

Speech: gilbert grape of mice and men adversity essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Good morning year 11 and teachers. My class has been studying the concept of 'Adversity' which is all about the hardship, misfortune and untoward conditions in a person's life.

John Steinbeck's novel 'Of Mice and Men' and What's eating Gilbert Grape' a movie directed by Lasse Hallstrom both thoroughly examine the social and economic adversities which prevailed in their contexts. 'Of Mice and Men' is a novel which pursues the plight of two migratory workers who are looking for more work after the developmentally challenged Lennie gets them into trouble at the last job.

The text is set in 1930s California during the depression, in a rural town with limited social and economic prospect. Steinbeck encourages the reader to empathise with the characters, which positions the reader to better understand the hardships faced in this context.

A main feature of this text is the recurring motif of George and Lennie's dream farm. The farm represents freedom from all the pair's current hardships, a place where they can be self-sufficient, and free from the social constraints that exist due to Lennie's disability.

By including this dream farm, Steinbeck hopes to assist the reader in understanding the social attitudes towards disabilities. Another value that can be taken from the novel is the concept of the inauspicious outcomes for the carer of a person such as Lennie.

Through the use of a resentful tone, when George says "I could get along so easy and so nice if I didn't have you on my tail.", Steinbeck conveys to the

reader, that George is unhappy with the strain looking after Lennie puts on his life.

The impact this has on the reader, is supposed to give understanding of the social and economic repercussion on the protector. 'Of mice and men' attempts to position the reader in ways so that they gain a full understanding of the concept of adversity, from the straight out nature of adversity, to the flow on effects of caring for a person who is in a state of affliction.

The other text we studied on my class was the movie 'What's eating Gilbert grape' directed by Lasse Hallstrom.

This text too is set in a rural American town with limited social and economic prospect, however it is set in a more recent context of the 1980s. The movie is about a dysfunctional family living through many different sources of adversity, a morbidly obese mother, no father, a son with a similar development disability to Lennie and worst of all is their location, being such a small town, it has no facilities to support the family. In this text, two of the characters suffer conditions which are, on a social level, very disabling due to the lack of understanding by the society of their context.

The mother Bonnie is perceived as a sort of sideshow belonging in the circus.

When she is spotted outside the police station after retrieving Arnie from yet another mishap, everyone around stares at her and one man goes so far as to take a photo. This explores the nature of the social condition under which Bonnie suffers. The technique of slow motion is utilised to reveal Bonnie's

inner turmoil as well as reflecting the town's narrow minded attitude. The event affirms the idea of the social adversities faced by the grape family.

Like the novel, the family in this movie strongly portrays the strain, a person who requires extensive care, puts on those around them.

Comparing the movie and the novel, you gain an understanding for the true hardships that a person can suffer, and the flow on effect of having to deal with this affliction. These two texts provide insight into the changing nature of society's attitudes towards those more vulnerable by comparing their ideas over their changing contexts.