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Life in America

In a letter written to his wife overseas in England in 1830, weaver John Downe creates great exaggeration through hyperboles, as well as sentiment through his diction to reassure and persuade his wife that America is the place to be, and the answer to their problems; moreover that he longs for her and the kids to join him to live the American Dream.

To sell the American dream to his wife, Downe compares life in England to what it is like in America. Knowing she most likely has doubts about making this journey, he exaggerates and downplays these doubts and reassure her through the use of hyperboles. He tells the tale of how he met a farmer one day and explains how, “*I was welcome to come to his house any time; they had on the table pudding, pyes, and fruit of all kind that was in season, and preserves, pickles, vegetables, meat, and ‘everything that a person could wish’*,” (Downe), illustrating the immense comfort he receives there from other people. As well he is amazed at how much money can get him, he further states “*And I can have a barrel of cider holding for 32 gallons, for 4s., and they will lend me the barrel till I have emptied it*, (Downe), as well as “*And I can go into a store, and ‘have as much brandy as I like to drink for three half-pence and all other spirits in proportion’*,” (Downe). Downe also states how “*America is not like England, for here no man thinks himself your superior*,” (Downe), praising the difference of equality in America, as opposed to how it is currently in England. By creating this exaggeration in numerous statements such as these, he is

able to create great emphasis on how wonderful his life is so far, and the great amenities that being there entails; hoping that his wife and kids can be there to share that with him, and further causing them to yearn that as well.

To strongly convey the immense hope he has for them to make the journey to America, Downe's diction allows him to connect straight to his wife's heart and create great sentiment. He states, "*My dear Sukey, all that I want now is to see you, and the dear children here, and then I shall be happy, and not before,*" (Downe), revealing how much he misses them, as well as for that to be reciprocated. Furthermore he as well says, "*I would rather cross the Atlantic ten times than hear my children cry for victuals once,*" (Downe), helping to point out how America is the answer to the problems they have been facing, and how he so deeply wants the best for them. These statements assist in revealing his deep desires of togetherness with his family in America, as well as to give his wife this feeling as well; further motivating her to want to make the trek.

In the end, Downe wants the best for his family. For his family to be able to live a life without worries, and to be together. By creating immense exaggeration and emphasis through numerous hyperboles, he is able to help reassure her doubts of making the long journey. As well, his diction allows him to touch her heart directly by revealing his deep sense of yearning for the family to be together again and live a happy life. Because in the end, a parent wants nothing but the best for their family. To live a happy life, and to see their children grow up to be successful and happy as well. Downe is one of those many parents, trying to do all he can so that his family can live a wonderful life together.

Works Cited

Downe, John. "2003 AP English Language and Composition Free-Response Questions." *College Board*, secure-media.collegeboard.org/apc/ap03_frq_english_lang_23014.pdf. Accessed 6 Oct. 2022.