

# The great depression of mice and men

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



The Great Depression was a time of hardship for everybody especially ranch workers. It prevented people from living the life they desired. Many people lived in poverty switching between jobs. Eventually people, like Lennie and George, began searching for jobs in California, in fact “ thousands flocked to California”. People were in search of jobs as migrant workers for fruit and vegetable fields. When there was an opening for one man, there would be at least ten men competing for it. They were willing to work for extremely low wages, even just for food.

So it was important for George and Lennie to keep their job in order to earn the money to save up for their farm. Such a condition where men are trapped and are in terrible economic conditions helps to create an emotional climate where people do not rely on others. It is also the reason why Lennie and George’s friendship is so unique, something that strikes everyone that they meet.

In a time where so few bonds are honoured because of the desire for something better and something that feeds self interest, Lennie and George demonstrate a bond that is very rare, this almost makes everyone suspicious because so very few would travel with company. African Americans, Native Americans, Mexican Americans and women were bitterly discriminated and the hardest hit during the Great Depression. They were looked at as the groups that could take jobs away from white men. Crooks represents this factor as he himself was a black American who was margined from the rest of the ranch workers because back then discrimination against black people wasn’t abolished yet meaning they were segregated from the white people which meant they couldn’t find work.

They were treated very poorly and were considered one level up from animals. , The fact that Curley's wife is able to spit so much of venom at Crooks and Candy in chapter four is representative of the fact that both men especially Crooks who was better off than most of his kind needed the work offered by the ranch and couldn't speak against her, as she is right in that a word to Curley will force them back to unemployment, at best. (ADD QUOTE)

The Great Depression also changed the family in several ways. Many couples delayed getting married, and divorce rates and birth rates dropped. Some men also abandoned their families. A 1940 poll revealed that 1.5 million married women had been abandoned by their husbands. We see that most of the time Curley and his wife who have recently been married find it difficult to be together, hardly seeing each other. Curley's wife is frustrated by this and goes and seeks attention from the other ranch workers causing Curley to become jealous. Besides her husband's jealousy, Curley's wife's social status also restricts her freedom.

In the 1930's, during the Great Depression, the social status of women was quite low. Men did not take women seriously and the major role of women was to cook, clean, and raise the children. Curley's wife is a perfect example of how women were viewed in the early 20th century. She was treated like property to Curley and was not given a name being referred to only as 'Curley's wife'. To conclude, with women having such low social status during the Great depression Steinbeck's uses this as a main aspect in Curley's wife's character to show us how the great depression can cause a person to become emotionally unstable.( ADD QUOTE) Steinbeck uses sacrifices in the novella to show how the great depression gave no hope for America's

citizens; The fact that George made the decision to shoot Lennie during the Great Depression was symbolic because it was one of many examples of people trying to protect the people they cared about from the effects of the Depression.

George shooting Lennie was similar to Candy deciding to put his old dog down, or Slim drowning the puppies. All of these decisions were meant to save them from a worse fate. If Candy had not had the dog put down, or Slim had not drowned the puppies, they most likely would have suffered until they eventually passed away. George makes the decision to end Lennie's life before he has to suffer a miserable death by Curley's hand. The fact that Lennie is talking about their American Dream is even more symbolic, for the reason that it wouldn't be reached, just like many people's American Dream's during the Depression.

We can clearly see that although the characters may appear different they, like every other person in American is going through the same thing, . It is only because of the Great Depression and the problems caused within it that everyone, despite differences in background and experience, feels the same pressure bearing down on them. Steinbeck may have chosen to have a circular plot to show that no circle has an ending, in a way the plot is like a representation to show the dead end existence of the Great Depression which was a time of misery, no hope and great sacrifices...