**American Dream in *"Of Mice and Men"***

The American Dream is a representation of hope for a better life. This notion is a wake-up call to all, irrespective of current status, that one's life can be successful, especially when one pursues the preset goals of freedom and social and economic privileges. Authors have inherited this concept and authored stories representing the American Dream's achievement. In such stories, authors depict characters that go through challenging moments in life but remain hopeful that big things are achievable regardless of unfortunate situations. For example, in *Of Mice and Men,* John Steinbeck creates a story of different characters living in undesirable conditions but hoping to make their lives better through hard work and by defying all odds against them. The *Of Mice and Men* story paints the theme of the American Dream through an environment of limiting factors experienced during the Great Depression as Americans pursued the dreams through the hope for prosperity shared by George, Lennie, Candy, and Curley's wife.

**An Environment of Limiting Factors Experienced During the Great Depression**

First, the story paints a picture of misery among the characters in the story, which is symbolic of the Great Depression that engulfed the hope of many Americans seeking to attain the American Dream. According to Hauhart (2016), the Great Depression had unprecedented impacts on the realization of the American Dream, especially on the morale of Americans. During the crisis, Americans were primarily reduced to less self, making American Dream almost impossible. In the story, the author paints a picture of misery among the characters, who wish to achieve unimaginable goals amid countless limitations. One night, Lennie suggests having ketchup. However, George responds miserably, saying, "Well, we ain't (sic) got any" (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 4). George feels they are at their lowest point in life but still determined to achieve their goals. These problems represent the Great Depression that crippled Americans' hope to achieve the American Dream, showing the story is built around the achievement of the Dream.

**George and Lennie, Candy and Curley's Wife's Dreams**

George and Lennie's dreams of sustainable life, peace, and independence represent the American dream's ideals. Leonhardt (2016) notes that the American Dream is a vision where people who are presently struggling envisage a future full of opportunities for shared economic prosperity and high living standards. In this case, people work hard and seize available opportunities to live up to their dreams. The story paints a picture of George and Lennie's determination to succeed. George notes, "O.K. Someday-we're (sic) gonna (sic) get the jack together, and we're (sic) gonna (sic) have a little house and a couple of acres an' a (sic) cow and some pigs" (Steinbeck 1937, p. 5). With the farm, George and Lennie can generate economic advantages that would secure their economic independence. In the American Dream, the goal for Americans, irrespective of their background characteristics, was to work to improve their economic well-being, more so, secure economic independence.

Additionally, Candy's dream in the story resembles the pursuit of the American Dream. As a worker on the same ranch as George and Lennie, Candy seeks to join hands with George and Lennie to actualize the dream of owning a farm. Pointedly, Candy sees a situation where he can donate to George and Lennie's dream. Candy suggests, "Tha's (sic) three hundred an' (sic) fifty bucks I'd put in" (Steinbeck, 1937; 22). Despite the harsh conditions and old age, he thinks of partnering with George and Lennie as the salient way to achieve independence. In the story, the author uses Candy to bring about discrimination (BBC, n.d.). Such cases were synonymous with pursuing the American Dream, where people had to overcome discrimination to make it in life. Candy goes through difficult experiences, which make his dreams seem impossible. To some Americans, especially the marginalized, the American Dream seemed unachievable, but they still had to pursue it.

Lastly, Curley's wife's wish to become an actress expresses the theme of the American Dream. Curley's wife, the representative of women in the story, dreams of becoming a renowned actress, wishing to come out of the protection and suppression exerted by Curley on her (Shayesteh and Haratyan, 2017). Unarguably, becoming a star actress is not easy, which is symbolic of how hard it is for some Americans to achieve the American Dream. In the story, Curley's wife describes her American dream to Lennie as something she could achieve herself (Steinbeck, 1937). Despite the challenges, Curley's wife pushes to realize her goal, although she fails to realize the dream. Curley's wife's failure represents how the American Dream remains unachievable to many, especially women, who are suppressed and reduced to traditional roles at home. Nevertheless, there is still hope for women who do not give up.

**Conclusion**

Undoubtedly, countless limiting factors, dreams of George and Lennie, Candy, and Curley's wife, represent the theme of the American Dream in the story. In the narration, characters aiming to make it in their lives face countless stumbling blocks, synonymous with the Great Depression, that Americans had to overcome for their dreams to remain valid. George and Lennie's dreams of owning a farm embody the spirit of the American Dream, where Americans seek economic freedom and prosperity. The two characters are determined to achieve this goal. Likewise, Candy harbors the same goal of joining George and Lennie to own a plot. Despite his challenges, Candy is confident that achieving his aims would offer him much-needed freedom. Finally, Curley's wife dreams of becoming an actress, a dream she pursues dearly. She knows achieving it will liberate her from her husband's suppression and give her freedom. All these dreams are a true reflection of the American Dream at that time.

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