

Discrimination in of mice and men

Literature, Russian Literature



When John Steinbeck was attending Stanford, he took time off to go work on a ranch at Salinas Valley. This is where he encountered the models for many of his characters for his stories. One of them included one of his most popular and touching novellas, *Of Mice and Men*. With this book, he tried to show the hardships of the discriminated. During the period of the Great Depression, many individuals were forced into poverty and away from their families. Many began to flee to the West in search of work. However, when they reached their destination, they were not received kindly.

In the novella, *Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck thoroughly depicts, by the presence of many discriminated and oppressed individuals, that life in this time period was beyond arduous for most people because of the Great Depression and the way others perceived them. The Great Depression was an economic downturn coming before World War II. The depression occurred at different times in different countries, but in the United States, it happened during the 1930s. Historians blame the crash of the US stock market, on October 29, 1929, for igniting the Great Depression. Then, the depression quickly expanded across the world.

The Great Depression not only affected the poor, but the rich as well. Industrial production, foreign trade, and wholesale prices diminished. The loss of money from these happenings developed a state of unemployment, caused foreclosures and homes to be lost, families to separate, and extreme deflation. Unemployment rates soared through the roof. In the US, twenty-five percent of the population was out of work. Even in some countries, the rates were as high as thirty-three percent (Candling). Hope still lingered in

the air for some and the Great Depression was later used as an example as to how bad the economy could get.

Rural regions suffered the most when crop prices fell drastically. The huge drought, which occurred during the asses, contributed to this. In many plains, dust was everywhere. It was so that It was Impossible to keep a house clean and chickens would sleep earlier than usual because the darkness caused by the dust storms made them think it was night. More and more storms began to hit and many farmers lost their good farmland to the high winds. By 1934, almost 100 million acres of farmland were completely destroyed (Candling).

Many economies began to rejuvenate in the mid- asses, but in many other nations, the detrimental impact of the Great Depression lasted until the end of World War II. This tragedy was one of the most widespread, long-lasting, and deepest depression of this era. The effects of the Great Depression disturbed every race of people in America. However, African Americans were always most affected. Most African Americans were out of work and whites demanded that they be fired If a white person was unemployed.

Racial violence became common and lynching Increased (Sutra).

In Steinbeck novella, Crooks is a stable buck on the Salinas Valley ranch. During this He was separated from the rest of the white farmhands on the ranch. Crooks states, " I anti wanted in the bunkhouse, and you anti wanted in my room" (Steinbeck 68). This shows how African Americans were treated like animals and isolated from others because of discrimination. After being neglected, Crooks proclaims, " If I say something, why it's Just a n*****

saying it" (Steinbeck 70). Crooks has accustomed to the inequality he receives from others and turns on himself, saying negative things.

However, on a brighter note, no one would hold him responsible for anything because his words " don't mean nothing" and are ignored. The author show how African Americans' lives were hard because of racism. Steinbeck shows the hardships of a disabled man during this period of time in his novella Of Mice and Men. One would think they received special care but the worst time period a disabled person could live through is the asses. Others didn't care for them because chances were that they already had someone to take care of, whether it was themselves or a family (Barrett). They were abused and people would blame them for their problems.

Some mentally handicapped people were institutionalized. The government gave little to no protection for the disabled (Philosophy). This is similar to how a character in the story is treated. Leonie Smalls is George's friend and they are both traveling to the West in search of work, because they had to flee their hometown in the result of Lien's incident with petting a girl's mouse dress (he likes soft things). Leonie says, " George says I goat stay here an' not get in no trouble" (Steinbeck 68). In this moment, George demanded Leonie stay at the ranch while they go out to the whorehouse.

To George Milton and other workers, he is seen as a dim-wit that can only work. Leonie should be able to have some fun too. " If he finds out what a crazy Starr you are, we wont get no Job, but if he sees yah work before he hears yah talk, we're set" (Steinbeck 6). There is no doubt Leonie is a great worker, but perhaps George is a little too hard on him. At their arrival at the

ranch, the boss gets suspicious because George does all the talking. Leonie says four words and George throws a tirade at him for doing so. Even though sexism was around forever, this type of discrimination was most evident during the asses.

The typical women had an employed husband, and if they lost their job, they usually had enough resources to survive (Ware). Steinbeck depicts that with *Of Mice and Men*. Curler's wife is a victim of unfairness because of her gender. She is the wife of the boss's son, Curler. They live with no worries, but Curler's wife's actions are constricted and she has limited rights, like every other female in America at the time. She is the only woman on the ranch and is unnamed by the author which shows her unimportance - which shows sexism. " Don't you even take a look at that b****.

I don't care what she says and what she does. I seen me' poison calling Curler's wife a derogatory term for a woman, which is sexist. George, and very other farmhand on the ranch, thinks she is flirty and has " an eye for all the men on the ranch". " Won't you tell her to stay the hell home, where she belongs? " (Steinbeck 90). During this time, it was often that women stayed home with kids and chores to do around the house, while men would go out and work, wherever it was (Ware). Here Candy implies that the ranch is no place for a flirtatious woman like Curler's wife, which is a sexist stereotype.