

Candy in of mice and men

Literature, Russian Literature



Candy's name has many connotations and many of which gives us an insight to the inequalities against old people in American society. Candy on the very simple and literal level means "sweet and pleasing" and shows that Candy is a very sweet, nice old man. Another connotation that springs to mind is that Candy, the old swamper, is a very friendly, honest and open man with whom you can talk about everything.

This is underlined by his name: "candid" means "not hiding one's thoughts, frank and honest".

But Candy's name has also an even deeper meaning or connotation which highlights an inequality in society in that his name- Candy- is a metaphor as much like his name, candy or sweets have a sell-by date. This portrays that in American society all workers are expendable or indispensable and after a given time they are rendered as useless.

The killing of Candy's dog is a key metaphor in the book as Candy the old handyman, aging and left with only one hand as the result of an accident, worries that the boss will soon declare him useless and demand that he leave the ranch.

Even though we learn that Candy's dog was once an impressive sheep herder, past accomplishments and current emotional ties matter little, as Carlson makes clear when he insists that Candy let him put the dog out of its misery, we see this in the line: "He ain't no good to you...why'n't you shoot him Candy?"

Candy's dog serves as a harsh reminder in American society of the fate that awaits anyone who outlives their usefulness. This situation also portrays an

inequality in society in that society views on their age and incapacabilities rather than their values and past achievements. Steinbeck throughout the novel uses Candy to portray to the reader the inequality of ageism in American in society in 1920. Through his descriptions of Candy's working and living conditions, Steinbeck highlights the frequent use of discrimination and ageism. Candy is an " old swamper", who lives in a " bunkhouse".

His possessions are a " bunk" and " an apple box". Theoretically, one should treat aged people respectfully. In our society, pensioners have a better life than employees. However, Candy is a " swamper" and he is not treated fairly. The repetition of " old" in Candy's description also emphasises that his appearance and inability to work because of his age was what many people judged Candy by. Candy because of his age and disability is an outcast on this ranch we see this when he does not go into town with the rest of the ranchworkers which highlights how excluded Candy is.

The exclusion of Candy is another indication of the inequalities in American society in that it was very ageist and discriminative. In our society pensioners are treated with a lot more respect than the average middle-aged working class citizen but we learn from this novel that society in 1920 was juxtaposed to this. Candy did not get pension or benefits for the government; the only sum of money he received was the inadequate sum of \$250 for the loss of his hand, which contributed massively to his uselessness. This is an indication in of an inequality in society as old people were not even valued by the government as there were no pensions.

Old people were poor in the 1920's because they were seen as useless by the average people and the government alike. This indicates that American

society greatly believed in the term 'survival of the fittest' and believed people should 'work until they dropped.' After Lennie leaves the ranch Candy replaces his role and becomes dependent on George: "What we gonna do now George? What we gonna do now?"

Also throughout the novel we notice Candy's vulnerability in the ranch especially when it comes to the boss. For example we see in the line: "You won't tell Curley nothing I said?" that Candy is in fact frightened of the boss and his son and knows that they have the power to get rid of Candy from the ranch and therefore would leave him with nothing.

Candy is a passive man, unable to take any independent action. Indeed, his one major act in the book - when he offers Lennie and George money in order to buy a piece of land with them - is a means by which he can become dependent on them: "An' I'll make a will an' leave my share to you guys in case I kick off" This indicates an inequality in that it shows how vulnerable old people were in American society especially once they got past the stage of being able to work as no one seen them as any use.

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