

Writing work sample

Hope

Pandora's curiosity got the better of her. She could no longer wait to see what was in the box given to mankind. So while her husband, Epimetheus, was out, she decided that a harmless peek would cure her of the desire to see what the beautifully carved box contained. She cautiously lifted the lid and peered in. Out flew a black torrent of maladies and evils. Disease and pain escaped, followed by hatred, greed and jealousy, and they gleefully spread across the world to do their handiwork. A guilt stricken and horrified Pandora gingerly glanced back into the seemingly empty box. There, down at the very bottom, lay Hope. Gracefully, it glided into the room and told Pandora, "Whatever evils are abroad, hope never entirely leaves you; and while we have that, no amount of other ills can make us completely wretched."

The Great Depression was one of the most trying times in American history, stretching every man to his absolute limits. But at every downfall, at every dead-end, they still had hope; hope that things would get better, hope that maybe around the next bend there would be a job or that this dust storm would be the last. When all the evils of life had been thrown at them, like Pandora they looked back into the box and found hope waiting for them there. This feeling of hope is often not said, but felt, an emotion that is written in between the lines using specific imagery and language ~~to portray it~~. Karen Hesse's novel, Out of the Dust, and John Steinbeck's, The Grapes of Wrath, capture the emotion of hope through the use of imagery.

Hesse's novel portrays this hope as a desperate need for rain to come and the crops to grow by creating specific images of what occurs. "If Daddy gets five bushels to his acre / it'll be a miracle," Billie Jo says in June of 1934 (45). Here Hesse uses the desperation of her ^{Billie Jo's} situation to amplify the hope that she has for these five bushels because we know that five acres can produce much more. "Quarter inch of rain / is nothing to complain about. It'll help the plants above ground, and start the new seeds growing" (55). During May of 1935 it rains for three days and "The rain has brought back some grass / Joe De La Flor is singing in his saddle again" (180). She hopes that this will be the last dust storm, that the rain will dampen the dust and the plants will hold the soil down. Even Joe De La Flor believes that the rain will stop the storms and sings for it. Billie Jo's telling of Joe singing gives the feeling that he is hopeful for the future, that things are looking better. Hope is written into each vignette as a mood, created through her use of language and the way that each is structured. The feeling that she describes, that desperate need or hope for the dust to stop, is not blatantly said, but rather felt through the emotion that she conjures by choosing what to depict.

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The Grapes of Wrath also depicts hope as a deep emotion, using images to create the feeling of hope. The Joad family arrives over the mountains and is able to see the luscious, fertile land of California "The grain fields golden in the morning, and the willow lines, the eucalyptus trees in rows. Pa sighed, 'I never knowed there was anything like her [California]'"(310). Depicted in the image Steinbeck describes, the golden grain fields in the morning, is the sense of hope. When the Joads arrive in the Weedpatch Government Camp, Steinbeck uses the imagery of order and cleanliness to conjure the security of the camp and hope for the future, "Side-meat tonight, by God! We got money for side-meat!" a man tells to another (557). Because his situation is so desperate the side meat seems like a holy thing, so full of hope. The excitement that is packed into this quote shows how this man is finally getting what he had hoped for, a good meal. Steinbeck's choice of what he describes is used to depict hope.

Both Hesse's and Steinbeck's novels have a common thread of hope that is depicted through their use of imagery. In Out of the Dust Billie Jo just wishes for five bushels, that's all, and the man in The Grapes of Wrath is ecstatic over side meat. Using simple imagery both Hesse and Steinbeck show the desperateness their situation is and how they still are willing to hope for even the smallest things. When Billie Jo chooses to tell about Joe De La Flor and Steinbeck gives us the image of the golden field, they give us the feeling of hope through the image they create. Singing and gold are both words associated with hope. And when Hope is described as glowing in "Pandora's Box," this also gives the feeling of warmth and security, and therefore hope. By creating the tone of hope Steinbeck and Hesse tell us that no matter how hard things get, hope will always be at the bottom of the box.