**Compare how Steinbeck suggests a dream can be dangerous in his two novellas The Pearl and Of Mice and Men.**

'Dreams can be such dangerous things; they smoulder on like fire does, and sometimes they consume us completely'. Aligning with Arthur Golden's depiction of dreams, the dangers of hoping for an unattainable vision inevitably play out in Steinbeck's novellas The Pearl and Of Mice and Men. Characters like Kino and Lennie illustrate that while it is important to have ambition, dreams can be gravely damaging when they are beyond one's scope. The risk of such damage grows in magnitude when unattainable dreams are coupled with innocence and blind hope. As both novellas conclude, it becomes increasingly evident that a dream is most dangerous at its fall.

In The Pearl and Of Mice and Men, Steinbeck implies the dangers of aspiring for unattainable and unrealistic hopes and dreams. As each protagonist's vision starts to form, the omniscient narrators comment on the unfamiliarity and abnormality of such thoughts. In The Pearl, 'pictures formed of the things Kino's mind had considered in the past and had given up as impossible'; and correspondingly, in Of Mice and Men, George and Lennie fell into silence in amazement that 'this thing they had never really believed in was coming true'. Harsh diction emphasising the dream had always been 'impossible' and 'never' believed suggests both are far beyond their scope. Further, before Kino visits the pearl buyers to sell the pearl, Juan Thomàs cautions him of getting cheated, as he has no way of '[knowing] what is a fair price'. Kino subsequently remarks that 'that is true' because '[they] are here, [they] are not there'. Steinbeck juxtaposes the separation between them and the pearl buyers to express the socioeconomic disparity, reinforcing Kino's futile strive for a dream beyond his scope. Similarly, Steinbeck continues to remind readers of the inevitable gap between the characters in Of Mice and Men and their goals. For instance, George recounts the story of their dream for Lennie, describing how they will 'build up a fire in the stove and set around it an' listen to the rain comin' down on the roof'. Immediately after, however, he exclaims that he 'ain't got time for no more', and they proceed to '[sit] by the fire and [fill] their mouths with beans'. Steinbeck heavily contrasts the dream and reality to highlight that George and Lennie wish to live a life they are inherently not equipped to live. Steinbeck utilises contrast to suggest that regardless of how attainable a dream appears, there are unavoidable risks of aspiring for something so implausible in nature.

The protagonists further pursue their dreams – despite being unattainable - with irrational, blind hope, and Steinbeck hints at the dangers of this through imagery and dramatic irony. Towards the beginning of The Pearl, the discovery of 'the Pearl of the World' initiates Kino and Juana's dream. Thereafter, Kino begins to develop unwavering faith in the pearl's value and its ability to fulfil their desires, describing it as 'the great pearl, perfect as the moon', its 'lovely grey surface' glowing with 'silver incandescence'. Steinbeck focuses imagery on the outward features of the pearl, illustrating Kino's fixation on the pearl's seemingly 'perfect' appearance and the consequent blindness he has towards the corruption and danger it holds. Further, the moon simile suggests the pearl and the vision it carries are attractive and beautiful but distant. Hence, Steinbeck implies the risks of pursuing something out of reach in blind faith. Likewise, Steinbeck hints at the dangers of Lennie's innocent yearnings in Of Mice and Men. Constantly throughout the novella, Lennie asks George to recount his favourite story, about 'the garden and about the rabbits in the cages and about the rain in the winter and the stove, and how thick the cream is'. Polysyndeton creates a fast-paced and list-like structure, emphasising Lennie's hasty and impulsive desires, a product of his innocence and unawareness of reality. Steinbeck hints that such desires, considering their impetuous nature, could bring about harmful consequences. Moreover, Kino and Lennie's blindness grows to such a magnitude they cannot see evident signs of danger. Steinbeck states that Kino 'was glancing about suspiciously, for the evil song was in his ears, shrilling against the music of the pearl'. However, even as he perceives danger, the author details that his hand 'closed tightly on the pearl again' and that it was 'warm and smooth against his skin'. Tactile imagery portrays Kino's belief in the pearl and inability to recognise that the danger may stem from the pearl itself. Lennie, too, is completely insensible towards signs of danger. Even as he '[sits] in the hay and [looks] at the little dead puppy' that he has just killed; he continues to worry about the '[tending]' the 'rabbits'. This dramatic irony emphasises the tragedies and dangers of irrationally hoping for an unattainable dream. Hence, Steinbeck’s imagery and dramatic irony in his novellas suggest that impulsive and blind hope renders an innocent dream dangerous.

Subtle hints of a dream's danger eventually play out in real, immense consequences. In The Pearl, Kino's dream is most dangerous and damaging when it finally collapses. As Kino and Juana return to their village, Steinbeck describes their eyes as glancing 'neither right nor left nor up nor down', using polysyndeton to emphasise the lack of direction, ambition, or purpose they now have in the downfall of their dream. Further, Steinbeck captures how their legs are said to be moving 'a little jerkily, like well-made wooden dolls'. The simile comparing them to a lifeless, 'wooden' toy depicts their completely stiff and desensitised state of devastation. In Of Mice and Men, the author displays a similar result of numb grief. Oblivious to the failure of the dream, Lennie’s last moment with George, revelling in the dream of ‘the fatta the lan’’brims with dramatic irony as George ‘raised the gun and steadied it.’After shooting Lennie, George sits 'stiffly on the bank' and speaks 'tiredly' so that his voice is 'almost a whisper'. Diction in words such as '[stiff]' and '[tired]' illustrate George's withdrawn and numb state, the results of finally letting go of a dream and confronting reality. Through depictions of the aftermath of a fallen dream, Steinbeck implies the dangerous and destructive nature of striving desperately for something and then having to let go of one's hope.

Dreams are of great value as they can provide us with purpose and motivation. However, in his two novellas, The Pearl and Of Mice and Men, Steinbeck suggests the risks of dreaming for something beyond one's scope with innocent and blind hope, as the protagonists, Kino and Lennie, do. Through their eventual downfall and devastation, he depicts that dreams are dangerous at their fall, as a collapsed dream can transform us into the worst versions of ourselves, destroy us, and 'consume us completely'.

**Steinbeck Intertextual Essay Marker’s Comments**

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**KU1**

*Detailed knowledge and understanding of ideas and perspectives explored in a diverse range of texts.*

There is an intelligent central thesis to the essay exploring the ways in which dreams can be dangerous and the effects of this on individuals. Their argument is consistently drawn back to the author's exploration of this concept across novellas.

**KU2**

*Extensive knowledge and understanding of the variety of language features, stylistic features, and conventions authors use to make meaning.*

There are a wide variety of devices drawn into their response, including diction, juxtaposition, contrast, polysyndeton, symbolism, dramatic irony, imagery, etc, that are connected to characterisation and ideas.

**AN2**

*Insightful analysis of how language features, stylistic features, and conventions combine to influence readers in various text types.*

The student unpacks devices and explains how the author uses them and to what effect. They follow up the evidence with analysis that connects the information to the idea being explored.

**GRADE: A**