

The Analysis of Loneliness theme in of Mice and Men

O. KH. Ganiyeva¹ Z. T. Rajabova²

Abstract: A Pulitzer Prize and Nobel Prize recipient for his literary works, John Steinbeck is a preeminent figure in 20th-century American literature. In addition, he has made a significant contribution to world literature through the unique writing style and locations of his books. The lives of the lonely characters that is shown in the book "Of Mice and Men" as the key topics of the work is about to be thoroughly studied in the following article. Steinbeck touches on an issue in his account of what it means to be human: the nature of loneliness.

Keywords: John Steinbeck, style, language, loneliness, discrimination, American dream, solitude.

1. Introduction

John Steinbeck is an American author who has written extensively about important topics, real-life events, and the people in their lives. As a well-known author, John Steinbeck has contributed significantly to world literature and is regarded as one of the best writers of the 20th century. For "his realistic and inventive writings, combining as they do sympathetic humor and strong social awareness," he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962. He has been called "a giant of American letters."

2. Main part

The main theme of Steinbeck's novel "Of Mice and Men" was that it was almost impossible to achieve the American dream in the face of enormous natural and economic difficulties, and it explained the failure of the American dream. The novel dealt with loneliness and its dangers, powerlessness, economic depression, friendship and covers several themes such as human nature, the plight of the working class, and hope for a bright future. It also examined various issues, including racism, discrimination, and other forms of discrimination in the case of single people seeking happiness. This novel portrayed loneliness as a complex emotion through Lennie, George, Candy, Curley's wife, and Crooks. The novel began, "A few miles from Soledad," because the name of the city depicted in the poem was Soledad, which translated to "solitude" in Spanish, and therefore, it was seen as an important theme in this work. The work depicted the Great Depression when unemployment was high and the unemployed population felt alienated from society. The characters of this novel were different from the others on the ranch: Candy was older than the others; Crooks was the only black person and Curley's wife is the only woman on the ranch. Because of these factors, the characters became isolated from others and the other people on the ranch and also, isolated them from society by treating them badly. Steinbeck's skill in depicting the motif of loneliness in the novel was that he did not tell the reason for loneliness of each character, but we could understand the reasons for it from the happening events.

George Milton was the first of the characters to be affected by loneliness in "Of Mice and Men". For a long time, he took care of Lennie when he was mentally weak and unable to cope. Lennie always unknowingly got himself into big trouble, which would be detrimental to George as well. As a result, both Lennie and George would quickly lose any jobs and they would never stay in one place for long. Then, he never had the chance to develop a relationship with anyone, and this was one of the factors

¹ Bukhara State University, Bukhara, Uzbekistan



that contributed to his loneliness. Lenny was like a baby. He refused to stand up for himself and couldn't take responsibility for his own actions. Lenny was out of touch with reality and the real world.

George and Lennie were the only characters in the novel who were friendly towards each other. With this feature, they differed from other participants, and the loneliness of other characters was clearly visible. About his relationship with Lenny, George says: "Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place." He was so lonely. He even had to play a card game by himself. At the end of the novel, George was forced to shoot Lennie, his companion and only true friend. At that moment, he lost what he had: that was his purpose in life. After that, he felt that he had fallen into a world of true loneliness and realized that he would never again be able to fill his empty dreams and hopes.

Another character who suffered from this feeling in the novel was Curley's wife. Although she was married to Curley, she hated her because she never loved her. She didn't want to talk to Curley, and she's feeling lonely because he didn't have anyone else to talk to on the ranch either. This had a dramatic effect on her behavior. It led to inappropriate flirting, sometimes infidelity and even cruelty. She often walked around the farm and asked the men there for Curley. Even though Curley didn't interest her, she was an excuse, and she behaved cynically in situations like this. He knew that this was the only way to attract the attention of others. She always considered herself the most attractive and beautiful woman. However, the farm workers did not treat her well and try to ignore her to avoid getting into trouble. Loneliness made her so unhappy and distrustful that she fed on deliberately insulting and humiliating others. Curley's wife reassured her that there were worse people than his life. Curley's wife was never mentioned by name in the novel, reflecting her lack of appreciation as a person. It seemed that her only purpose in life was to walk around and look for someone to pay attention to her. The sad part was that Curley's wife, despite her best efforts, could not find anyone to talk to her, so she feels like she is sinking into the abyss of loneliness. In his opinion, it was a pain that could only end with death.

The other female character that appeared in the book directly was Curley's wife. She was referred to as "jailbait" by many of the ranch's male characters who felt threatened by her because she was flirtatious and her husband was violent and envious. Because of how she behaved around all the men on the ranch, they thought she's a tart. The absence of Curley's wife's name from the book illustrated how little respect was shown for her as a person. Her character demonstrated the negative attitude towards women that might have been held by men such as the ranchworkers at the time. The other characters never considered her to be a valuable character; they only considered her in connection to her spouse. Curley's wife was incredibly lonely as a result of this misogyny and isolation. She looked for men to talk to so that she might interact with someone. The wife of Curley freely stated that she found her husband to be a nasty person. Due to her unfulfilled desire of becoming a movie star, Curley's wife was disappointed.

Due to his color, Crooks was physically separated from the other ranch workers. When someone approached him, he became irate and resentful due to his literal seclusion, illustrating the negative repercussions of loneliness. Crooks would want to be a part of George and Lennie's farm, but he rapidly understood that he wouldn't fit in there. Racism made him different and devalued his life. He fought loneliness through books and his work, but he realized that these things could not be replaced with a person and his company.

Another character in the play was very old and frail Candy. He had lost an arm on the farm and so he was unable to help to people on the ranch, the farm workers looked at him like a useless object. Candy was willing to join George and Lennie's dreams because it was now her dream too. He adapted to their plan to get rid of the pain of loneliness. However, Candy's recent companion dog was killed by Carlson, which made her lonely even more. His dog was also very old and the farm people didn't like him either, so they shoot him. Candy felt guilty about the dog's death; she thought I shouldn't have let a stranger kill my dog. He tried to cope with loneliness by adapting to the American dream. That loss in Candy showed the loss of George that experienced after Lennie's death. Those losses illustrated the main idea of the novel: that the mentally and physically weak people could not survive.



In the novel, Lennie's death was foretold even before he was killed. One of the characters, Slim, pointed out, "Some creatures were too weak to fight." He said that drowning his newborn puppies was an act of kindness because his dog couldn't take care of them. So, as you read the novel, you decided that killing Lennie might be kind to him. This foreshadowing was reinforced when Carlson killed Candy's old dog. This is a hint that George would kill Lennie. Although George was Lennie's killer, he was also his savior because he protected his friend from a more horrible death. Even if he didn't, he was sure to be killed because he accidentally killed Curly's wife.

Lenny's tragedy is also the tragedy of the American Dream, as neither Lennie nor George were able to achieve their dream farm. The events of the novel began with various dreams, but in the end, these dreams disappeared along with Lenny.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, John Steinbeck maintains a prominent position in both American and international literature. Even though he is a notable representative of American literature from the 20th century, his works continue to be well-liked and extensively read all over the world. The nature of dreams, loneliness, man's propensity for cruelty, helplessness and economic inequities, and the uncertainty of the future are just a few of the topics that Steinbeck explores in *Of Mice and Men*.

References:

1. Ahnebrink, L. *The Beginning of Naturalism in American Fiction*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1961.
2. *American literature of the XX century. A group of writers (2005) USA*: Boston University Press.
3. Benson, Jackson J. Ed. *The short novels of John Steinbeck: Critical Essays with a Checklist to the Steinbeck Criticism*. Durham: Duke Up 1990.
4. Crayola, Robert ' *Of Mice and Men*': A Reader's Guide to the John Steinbeck Novel. Lanham: Scarecrow, 2009.
5. Hughes, R. S. *John Steinbeck: A Study of the Short Fiction*. R.S. Hughes. Boston: Twayne, 1989.
6. Meyer, Michael J. *The Essential Criticism of John Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men'*. Lanham: Scarecrow, 2009.
7. Parini, Jay, *John Steinbeck: A Biography*, Holt Publishing, 1996.
8. Steinbeck J. *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters*. Ed. Elaine. New York: Penguin. 1976.
9. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327702124_UNVEILING_MULTIPLE_THEMES_AND_CONCERNS_A_READING_OF_JOHN_STEINBECK'S_OF_MICE_AND_MEN.
10. <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/o/of-mice-and-men/critical-essays/major-themes>
11. https://www.academia.edu/36753544/OF_MICE_AND_MEN

