching the American Dream. Many people have dreams, but they do not reach them because they are content with the way they are living or do not have the endurance to strive to reach their dreams. Through the use of parallelism, Steinbeck uses George, a main character in the book, states that the farmers during the time had nothing to look forward to because work was most important to survive. With the use of syntax, Steinbeck describes Crooks and how he does not strive to go any further in his life because he is content with his situation at the farm. Also, Steinbeck's use of personification with the way Mrs. Curley talks about how she wants to reach the American Dream, but she does not pursue her dreams, helps explain his point of view. These examples help explain Steinbeck's point of view of the impossibility of reaching the American Dream. Striving and having endurance is the key to open a locked door to reach the American Dream, rather than accepting and being content with a position in life, keeping the people behind a locked door, denying the availability to pursue their dreams. Works Cited Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men*. New York: the Penguin Group, 1993. 14-88. Print.