**O M&M Theme Essay Plan**

Essay Q

Choose a novel or short story or work of non-fiction which explores an important theme.

By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the author has explored this theme.

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| **Introduction**  Name of text  ‘Of Mice and Men’  Name of author  John Steinbeck  Very BRIEF summary of plot   * Set in California in the 1930s * Two travelling men are trying to earn enough money to achieve their dream of owning their own land * The men face many issues in their struggle to achieve the American Dream, proving that this is often an unattainable goal   Rephrase question-mention techniques that will be discussed   * The American Dream is an important theme within the novel * American Dream=idea that capitalism is a saviour-anyone can achieve in America if they work hard enough * Steinbeck criticises this dream and portrays is as unrealistic * Steinbeck uses characterisation, key incident, dialogue and symbolism to explore this interesting theme |
| **Main Paragraph 1**  Point  Initially, the theme of the American dream is introduced in the novel through symbolism.  Context  At the beginning of the novel, Lennie and George discuss their dream of owning their own property, and working for themselves  Quotation  “’OK, some day-we’re gonna get the jack together and we’re going to have a little house an’ a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs and…’  ‘An live off the fatta the lan’,” Lennie shouted.”  Explanation   * Steinbeck emphasises this theme through his use of symbolism. * The house and land symbolise freedom and self-sufficiency for the men: the epitome of the American Dream. * This symbol is a representation of the hope that motivates both of the characters to endure the struggles they face, * illustrates the unshakeable belief they have in the concept of the American Dream: if you work hard and are dedicated and focused, you can achieve anything. |
| **Main Paragraph 2**  Point  Characterisation is used by Steinbeck to criticise the American Dream  Context  Midway through novel, Lennie encounters the black, disabled stable buck Crooks, and shares his and George’s future plan:  Quotation  ”Every damn one of ‘em’s got a little piece of land in his head. An’ never a god damn one of ‘em ever gets it. Just like heaven.’  Explanation   * Crooks is a disadvantaged character-black in a time of extreme racism, disabled, looked down on and segregated from other men * Jaded by experience of American Dream * Crooks saying American Dream is unrealistic-pessimistic outlook * Character used by Steinbeck symbolically to criticise American Dream |
| **Main Paragraph 3**  Point  In the novel, there is a key turning point in which the reality of the American Dream is destroyed for George and Lennie.  Context  At a key moment in the novel, Lennie accidentally murders Curley’s wife, ensuring life will never be the same for the pair, which George instantly realises:  Quotation  ”I think I knowed from the very first. I think I knowed we’d never do her. He usta like to hear about it so much I got to thinking maybe we would.”  Explanation   * following Lennie’s murder of Curley’s wife, George realises that their dream is just that-not a reality * innocence lost now Lennie’s violent act has been committed * key incident as affects all characters and changes paths * disillusionment with American Dream-many obstacles effect ability to achieve goals |
| **Main Paragraph 4**  Point  Ultimately, Lennie’s death at the end of the novel is symbolic of the death of The American Dream  Context  At the end of the novel, Lennie runs away after killing Curley’s wife. George must find Lennie before Curley does, to ensure he is not murdered in a horrific manner:  Quotation  ”’…Look down there acrost the river, like you can almost see the place.’  Lennie obeyed him. George looked down at his gun.”  Explanation   * Lennie still obeys George’s commands, despite his horrific act-great trust * Lennie still imagining happy future-unaware plans have changed, is naively hopeful * death symbolic of loss of hope and faith in American Dream-failure for working class to achieve this goal |
| **Conclusion**  Explain why aspect is important in novel   * The American Dream is seen as an unobtainable goal within Steinbeck’s novel * Reflects the difficulties of this time period and great despair felt by the working man.   Explain how techniques have been used to show this  Through Steinbeck’s skilful use of characterisation, symbolism and key incident, this theme makes a powerful impact on the reader, allowing them to share the disillusionment felt by Lennie and George. |