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**Disability and its Intersection with Race and Class in  
William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930) and John  
Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937).**

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## **Dedications**

To :

My lovely parents.

My sisters :Houria ,Baya ,and Lynda .

My brother Ghiles.

My nephews: Iyan ,Ilias ,Maya .

My brothers- in -law: Youcif, Farid ,Mourad.

***Nawal***

To:

My lovely parents .

My sister Sara.

My brothers :Adel and Rafik.

***Nadia***

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## Abstract

*This research paper is a comparative study of William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930) and John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937). It examines the intersection of disability concern with race and class in both novels. To achieve the intended results, we borrowed concepts from disability studies theory, namely Williams Kimberle Crenshaw's theory of "Intersectionality" and Josh Lukin's theory of "Disability and Blackness". The appropriateness of these theories is explained by Lennard J. Davis who claims in his theory "Disability Studies Consciousness" that we should read any novel with disability consciousness since all the novels refer in a way or another to the issue of disability. We have divided our discussion into four chapters. The first chapter analyses disability concern in both novels. The second chapter discusses how Lennie and Darl are marginalized and ill-treated just like black people. The third chapter analyses how the disabled Lennie is exploited and lives under bad conditions like people who belong to the working class. Moreover, we discuss disability's intersection with class in *As I Lay Dying* through Cash since he has physical disability and he belongs to the lower class. In the last chapter, we tackle the attitudes of the two selected authors towards racism and Capitalism. After analyzing the two novels, we conclude that Lennie and Darl share common fates with the blacks. Second, due to his disability, Lennie lives the same experiences as people from the working class, and Cash is the best example of disability's intersection with class in *As I Lay Dying*. Third, Steinbeck and Faulkner have utterly opposing views towards racism and Capitalism.*



## Introduction

The present work is a comparative study of two novels by two American authors, namely John Steinbeck and William Faulkner. Since they are Southerner writers, it is not difficult to find some similarities between their works. Throughout this comparative study, our aim is to shed light on the apparent similarities existing between *As I Lay Dying* (1930) and *Of Mice and Men* (1937), particularly the exploration of similar themes and existing differences between the attitudes of the two selected authors.

The two novels have received a great deal of criticism from many scholars. In fact, they had been studied from three different perspectives. First, several critics studied them from the Marxist perspective. For instance, Fatma Balci in her essay applies Marxist theory on *Of Mice and Men* and she analyses the characters, particularly the protagonists<sup>1</sup>. She argues that all the workers in the ranch are exploited by the manager who is only interested in how to make profit whatever the cost<sup>2</sup>. The migrant workers are working for long hours in very bad conditions<sup>3</sup>, and they are ill-paid<sup>4</sup>. In fact, the workers are aware that they are exploited<sup>5</sup>, but they submit to that exploitation<sup>6</sup>. While applying Marxist theory on *As I Lay Dying*, Jolene Hubbs easily recognizes that Faulkner deals with class struggle. In this concern, he claims that *As I Lay Dying* powerfully reflects the terrible conditions or “rural poor whites”<sup>7</sup> in the South during 1930s<sup>8</sup>. In addition, he argues that Faulkner sympathizes with the Southerners who are exploited because they belong to the lower class<sup>9</sup>.

Second, both novels have been studied from the postcolonial perspective because of the presence of the issue of race in them. Saffen Nueman Arif analyses *Of Mice and Men* through the postcolonial lense<sup>10</sup>, and he claims that Crooks, the only black character in the novel, is not accepted by white people in the ranch and lives in isolation<sup>11</sup>. In other terms, Crook’s color causes his marginalization and loneliness<sup>12</sup>. *As I Lay Dying* is also studied



from a postcolonial angle. Even though there are no black characters in it, and there is no explicit reference to the issue of race, several critics categorize *As I Lay Dying* as a novel that deals with racism in a clever manner. Alexander Price, for instance, argues that the Bundren family particularly, Jewel and Cash, are oppressed and racialized by the head of the family Anse, who is the master in the novel<sup>13</sup>. In this concern, he claims:

Through Anse himself, the other members of the family and also characters of the novel the Bundren family is to be racialized and under control of Anse Bundren. Through his control, Anse is able to cement his position as a slave master, positioning his family as slaves. While Faulkner uses this presentation to create a compelling comment on race relations in the Depression era South, the problem of defending one's "whiteness" would continue for decades to come.<sup>14</sup>

Third, several scholars approached the two novels from a psychoanalytical perspective and analyzed the "disabled" character Lennie in *Of Mice and Men* and Darl in *As I Lay Dying*. Saffen Nueman Arif examines the psychological state of Lennie<sup>15</sup> and argues that his mental retardation is the source of his troubles<sup>16</sup>. He claims that his admiration of touching soft things is the only problem behind putting himself and his friend George in troubles, and his self destruction eventually<sup>17</sup>. Concerning Darl, Liam C. Butchart concentrates his studies on his mental state<sup>18</sup>. He argues that Darl's "insanity" is related to the different events that occurred to the family<sup>19</sup>. His mother's death affects him widely and causes his insanity at the end of the novel<sup>20</sup>. In this context, he states:

Darl is a mélange of his family members' responses to his mother's passing (...) ,leading to insanity, a tangible sign of Darl's madness, and thus unhealthy reaction to his mother's death, is when he is being taken to the asylum in Jackson.<sup>21</sup>

From the quotation above, one can understand that Addie's death makes mental Darl's state worse. It is clear that unlike his father and siblings who are selfish and careless, Darl is a very affectionate character, and his mother's death had a strong impact on him.

### **Issue and Working Hypotheses:**

From the above review of the literature, it is clear that Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* had been studied and evaluated by several critics. However,

these critics limited their research to the study of mental illness, the issue of class, or race separately in both novels, and they ignored to compare the two selected novels. In fact, there is no literary contribution that had attempted to analyze the interaction that exists between disability concern, and the issue of class, and race. In other terms, the major limit is that these critics overlooked to study disability in both novels as a social category that may influence and intersect with other social categories like race and class.

The purpose of our research is to compare *Of Mice and Men* and *As I Lay Dying* as they elaborate on disability as a new social category that interacts with two other social categories, namely race and class. In this research, we intend to study four major points. First, we shall demonstrate that disability concern is a central issue in both novels. Second, we shall examine how the disabled Lennie and Darl are marginalized and ill- treated like the blacks. Third, we will study how disability intersects with class in both novels. In *Of Mice and Men*, the disabled character Lennie is exploited and lives under terrible conditions just like people from the working class .In *As I Lay Dying*, we shall study disability's intersection with class through the character of Cash not Darl. Cash has physical disability, and he belongs to the lower class at the same time. We intend to show how Cash is the best example of disability's intersection with class in the novel. Fourth, we will not limit our research to tackle mainly the similarities existing between the two selected novels, but we will also analyze the major differences in terms of the authors' personal attitudes.

To deal with this issue , we will rely on Lennard J. Davis's *Disability Studies Reader* (fourth edition) from which we borrow some concepts like “*Disability Studies Consciousness*” developed by Davis himself, the “ *Intersectionality*” theory by Williams Kimberle Crenshaw and the theory of “*Disability and Blackness*” by Josh Lukin. We will use these tools to help us to show how disability intersects with class and race in the two selected novels. In his theory, Davis claims that any novel can be read with a “*disability studies*

*consciousness*” because every novel tackles the theme of disability in a way or another<sup>22</sup>. Second, In her theory, Crenshaw recognizes that a person may have more than one identity<sup>23</sup>, and he or she may belong to various social categories for the simple reason that the different social groups related to race, class, disability and sexual orientation interact and influence each other<sup>24</sup>. Moreover, according to Lukin, having a disability is like being black<sup>25</sup>. In other terms, disabled people do not see any difference between them and the blacks<sup>26</sup>. They believe that they are otherized and ill-treated just like “people of colour”<sup>27</sup>.

We divided this paper into two sections. The first section presents the method and the materials we need in our study. In this section, we will discuss the three concepts we had selected from Davis’s *Disability Studies Reader* (fourth edition). This section also includes the summaries of the two selected novels to permit the reader to follow our research without difficulties. The second section will be devoted to the discussion of our results. This section is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, we shall show that both novels elaborate a disability as an identity category. In the second chapter, we will discuss disability’s intersection with race in *Of Mice and Men* and *As I Lay Dying*. In the third chapter, we will analyze disability’s intersection with class in both works. In the last chapter, we will examine the differences between the two selected novels that we had noticed throughout our investigation.

## **Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Balci Fatma, “The Marxist Concept of Alienation and Exploitation in *Of Mice and Men*” D.level paper, 15hec(University of Gothenburg, 2012).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 10.

- <sup>7</sup> Jolene Hobs, "William Faulkner's Rural Modernism" University of Alabama, 465. <http://www.dcs.k12.oh.us/cms/lib07/OH16000212/Centricity/Domain/121/William%20Faulkners%20Rural%20Modernism.PDF>.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid, 465
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid, 472
- <sup>10</sup> Saffen Nueman, "we'd have our place where we belonged" : Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and the Quest for a Lost Eden "M.A/Ph.D in International Journal of Scientific Research and Innovative Technology" .Vol.2 No .2. (Koya University / Faculty of Humanities and Social Science/Department of English Kurdistan /Iraq, February 2015) .
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid, 30.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid, 30.
- <sup>13</sup> Alexander Price, "A Study of "Whiteness" in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* : The Tensions between Archaic and Emergent ideas of race" .  
<http://www.academic.edu/7528032/A-Study-of-whitess-in-William-Faulkner-s-As-I-Lay-Dying-The-Tensions-Between-Archaic-and-Emergent-Ide...>
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Saffen Nueman, "we'd have our place where we belonged: Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and the Quest for a Lost Eden" .M.A/Ph.D in International Journal of Scientific Research and Innovative Technology .Vol.2 No .2. (Koya University / Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Department of English Kurdistan /Iraq, February 2015).
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid, 29.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, 29.
- <sup>18</sup> Liam C. Butchart, "Death, Mourning and Human Selfishness: Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* Through a Freudien" (Lens .Psyart: Hyperlink Journal for the Psychological Study of the Arts, August 14, 2015). Viewed on 1 May, 2016. [http://www.psyartjournal.com/article/show/butchart-death\\_mourning\\_and\\_human\\_selfishness\\_fau](http://www.psyartjournal.com/article/show/butchart-death_mourning_and_human_selfishness_fau).
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> Lennard j. Davis, "Introduction :Normality , Power , and Culture" in *Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J .Davis (New York :Routledge ,2013),10.
- <sup>23</sup> Sharon Smith, " Black feminism and intersectionality". <http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Josh Lukin, “Disability and Blackness” in Lennard.J. Davis’s *Disability Studies Reader*, ed.Lennard J.Davis (New York: Routledge, 2013),

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

## II Methods and Materials

In this research paper, we will try to establish a comparative study between Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* in the light of three important disability studies concepts that we had selected from Lennard J. Davis's *Disability Studies Reader: Hegemony of Normalcy and Disability Studies Consciousness*, the concept of *Intersectionality*, and *Disability and Blackness*. These three concepts help us in our analysis, and facilitate the task for us.

### 1-Methods :

#### a- Hegemony of Normalcy and Disability Studies Consciousness:

This theory is developed by Lennard J. Davis in his introduction to *Disability Studies Reader*. He claims that before the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, readers rarely find protagonists in novels as disabled characters<sup>28</sup>. However, starting from the nineteenth century, novelists started to associate the protagonists with disabilities<sup>29</sup>. Moreover, he states that we should read any novel with a "*Disability Studies Consciousness*"<sup>30</sup>. For him, almost all novels make some reference in a way or another to disability<sup>31</sup>. In other terms, the issue of disability exists in all novels<sup>32</sup>. Davis turns his attention mainly to novels, and he advises readers to read any novel bearing in mind the issue of disability<sup>33</sup>. In this concern, he notes:

My point is that disabilities –studies consciousness can alter the way we see not just novels that have main characters who are disabled but any novel. In thinking through the issue of disability, I have come to see that almost any literary work will have some reference to the abnormal, to disability, and so on. I would explain this phenomenon as a result of the hegemony of normalcy (...). In fact, once one begins to notice, there really is a rare novel that does not have some characters with disabilities –characters who are lame, tubercular dying of AIDS, chronically ill, depressed, mentally ill, and so on.<sup>34</sup>

From the above quotation, we notice that Davis is calling for changing the way we read novels. If we pay attention to the minor details that we usually consider as meaningless and

unnecessary in novels, we will notice that some of them deal with the issue of disability. He wants to make us aware of the issue of disability which is inevitable and unavoidable in every literary work, particularly novels.

### **b-The Concept of Intersectionality:**

The term “intersectionality” is coined for the first time by Williams Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989<sup>35</sup>. Crenshaw is an American scholar, and she is the founder of the field of “critical race theory”<sup>36</sup>. Throughout her investigation and research, she notices that social groups related to race, class, disability, sexual orientation interact and influence each other<sup>37</sup>. Moreover, she argues that every one of us may have more than one identity at the same time<sup>38</sup>. Before her contribution, there was no critic or scholar who noticed that social categories intersect. As Nirmala Erevelles and Andrea Minear note:

With the deconstruction of essentialism, the challenge of how to theorize identity in all its complex multiplicity has preoccupied feminist scholars of color .<sup>1</sup> Kimberle Cernshaw, one of the key proponents of the theory of intersectionality,(...).<sup>39</sup>

Disability studies scholars borrowed later on this theory<sup>40</sup>. These scholars agree with Crenshaw on the fact that social categories are linked and interrelated<sup>41</sup>, and they start to study disability as a social category that influences and is influenced by other identities at the same time<sup>42</sup>. Crenshaw’s theory is very influential, and it starts to be used by critics to analyze texts so as to find if there is intersection between the social categories that exist in the same text.

### **c-Disability and Blackness:**

This theory is developed and elaborated by Josh Lukin .He recognizes that the blacks suffer daily and live under bad conditions just like people with disabilities<sup>43</sup>. From our understanding of this theory, the blacks do not see any difference between them and people with disabilities<sup>44</sup>.Because of their skin color, the blacks are otherized<sup>45</sup>, and the white people are against their full integration into the society<sup>46</sup>. In fact, the white people still believe in the superiority of the white race<sup>47</sup>, and they consider the blacks as second-class citizens<sup>48</sup>.

Moreover, they are deprived of most of their rights like the right to vote and the right to attend college<sup>49</sup>. People with disabilities have the same problems as the blacks. They live at the margin of society<sup>50</sup>, and there is no law to guarantee their rights<sup>51</sup>. For this reason, the blacks feel as if they are disabled citizens since they live the same experiences of people with disabilities<sup>52</sup>. As Gollway, blind black activist, notes:

I can remember one manager standing up and declaring very loudly that he didn't see a difference between disabled people and black people, because he was black, and he felt just as disabled person .And I think he got a big support for that statement .And I think it clearly was a dividing point ,between the way blacks saw disability and the way that black disabled people saw disability .There was a difference .<sup>53</sup>

It is worth to mention that the major similarity between the blacks and people with disabilities is the source of their suffering. In fact, it is the state that is behind their miserable conditions. The state allowed the marginalization of the blacks<sup>54</sup>, and deprived them of most of their civil rights<sup>55</sup>. Similarly, it is the state that allowed putting the disabled citizens in the institutions<sup>56</sup> and does not accept to give them the right to work and the right to attend schools<sup>57</sup>.

## **2- Materials:**

*a - As I Lay Dying* (1930)

Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* recounts the story of the Bundren family that decides to bury Addie, the dying mother, in Jefferson. Most sections of the novel are narrated by the protagonist Darl. The latter suffers from mental disability. His illness allows him to know all the hidden secrets and intentions of his siblings and father<sup>65</sup>. Accordingly, he becomes a threat to them. Cash, the only hard worker in the family, is kicked by a horse, and he becomes physically disabled. Due to his disability, Darl behaves in an illogical manner, and this is what pushes his family to put him in asylum at the end of the story.



*b-Of Mice and Men (1937)*

Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* narrates the story of George Milton and Lennie Small, two migrant workers, who dream of having a farm of their own. They are close friends, and they travel together all the time. Lennie suffers from mental retardation, and George is the only one who accepts his illness. He sympathizes with him, and he does his best to take care of him. Due to his disability, Lennie has two major problems. First, he is unable to remember the information he had been said. Second, he is fond of touching soft things especially pets .Because of his disability, Lennie gets himself and his companion into troubles. George is aware that his life will be better without Lennie, but he never thinks to desert him. Unfortunately for him, his admiration of soft things leads eventually to his death. Lennie unwillingly breaks Curley's wife's neck .He does not mean to hurt her, for he just wants to touch her hair .Curley wants to revenge, and the other workers in the ranch consider Lennie as a murderer. Lennie runs away, and George is the only one who knows where to find him. Lennie eventually is killed by his companion, and the novel ends with this tragic event.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>28</sup> Lennard J.Davis, "Introduction :Normality ,Power ,and Culture" in *Disability Studies Reader*, ed.Lennard J .Davis .(New York :Routlege ,2013),9.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 10

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>35</sup> Sharon Smith, " Black feminism and intersectionality",<http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>.

<sup>36</sup> Anna Carasthathis, “The Concept of Intersectionality in Feminist Theory” California State University, Los Angeles. *Philosophy compass* 9/5(2014):305, 10.1111/phc3.12129 [http://www.academia.edu/4894646/The\\_Concept\\_of\\_Intersectionality\\_in\\_Feminist\\_theory](http://www.academia.edu/4894646/The_Concept_of_Intersectionality_in_Feminist_theory).

<sup>37</sup> Sharon Smith, “Black feminism and intersectionality”. <http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Nirmala Erelles and Andrea Minear “Unspeakable Offences : Untangling Race and Disability in Discourses of Intersectionality” in Lennard J. Davis’s *Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis. (New York :Routledge, 2013),355.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid,358.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid,358.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid,358.

<sup>43</sup> Josh Lukin, “*Disability and Blackness*” in Lennard J. Davis’s *Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis. (New York :Routledge, 2013)

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Hansan J.E, “Jim Crow laws and Racial Segregation” (2011). Viewed on 25 August 2016 from [/eras/jim-crow-laws-and-racial-segregation/](http://eras/jim-crow-laws-and-racial-segregation/).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> The Jackson Sun “Jim Crow Laws denied blacks dignity, vote” -225 W .Lafayette Street, Jackson ,Tennessee -731

The Jackson Sun | Jackson Sun News | Jackson Sun Homes  
Jackson Sun Marketplace | Jackson Sun Jobs

<sup>48</sup> Earl Ofari Hutchinson, “Still Second Class Citizens”. Ph.D.  
<http://www.afrocentricnews.com/html/ofariclass.html>

<sup>49</sup> Dr- Pilgrim David, “Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia” “Using Objects of Intolerance to Teach Tolerance and Promote Social Justice” . Edited 2000.(Ferris State University ,Sept ,2000).

<sup>50</sup> Eric Rosenthal and Arlene Kanter, “The Right to Community Integration for People with Disabilities Under United States and International Law” .Disability Rights Education & Defence Fund.3075 Adeline Street ,Suite 210 ,Berkeley ,CA 92703 [info@dredf.org](mailto:info@dredf.org).

<sup>51</sup> Wendy Taormina-Weiss, “Rights of Persons with Disabilities in America” Published 2012-02-27 (Rev. 2016-04-10).  
<http://www.disabled-world.com/editorials/6786854.php>

<sup>52</sup> Josh Lukin, “*Disability and Blackness*” in Lennard J. Davis’ *Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis. (New York :Routledge ,2013),309.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 309.

<sup>54</sup> Hansan J.E, ”Jim Crow laws and Racial Segregation” (2011).viewed on 25 August ,2016 from /eras/jim-crow-laws-and-racial-segregation/.

<sup>55</sup> The Jackson Sun “Jim Crow Laws denied blacks dignity,vote” -225 W .Lafayette Street , Jackson , Tennessee -731-4

The Jackson Sun | Jackson Sun News | Jackson Sun Homes  
Jackson Sun Marketplace | Jackson Sun Jobs

<sup>56</sup> A Brief History of the Disability Rights Movement

[http://archive.adl.org/education/curriculum\\_connections/fall\\_2005/fall\\_2005\\_lesson5\\_history.html](http://archive.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/fall_2005/fall_2005_lesson5_history.html).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

### III. Results and Discussion:

After having studied Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* in the light of Davis's *Disability Studies Consciousness*, Crenshaw's *Intersectionality* theory, and with Lukin's *Disability and Blackness*, we noticed that both novels display disability's intersection with race and class. In fact, we study disability as a social category and not just a recurrent theme to go beyond all what had been said about them. To make it clear, we do not focus mainly on the similarities, but we also study the differences between the attitudes of the two writers.

The study revealed that in both novels disability intersects and interacts with two other social categories namely race and class. Lennie, the mentally retarded in *Of Mice and Men* shares similar experiences with Crooks, the only black character in the novella, and he shares common fates with other workers in the ranch. In other terms, due to his disability, Lennie suffers from marginalization and lives under bad conditions just like "people of colour"<sup>58</sup> and people from working class. Similarly Darl, the mentally disabled in *As I lay Dying*, is marginalized and otherized just like the blacks during 1930s in the United States of America. Cash in this novel is the best example of disability's intersection with class. He has physical disability, and he belongs to the working class. Cash is voiceless and neglected just like people with disabilities.

The study of the two novels also revealed that both authors sympathize with disabled individuals since they show how they are excluded from society and deprived of most of their rights. The two authors share a common attitude towards people with disabilities, but they have opposing views towards racism and Capitalism. Steinbeck is against racial discrimination, and he calls for equality between the white people and the blacks. However, Faulkner seems to be racist in *As I Lay Dying* and he even opposes the abolition of slavery. Moreover, Steinbeck blames capitalism for the miserable state of the workers and their

exploitation. Faulkner shows pity towards the farmers in the South, and he blames the state for the abolition of slavery which was in the favor of the Southerners. For him, people in the South will have a better life if slavery still existed.

### **Chapter One: Disability Concern in *Of Mice and Men* and *As I Lay Dying*:**

Our aim throughout this research is to study disability's intersection with the issues of race and class in *Of Mice and Men* and *As I Lay Dying*. Drawing on Davis's concept of "Disability Studies Consciousness", this chapter examines disability concern in the two selected novels. *Of Mice and Men* contains three disabled characters: Lennie, the mentally retarded, Candy, the old man, and Crooks, the only black character in the novel. Candy and Crooks have physical disability while Lennie suffers from mental one. The protagonist Darl in *As I Lay Dying* is the only one who suffers from a disability. He is joined later on by Cash whose broken leg makes him a disabled. Our focus in this chapter will be only on Lennie and Darl. Because Lennie was born with mental retardation, his life and that of his companion turn into a disaster. People with mental retardation generally find difficulties in remembering things<sup>59</sup> and their brain does not develop and progress as the brain of able-bodied persons<sup>60</sup>. Similarly, Darl suffers from mental disability. Liam C. Butchart argues that Darl is not "insane" from the very beginning<sup>61</sup>, but it is only at the end of the novel that it is clear that he suffers from mental disability<sup>62</sup>. In this concern, he claims:

Set in the fictional Yoknapatawpha county, the story follows the Bundren family as they take their, Addie, to her native county to bury her. The family includes the deceased Addie, the father, Anse, and the five children: Cash, Darl, Jewel, Dewey Dell and Vardaman. Once Addie dies, the Bundrens commence their journey. When they finally arrive in Jefferson and bury the body, Darl has gone insane and is taken away to an asylum, a symptom of the broken state of the characters and the family.<sup>63</sup>

Lennie's and Darl's disability is slightly different, but they share the same fate related to disabled citizens. In *Of Mice and Men*, it is clear that Lennie suffers from mental retardation, but in *As I Lay Dying*, it is not easy to recognize that Darl has mental illness. Lennie has three major problems that makes him a disabled character. First, he is not able to remember what is

said to him. For this reason, George always repeats what he says to him. For instance, this is at play:

“So you forgot that awlready, did you? Igotta tell you again, do I? Jesus Christ, you’re a crazy bastard !  
“I forgot,” Lennie said softly . “I tried not to forget .Honest to God I did; George.”  
“O.K\_O.K. I ‘ll tell ya again. I ain’t got nothing to do. Might jus’as spen’ all my time telling things and then you forget’em ; and I tell you again.”<sup>64</sup>

It states that Lennie is unable to remember what George says to him. Thus, George gets angry since he is obliged to repeat his speech all the time to him.

Second, because of his mental illness, Lennie is always in need of George to take care of him since he cannot survive alone. Lennie is so attached to his companion; he even imitates his actions and deeds and regards him as a model to follow. We cite the writer:

Lennie , who had been watching, imitated George exactly. He pushed himself back, drew up his knees, embraced them, looked over to George to see whether he had it just right. He pulled his hat down a little more over his eyes, the way George’s hat was .<sup>65</sup>

This implies that Lennie imitates George’s deeds. For him, George always acts in a good way, and he wants to behave and act just like him. When Lennie does something wrong, George is annoyed and nervous. Thus, Lennie imitates him so as to learn good behavior patterns. It is clear that Lennie can do anything in order to satisfy George who is the only person who cares about him.

Third, he is obsessed with touching soft things particularly pets and rabbits. However, this habit causes problems to them. For example, Lennie is wanted by the police because he touches the dress of a girl, which is perceived as a rape attempt and pushes them to leave their job. Steinbeck writes:

“I got you you can’t keep a job and you lose me job I ever’get. An’ that ain’t the worst .You do things and I got you out.” (···) “jus’ wanted to feel that girl’s dress \_ jus’ wanted to pet it like it was a mouse \_well how the hell did she know you jus’ wanted to feel her dress ? She jerks back and you hold on like it was a mouse .She yells and we got to hide in a irrigation ditch all the day with guys lookin’ for us, and we got to sneak out in the dark and outta the country.”<sup>66</sup>

The previous quotation suggests that Lennie is a trouble maker. He always gets himself and his friend into troubles, and the major factor of their problems is his obsession with soft things. He does not mean to hurt the girl with the red dress, but only George believes him.

Even if Darl appears as an able-bodied character, there are two pieces of evidence that make us sure that Darl turns “crazy” . First, in monologue 19, he starts to refer to himself in the third person<sup>67</sup>. Therefore, Darl is detached and does not recognize that he is Darl <sup>68</sup>. Faulkner writes:

Darl has gone to Jackson, They put him on the train ,laughing ,down the long car laughing, the heads turning like the heads of owls when he passed. “what are laughing at ?” I said.<sup>69</sup>

It advocates that Darl becomes crazy. Darl is speaking about himself in the third person, and he does not recognize that he and Darl are the same person.

Second, he begins to ask himself a series of questions, and he burst into laughter. His laugh has only one meaning, namely that Darl is no longer sane. The writer claims:

“Is that why you are laughing, Darl?”  
Darl is our brother, our brother Darl. Our brother Darl in a cage in Jackson where, his grimed hands lying light in the quiet interstices, looking out he foams.  
“Yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes.”<sup>70</sup>

This implies that Darl is laughing without any reason. In fact, there is no sane person in the world that will laugh when he is told that he is going to be put in an institution for ever.

Lennie was born with mental retardation while Darl’s madness was caused by his family environment <sup>71</sup>. Because Lennie was born with mental retardation, he is always in a need of someone to look after him. It is worth to mention that George is the only person who accepts Lennie’s mental disability. George promises Lennie’s aunt to take care of him, and he does his best to keep his promise. He sympathizes with Lennie’s illness and believes that it is not his own fault that he was born with such disability. George is a good friend to him, and he never thinks to desert him even though he is aware that his life will be better if he lives alone. The writer states:

“ If you don’t want me, you only jus’ got to say so, and I’ll go off in those hills right there \_right up in those hills and live by myself. An’ I won’t get no mice stole from me. “ George said ,” I want you to stay with me, Lennie. Jesus Christ, somebody’d shoot you for a coyote if you was by yourself. No, you stay with me. Your Aunt Clara t wouldn’t like you running off by yourself, even if she is dead.” <sup>72</sup>

In other words, George is able to leave Lennie to live alone because he is a trouble maker and an annoying person. However, he knows that Lennie will not survive alone due to his disability, and he does his best to keep his promise to Lennie’s aunt.

Unlike Lennie, Darl was not born with mental disability, but there are several factors that turn him “insane” . First, his family is the major cause behind his insanity<sup>73</sup>. The Bundren family is abnormal and strange. The decision to bury Addie in Jefferson makes Darl’s mental state worse<sup>74</sup>. Darl is totally against the burial of his mother’s coffin in a very far land <sup>75</sup>. In fact, he is the only one who loves his mother, and he is aware that the trip is dangerous and long ,and his mother will not be at ease in her coffin .We cite the writer:

(...) but we hadn’t no more than passed Tull’s lane when Darl begun to laugh. Setting back there on the plank seat with Cash, with his dead ma lying in her coffin at his feet, laughing. How many times I told him it’s doing such things as that that makes folks talk about him, I don’t know. <sup>76</sup>

The statement above claims that Darl starts to behave in a strange way when they are at the wagon. Darl opposes the journey<sup>77</sup>. Accordingly, his behavior becomes strange and unacceptable<sup>78</sup>. It is immoral to laugh in such a situation, but Darl acts in a careless and thoughtless way.

Because he is against the trip, he does not save his mother’s coffin from water, and he puts fire on the coffin to stop the journey. It is true that deeds Darl’s are unacceptable, but it is his family which pushes him to do so. Faulkner writes:

(...), and it seemed to me that when Jewel worked so to get her outen the river, he was going against God in a way, and then Darl seen that it looked like one of us would have to do something, I can almost believe he done right in a way. But I reckon don’t nothing excuses setting fire to a man’s barn and endangering his stock and destroying his propert that’s how I reckon a man is crazy. That’s how he can’t see eye to eye with other folks .And I reckon they ain’t nothing else to do with him but what the most folks says is right. <sup>79</sup>



Cash in this quotation concludes that what others said about Darl is true. People look at Darl as queer and strange, and Cash starts to believe that he is insane especially after putting fire on the coffin. Darl's behaviour is strange from the beginning , but he starts to lose control of his himself due to the trip<sup>80</sup>.

Second, he is an affectionate and sensitive character<sup>81</sup>. Darl is not like the other members of his family, and he does not accept the idea that he will no longer see his mother. In other terms, unlike his siblings and his father who are thoughtless and careless, Addie's death strongly affects him<sup>81</sup>, and this event worsens his mental illness<sup>82</sup>. The writer claims:

It was the sweetest thing I ever saw. It was like he knew he would never see her again, that Anse Bundren was driving him from his mother's dearh-bed, never to see her in this world again I always said Darl was different from those others. I always said that he was the only one of them that had his mother's nature, had any natural affection. Not that Jewel, the one she laboured so to bear and coddled and petted so and him flinging into tantrums or sulking spells, inventing devilement to devil her till I would frailed him time and time.<sup>83</sup>

This quotation advances the idea that Darl is not selfish and uncaring person, but he is so attached to his mother, and her death has a strong impact on him. Cora is a strong believer that Darl is an affectionate person and he is the only one who cares about his mother.

Lennie's and Darl's disability makes their behavior socially unacceptable, and this causes their alienation. Lennie's obsession with soft things is what leads him to commit a crime later on in the novel. Lennie unconsciously breaks the neck of Curley's wife while touching her hair .He does not mean any harm, but the other problem of Lennie is his inability to control himself. In this concern, Saffen Nueman Arif states:

The real problem with Lennie is that he often gets himself and his companion in trouble ; he , is, like "a big baby" in compulsive love with petting such nice "soft things" (p.90) as mice, puppies, rabbits, or a women's dresses or hair. It is Lennie's foolishness or imbecility that has caused his and George's expulsion from their job ( ...).<sup>84</sup>

In fact, he does not mean to hurt neither the girl with a red dress nor Curley's wife. Lennie is a victim of his disability, and he dies eventually because his friendship with George can no longer go further than this.

However, Darl's mental disability professes him a "queer" ability to know things in advance<sup>85</sup>. Due to his disability, Darl knows all the secrets and the hidden intentions of all the members of his family<sup>86</sup>. For instance, he knows that Jewel is an illegitimate son<sup>87</sup>, and Dewey Dell is pregnant<sup>88</sup>. In addition, Darl creates horror and panic due to his capacity. Because he knows her secret, Dewey Dell is afraid of him, and she is worried all the time. If Darl informs the family that she is pregnant, this will turn her life into a calamity. Faulkner writes:

And so it was because I could not help it. It was then, and then I saw Darl and he knew. He said he knew without the words like he told me that ma is going to die without words, and I knew he knew because if he had said he knew with words I would not have believed that he had been there and saw us. But he said he did know and I said "are you going to tell pa are you going to kill him?" Without the words (...). And that's why I can talk to him with knowing with hating because he knows<sup>89</sup>.

It suggests that Dewey Dell is sure that Darl knows her secret even though he does not say to her anything. Dewey Dell discovers this from his glances. Accordingly, she is all the time worried and anxious.

During 1930s in the United States of America, people with disabilities were otherized, and they were forced to stay in the asylum forever<sup>90</sup>. Disabled persons were not accepted simply because they were different. Lennie and Darl powerfully reflect this. Being disabled was perceived as a "shameful condition"<sup>91</sup> that causes isolation and confinement in institutions<sup>92</sup>. In the Declaration of Independence, it is said that "all men are created equal"<sup>93</sup>. However, the American society puts this principle aside and deprives the disabled citizens from their civil rights to learn, to work and so on<sup>94</sup>. According to Davis, the way the normal-bodied persons think about the abnormal is shaped by some norms created in society<sup>95</sup>. He claims that the issue of disability is "a result of the hegemony of normalcy"<sup>96</sup>. Throughout our analysis, we notice that Lennie and Darl are marginalized and ill-treated due to their disabilities. Because of his disability, it is impossible to Lennie to live as a normal person with his own people and society that is pitiless and refuses what is unusual and strange.

George is aware of the attitude of the able bodied persons towards disabled individuals, and he is conscious that people with disabilities are deprived of most of their rights. For this reason, he always tries to hide Lennie's disability. He knows that every new manager will not accept to employ a disabled person. Therefore, when the boss interviews him and Lennie, he answers in Lennie's place so as to get the job as it is mentioned in the following quotation :

“That ranch we're goin' to is right down there about a quarter mile .We're gonna go in an'see the boss . Now, look\_ I'll give him the work tickets, but you ain't gonna say a word .You jus' stand there and don't say nothing .If he finds out what a crazy bastard you are ,we won't get no job, but if he sees ya work before he hears ya ,we're set, ya got that ?  
Sure, George, sure I got it.” <sup>97</sup>

From this quotation, we understand that George tells Lennie not to speak if the new manger talks to him; he is afraid that if he recognizes him as a disabled person, he will never accept to employ them. Without the help of his companion, Lennie will remain jobless despite the fact that he has physical strength that is needed at work. In this concern, Davis argues that the able-bodied persons are behind the problems that people with disabilities faced in their daily life<sup>98</sup>. Because Lennie does not have features of a normal person, he always faces problems in his life.

Likewise, Darl, strongly reflects society's attitude towards people with disabilities in the 1930s .In fact, Darl is treated and viewed like Lennie in *Of Mice and Men*. Because of his disability, Darl is marginalized and not wanted in the family .We had already said that Darl's mental illness allows him to discover all the secrets of his family<sup>99</sup>, and he sometimes foresees what will happen<sup>100</sup>. Because of his strange capacity, Darl is despised particularly by his sister. Dewey Dell wants to get rid of her brother by any means because he is a threat to her. To get him arrested, she informs Gillespie, the owner of farm, that it is Darl who burns the barn.We cite the writer:

And then I always kind of had a idea that him and Dewey Dell kind of knowed things betwixt them. If I'd a'said it was ere a one of us she liked better than ere a other, I'd' a' said it was Darl. But when we got it filled and covered and drove out the gate and turned into the lane where them fellows was waiting, when they come out and come on him and he jerked back, it

was Dewey Dell that was on him before even Jewel could get at him. And I then believed I knew how Gillespie knew about how his barn taken fire.<sup>101</sup>

It states that Dewey Dell can no longer bear Darl's presence at home .She never reveals her hatred towards Darl until the end of the novel when the police comes to take him to the institution. Cash is surprised since he believes that their relationship is very strong, but he finds out that he is mistaken, and he discovers how Gillespie knows who burns his farm.

Moreover, we had already mentioned that Darl is utterly against the idea of burrying his mother in Jefferson<sup>102</sup>, and it is this trip that worsens his mental state<sup>103</sup>. Darl does all his best to stop the journey<sup>104</sup> and he attempts to get rid of the coffin twice. However, Jewel saves the coffin. Because of his unreasonable and unacceptable deeds, Darl is also hated by his brother Jewel. In fact, Jewel had not been a good son to his mother when she was alive, but he shows his love and care by saving her from water and fire. We cite the writer:

“Darl” I said. But he fought again ,him and Jewel and the fellow ,and the other one holding Dewey Dell and Vardaman yelling and Jewel saying, “kill him .kill the son of the bitch” (···). It's not that I, “he said, then he began to laugh .The other fellow pulled Jewel off of him and he sat there on the ground, laughing .<sup>105</sup>

This statement claims that it is not only Dewey Dell who hates Darl , but even Jewel despises him. Jewel starts to hate Darl eventually, and he is for putting him in an institution since he tried to stop the journey twice. It is clear that Darl's disability pushes Jewel to hate him and not to accept him in the family any more.

In addition to marginalization, Lennie is subject to insults. In the novella, Lennie is considered as stupid and childlike and compared to an animal. In other words, because of his difference and illness, Lennie is insulted by able -bodied persons who are not able to accept him as a disabled person. Steinbeck writes:

Slim had not moved .His calm eyes followed Lennie out the door. “ Jesus” , he said. “ He's jes' like a kid , ain't he.”

“Sure he's jes' like a kid . There ain' t no more harm in him than a kid neither, except he' s so strong .I bet he won't come in here to sleep tonight. He'd sleep right alongside that box in the barn .Well - let' im. He ain't doin' no harm out there.”<sup>106</sup>

From this quotation, it is clear that Slim and George, who are able-bodied persons, view Lennie as child. Slim is surprised when he notices that Lennie is different from him ,and he does not talk and behave in the same manner like the other workers in the ranch .

Besides, the able-bodied citizens believe that they are superior<sup>107</sup>, and they treat people with disabilities wrongly<sup>108</sup>. Because of his disability, they always cause problems to Lennie . For instance, Curley ill-treats Lennie because he recognizes that he is not an able-bodied citizen. Because of his arrogance, Curley wants to exercise his supremacy over him. We cite Steinbeck:

Candy joined the attack with joy. "Glove fulla Vaseline," he said disgustedly. Curley Glared at him. His eyes slipped on past and lighted on Lennie; and Lennie was still smiling with the delight at the memory of the ranch .  
Curley stepped over to Lennie like a terrier. "What the hell you laughin' at?  
Lennie looked blankly at him. "Huh?"  
Then Curley's rage exploded. "Come on, ya big bastard.  
Get up on your feet .No big son -of -a-bitch is gonna laugh at me. I'll show ya who's yella,"<sup>109</sup>.

It suggests that Lennie is mis-treated by Curley since he recognizes that he is different from the other workers in the farm .Curley wants to show off his strength and power at expense of Lennie .

Similarly, Darl is ill-treated by his family. His family is expected to take care of him and accepts his mental disability. However, his father decides to put him in an institution in order to get rid of him. Due to his strange capacity and queer behavior, the Bundren family especially Dewey Dell and Jewel can no longer bear the presence of a disabled person in the family. Darl becomes a threat to them, and if he remains at home, they will not live at ease.

The Bundren family eventually decides to put him in an institution. Faulkner claims:

It wasn't nothing else to do .It was either send him to Jackson ,or to have Gillespie sue us, because he knowed some way that Darl set fire to it. I don't know how he knowed, but he did. Vardaman see him do it, but he swore he never told nobody but Dewey Dell and that she told him not to tell nobody.But Gillespie knowed it. But he would' a' suspicioned it sooner or later. He could have done it that night just watching the way Darl acted .<sup>110</sup>

It states that Darl is supposed to be put in jail, but his family puts him in an asylum so that the police will not arrest him. Arguably, his family tries to protect him. However, putting him in asylum for ever is harsher than putting him in jail.

It is important to note that Steinbeck integrates Lennie into the society to show the attitudes of the able-bodied citizens towards people with disabilities. It is clear that Lennie has no place in his society, and the tragic end of the novel is very symbolic. The death of Lennie is inevitable because the disabled individuals cannot survive in a society that rejects and deprives them from most of their civil rights. The author writes:

And George raised the gun and steadied it, and he brought the muzzle of it close to the back of Lennie's head. The hand shook violently, but his face set and his hand steadied. He pulled the trigger. The crash of the shot rolled up the hills and rolled down again. Lennie jarred, and then settled slowly forward to the sand, and he lay without quivering.<sup>111</sup>

This implies that Lennie has no place in the ranch. George tries hard to integrate him into the society and he teaches him how to behave. However, his efforts are useless because the society will never accept Lennie whatever happens and “Rather than surrender him to the authorities to be hung, George chooses to execute Lennie”<sup>112</sup>.

### **Endnotes:**

<sup>58</sup>Lennard J.Davis, “The End of Identity Politics :On Disability as an Unstable Category” in *Disability Studies Reader*,ed.Lennard J.Davis (New York :Routledge ,2013),266.

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<sup>61</sup>Liam C.Butchart , “Death ,Mourning and Human Selfishness : Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* Through a Freudien (Lens .Psyart: Hyperlink Journal for the Psychological Study of the Arts, August 14,2015).Viewed on 1 May ,2016. [http:// www.psyartjournal .com/article /show/butchart – death\\_mourning\\_and\\_human\\_selfishness\\_fau](http://www.psyartjournal.com/article/show/butchart-death_mourning_and_human_selfishness_fau)

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> John Steinbeck , *Of Mice and Men* .(USA :Penguin Books ,1994),6.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid,5.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid,13.

<sup>67</sup>Terry Shannon Wiley, "Analysis of Darl's Descent into Madness in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*" . The John Cooper School ,The Woodlands, Texas. Southeast Missouri State University.  
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<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (USA:Vintage ,1996),94.

<sup>77</sup> Terry Shannon Wiley, "Analysis of Darl's Descent into Madness in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*" .The John Cooper School ,The Woodlands ,Texas. Southeast Missouri State University .  
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<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (USA:Vintage ,1996),220.

<sup>80</sup> Terry Shannon Wiley, "Analysis of Darl's Descent into Madness in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*" .The John Cooper School,The Woodlands ,Texas. Southeast Missouri State University .  
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<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

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<sup>84</sup> Saffan Nueman, " we'd have our place where we belonged" : Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and the Quest for a Lost Eden" M.A/Ph.D in International Journal of Scientific Research and Innovative Technology.Vol.2 No .2. (Koya University / Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences /Department of English Kurdistan /Iraq, February2015).

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- <sup>99</sup>A Bief History of the Disability Rights Movement .  
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- <sup>91</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>92</sup>Ibid .
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- <sup>94</sup> Eric Rosenthal and Arlene kanter , “The Right to Community Integration for People with Disabilities Under United States and International Law” . Disability Rights Education & Defence Fund.3075 Adeline Street, Suite 210, Berkeley, CA 92703 [info@dredf.org](mailto:info@dredf.org).
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## **Chapter Two: Disability's Intersection with Race in *Of Mice and Men* and *As I Lay Dying*:**

Our aim in this chapter is to study disability's intersection with the issues of race and class in *Of Mice and Men* and *As I Lay Dying*. This chapter is mainly devoted to examine disability's intersection with race in the two selected novels. Our purpose in this chapter is to show how disabled characters in the two selected novels share common fates and experiences with the blacks. To reach our aim, we rely on the concept of “Intersectionality” developed by Crenshaw and Lukin's theory of *Disability and Blackness*. According to Lukin black people feel as if they are disabled citizens<sup>113</sup>. In other words, the blacks are marginalized and otherized just like people with disabilities<sup>114</sup>. While applying this theory on *Of Mice and Men*, we notice that the disabled Lennie shares similar experiences with Crooks, the only black character in the novella. Both Lennie and Crooks suffer daily, and live under bad conditions. The only difference between them is the source of their suffering. Lennie suffers because of his disability while the latter suffers due to his skin colour. It is true that slavery was abolished in the United States of America, but racism still existed during 1930s mainly in the South due to the Jim Crow Laws<sup>115</sup>. The latter allowed segregation and separation of the two races in public space including transportation, schools, churches and so on<sup>116</sup>. The white people still did not accept the idea that the blacks were American citizens<sup>117</sup>.and they rejected their involvement into the white society believing that they were more superior to them<sup>118</sup>. The blacks were not only unwanted, but they were also deprived of most of their rights like the right to vote, the right to attend college<sup>119</sup>. Moreover, they were considered as second – class citizens<sup>120</sup>. In other terms, they were viewed as inferior<sup>121</sup>, and they did not deserve to be American citizens<sup>122</sup>. Crooks in *Of Mice and Men* powerfully reflects the racial discrimination during 1930s in the United States of America. Crooks is the only black character. He is called Crooks because of his physical disability. While working in the barn, he is kicked by a horse,

and his back becomes bent due to his injury, however, his disability does not prevent him from working. He is a hard worker, and he does his job properly despite the pain. Steinbeck writes:

Crooks sat on his bunk ,his shirt was out of his jeans in the back ,in one hand he held a bottle of liniment, and with the other he rubbed his spine, now and then he poured a few drops of liniment into his pink-palmed hand and reached up under his shirt to rub again, he flexed his muscles against his back and shivered <sup>123</sup>

It advances the idea that Crooks is not taken to the doctor, and no one in the ranch cares about his injury. He suffers daily, but he never complains and he does his job properly. It is clear that he is accustomed to solitude, and he does not expect help from anyone<sup>111</sup>. Steinbeck associates him with physical disability to show that the American society falls apart because of the racial discrimination that still exists in the South .In other words, he wants to say that the American society is not unified and disintegrated since skin colour is still taken into consideration.

Correspondingly, Faulkner in *As I Lay Dying* explores the issue of race in the United States of America during 1930s implicitly without engaging black characters. In this concern, Alexander Price notes:

Race relations in the postbelum American south and thus African Americans are a common aspect of the novels of William Faulkner, in *As I Lay Dying* there is “no visible black presence” <sup>1</sup>, yet by searching more deeply into the novel we can find a comment on race relations hidden within the exchanges between white members of the Bundren family <sup>124</sup>

It suggests that there is the issue of race in *As I Lay Dying* just like in most of Faulkner's works. The difference between *As I Lay Dying* and his others novels is that the theme of racism is introduced in a new manner. The author tackles this theme through the Bundren family, and he does not use major black characters .

It is necessary to mention that Steinbeck and Faulkner do not deal with issue of race in the same way. The former describes the daily suffering and the otherness of the blacks. However, the latter does not show the suffering of the blacks, and how they are treated as inferior and deprived of their civil rights. He rather wants to show that the blacks are still

segregated despite the fact that slavery was abolished since the white people in the South are not yet ready to get rid of the habit of behaving like masters, and they are still not able to accept the idea that the white people and the blacks are equal.

Steinbeck portrays how the blacks are treated as inferior and not worth to be American citizen through Crooks, and there are endless examples that show this in the novella. For instance, Crooks is not considered as a human being since he lives with animals in the barn. He is given a tiny room in the barn because he is not allowed to sleep in the bunk house with the other ranch workers. Steinbeck writes:

Crooks, the negro stable buck, had his bunk in the harness room ; a little shed that leaned off the wall of the barn , on one side of the little room there was a square four –paned window, and on the other, a narrow plank door leading into the barn, Crook’s bunk was a long box filled with straw, on which his blankets were flung on the wall by the window there were pegs on which hung broken harness in process of being mended.<sup>125</sup>

It claims that Crooks is given a room that fits animals and not human beings. All the other white workers in the ranch sleep in the bank house except Crooks who sleeps with animals. It is clear that Crooks lives under bad conditions since society does not accept him as an American citizen who should normally have the same rights as his fellow workers.

Due to skin colour, Crooks lives in total isolation. He is not allowed to enter to the bunk house nor to play cards with the white workers. He lives like a prisoner in his tiny room. He spends all the time alone and there is no contact with the outside world “cause I’ am black, they play cards in there, but I can’t play because I’ am black”<sup>126</sup>. It suggests that racial discrimination exists everywhere even in the bunk houses. Crooks receives a different treatment from the other workers in ranch. He is marginalized and has not the same rights as the white workers.

It is not easy for Crooks to live in a place where he is not wanted and otherized since the solitude is unbearable. The human being generally is sociable and in a need to

communicate and deal with other people. Therefore, to lessen his loneliness, Crooks spends his free time in reading books which become his closest friends. The writer claims:

Crooks said gently, “ maybe you can see now , you got George ,you know he’s goin’ to come back, s’pose you didn’t have nobody, s’pose you couldn’t go into the bunk house and play rummy ‘cause you was black, how ‘d you like that ? s’pose you had to sit out here an’ read books, sure you could play horseshoes till it got dark, but then you got to read books, books ain’t good, a guy needs somebody –to be near him “he whined <sup>127</sup> .

This statement implies that Crooks is jealous of Lennie since he has a close friend that takes care of him .He complains about his loneliness and otherness ,and he wishes that he has a friend to talk to when he wants. Crooks does not like reading books, but he is obliged to do this so as to spend free time.

However, Faulkner tackles the theme of racism through The Bundren family. The Bundrens are like the other Southerners who still believe in the superiority of the whites over the blacks. Despite his poverty, Anse Bundren behaves like a master since his ancestors were behaving in the same way. The major problem of the American families in the South is that they are not able to get rid of the past and act and think like their ancestors; the Bundren family is the best example. In this concern, Alexander Price argues that Anse Bundren acts like a master in the novel<sup>128</sup>. Being the head of the family, Anse has the authority at home and he dominates his children<sup>129</sup>. He deals with his children as slaves whom he wants perpetually to control.<sup>130</sup>In this context, he claims:

The slave master mode that anse positions himself in is that of the antebellum south –a specifically white master as the head of house and labor ,with black slaves under him ,through the racialization of the bundren family ,we see them as the black slaves ,owned by anse <sup>131</sup>

Price in the quotation above argues that Anse behaves like a master .Being the father gives him the right to control his children. He claims that the whole family is under his domination, and no one of his children complains or tries to stop this domination since he is the head of the family.

There are three major pieces of evidence in the novel that show how Anse behaves like a master. First, Anse puts cement on Cash's leg. He knows that cement is not good for his son because it may cause him a handicap, but he insists on putting it on his injury. Unlike Anse who is lazy, Cash is a hard worker and a very skilful carpenter. Anse is jealous of Cash's capacities, and he puts the cement to keep him under his control. We cite the writer:

“We done bought the cemen, now,” Pa says,  
 “I could last it, “Cash says “it ain't but more day .It don't bother to speak of” he looks at us, his eyes wide in his thin grey face ,questioning “it sets up so”  
 “We done bought it now” , Pa says<sup>132</sup>

It states that putting cement on Cash's leg is Anse's idea. Cash does not want to stop the journey in order to put the cement, but Anse refuses to listen to him. Clearly, when Anse takes a decision, no one in the family can object or dare to question it.

Second, Anse decides to take a new Mrs. Bundren at home without the consent of his children. Normally, Anse should inform his own children that he will remarry, but he takes this decision without giving any importance to his children's attitude towards this matter. Faulkner claims:

and there we set watching them ,with Dewey Dell's and Vardamen's mouth half open and half –et bananas in their hands and her coming around from behind Pa,looking at us like she dared ere a man (···) ‘ it ’ s cash and jewel and vardaman and dawey dell” , Pa says ,kind of hangdog and proud too ,with his teeth and all, even if he would'n look at us “meet Mrs ;bundren “he says<sup>133</sup>

It claims that Anse does only what he wants without taking into consideration the opinion of his children. He brings his new wife, and no one of his children dares to react or to object.

Third, Anse treats his youngest son as a slave. Vardaman is also under control of his father. Anse imposes himself on Vardaman, and he wants him to behave and act as he wants. Faulkner states:

“you clean that fish ,” Anse says.  
 Vardaman stops “why can' t dewey dell clean it ?” he says  
 “you clean that fish .”Anse says.  
 “aw, Pa”,Vardaman says.

“you clean it ,”Anse says ,he don’t look around ,Vardaman comes and picks up the fish<sup>134</sup>

It suggests that the members of the Bundren family do not act freely. They generally do what their father tells them to do, and they do not have the freedom to do what they want. It is clear that Anse has a total authority at home and the children receive his orders without objection. It follows that Anse represents former slave owners unable to give up on their authority as masters. Therefore, he projects those authorities on his children.

In addition to the metaphorical reference to race relations, Faulkner later on in the novel refers to the issue of race in the American society in an explicit way by using the word “nigger” <sup>135</sup> several times .Using this word makes the reader certain of the existence of the theme of racism in *As I Lay Dying* .He does so by Vardaman who compares Cash’s leg to that of a “nigger” <sup>136</sup> . We cite Faulkner:

And then Cash was still a wake, he turned his head from side to side, with his sweat on his face  
“do you want some more water on it, Cash ?”Dewey Dell said  
Leg and foot turned black, we held the lamp and looked at Cash is foot and leg where it was  
black  
“your foot looks like a nigger ‘s foot ,Cash”, I said <sup>137</sup>

From this quotation we notice that the Bundren family is Racist and still look at the blacks as inferior to them. Vardamn acquires the same beliefs because when he sees Cash’s leg becomes black, he unconsciously compares it to that of a “nigger” <sup>138</sup> . The author wants to say that the families in the South still are not able to consider the blacks equal to them.

Vardaman is the youngest member of the Bundren family, and the author chooses him to transmit his message in the novel. He was born to a Southern American family that still believes in the racial segregation and the superiority of the white people. Therefore, it is logical that he will acquire the same beliefs and thoughts of his own family and society. The writer claims:

Jewel was lying on his face, his back was red Dewey Dell put the medicine on it, the medicine was made out of butter and soot, to draw out the fire, then his back was black “does it hurt,

Jewel ?” I said “your back looks like a nigger’s Jewel” I said, cash’s foot and leg looked like a nigger’s, then they broke it off, Cash’s leg bled <sup>139</sup>

It suggests that Vardaman uses the word “nigger” <sup>140</sup> twice since he also compares Jewel’s back to that of “nigger” <sup>141</sup>. It is clear that Vardamn is the representative of the author. Faulkner in this novel is “ racist” and he it is through Vardaman that he justifies his view. He chooses Vardaman to show that the Southerners inherited the racist attitudes from their ancestors who used to look at the blacks as no more than servants.

According to John Locke, the human being was born as a “ tabula rasa” . In other terms, people are created knowing nothing about their world and milieu<sup>142</sup>, but they acquire later on habits ,rituals ,beliefs and thoughts from their family, school, society, religion and so on<sup>143</sup> . It is worth to note that Faulkner has a hidden message in the novel. It is only through Vardaman that he refers to racism openly since he wants to show that the families in the South still teach the coming generations that the blacks are inferior and second –class citizens. In other words, he wants to say that the South will never put aside the belief that the white people are more superior than the blacks whatever happens since this belief is inherited and transmitted from generation to another, and it is difficult to the South to deal with blacks as American citizens. Thus, Faulkner reproduces the racial segregation that took place in the South during 1930s.

We apply the concept of “*Intersectionality*” and Lukin’s theory “*Disability and Blackness*” on *Of Mice and Men* and we come to the conclusion that Lennie and Crooks share similar experiences just like Darl is comparable to a black person. It is worth to mention that in this chapter, we do not tackle disability and the issue of race mainly as themes but also as social categories .According to Crenshaw, social groups like gender, race, class, disability, sexual orientation generally interact and influence each other <sup>144</sup>. In the two selected novels, both writers deal with disability and race in the same work. The intersection and interaction



between these two social groups are inevitable, and this is what we attempted to prove in this chapter.

According to Lukin, the black people share similar fates and experiences with the disabled citizens<sup>145</sup>. While comparing in *Of Mice and Men* the disabled character Lennie with Crooks, we notice that they share three main elements. First, both are excluded from the society and they are viewed as others and intruders. Because of his skin colour, Crooks is otherized and he is totally rejected to be involved into the society. Steinbeck writes:

“well, he’ s a pretty nice fella , gets pretty mad some-time, but he’ s pretty nice, tell y what –know what he done Christmas ?brang a ballon o whisky right in here and says,” drink hreaty boy ,Christmas comes but once a year “the hell he did ,whole gallon ?”  
“yes sir ,jesus ,we had fun ,they let the nigger come in that night”<sup>146</sup>

It states that Crooks is not wanted in the bunk house because of his skin colour. The other workers in the ranch have fun particularly during Christmas while Crooks is obliged to stay in his room all the time because he is different .The white workers deal with him as stranger since they are not yet able to accept him as American citizen who belongs to their same society. Similarly, Lennie is unwanted in his society. Because of his disability, Lennie is dissimilar, and he does not act and behave like the able-bodied persons. People do not accept his difference and refuse his involvement into the society. Hence, society treats Lennie just like Crooks.

Second, because he belongs to “people of colour” <sup>147</sup>, Crooks is deprived of his civil rights. Crooks works in the farm just like the other workers, but he is isolated in the barn with animals. Similarly, Due to his disability, Lennie is deprived of his civil rights, particularly the right to work. The major problem of people with disabilities is that there is no piece of legislation that guarantees their civil rights<sup>148</sup>. The managers refuse to employ disabled people believing that they cannot do their job properly like able-bodied persons<sup>149</sup>. Without George’s help, Lennie will never get the job in the ranch. George does not confess to

the boss that Lennie is mentally retarded since he knows the attitude and the reactions of the managers towards people with disabilities.

Third, both are associated with negative images. The workers in the ranch make fun of Crooks and do not respect him. He is viewed as a dirty person and they say that “Crooks stinks”<sup>150</sup>. Crooks is not allowed to enter the bunk house, so it is not possible for them to know that he stinks. Similarly, Lennie is associated with negative images throughout the novella. He is viewed as a kid and stupid because he does not talk and behave like an able-bodied person. Thus, the other ranch workers and even his closest companion make fun of him. Moreover, Lennie is compared to a dog several times in the novel. He is reduced to an animal simply because he is different and he does not seem as one of them.

Similarly, disability’s intersection with race also exists in *As I Lay Dying*. Throughout our analysis of the novel, we come to the conclusion that the protagonist Darl shares the same fates as the blacks for two main reasons. First, Darl is marginalized just like “people of colour”<sup>151</sup>. Due to his disability, Darl is put in the asylum. Darl’s situation reflects exactly what was happening to people with disabilities in 1930s in the United States of America. During this episode, disabled people were forced to be put in the asylum forever<sup>152</sup>. The state denied their rights<sup>153</sup> and assumed that they cannot take part in the American society<sup>154</sup>. Living in isolated places is the fate of anyone who was born with a disability and the attitude of Bundren family towards Darl is the best example. Similarly, the blacks were born to be marginalized and treated as intruders<sup>155</sup>. We notice that there is not a difference between Darl and the blacks. Any person with disabilities and the black citizens face the rejection of people to them, and they are destined to live at the margin of their society.

Second, Darl is hated like the black citizens. Society despises disabled citizens because of their strange and unusual behaviors. Darl in the novel suffers from mental disability that pushes him to do queer and illogical things and to discover the secrets of

everyone in the family<sup>156</sup>. Therefore, the Bundren family especially Dewey Dell and Jewel despise him and they do not bear his presence at home. Faulkner wants to show that no one will accept Darl's disability and that he belongs to nowhere only the institution where he will find people like him. Similarly, the white people in the South hated the blacks<sup>157</sup>. The Southerners considered the blacks as enemies<sup>158</sup> and they did not accept that the blacks are American citizens<sup>159</sup>. Because they were hated, the blacks were not allowed to have the same civil rights as the white people<sup>160</sup>, and they were still viewed as inferior citizens<sup>161</sup>. After drawing this comparison between Darl and the blacks, it is clear that they share two major similarities. Both are marginalized and hated simply due to their difference.

It is worth to mention that Crooks is the best example of disability's intersection with race in *Of Mice and Men*. Crooks is a black and disabled character at the same time. Steinbeck associates him with physical disability so as to show that his marginalization and ill-treatment is inevitable and unavoidable. If Crooks is not otherized because of his skin colour, he will be excluded from society due to his disability. Throughout his novella, Steinbeck wants to show that people with disabilities in the 1930s suffered and lived under bad conditions like the blacks. It is clear from the novella that he sympathizes with disabled persons. We notice also that he pities the blacks who are victims of the harshness of the white society in the South. He shows through Crooks how the Southerners are not able to accept the blacks as American citizens and still believe in the superiority of the white people. The workers in the ranch see Crooks as a stranger who does not belong to their same race. Crooks is considered as useless since they believe that his presence in the farm has no importance because according to them the black people are not skilful and have no capacities. Since he gathers "people of colour"<sup>162</sup> and disabled citizens in one work, it is not difficult to recognize the interaction of disability and race because according to Crenshaw, social groups interact and influence each other in a

way or another<sup>163</sup>. Hence, Crooks and Lennie share common fates and experiences, and the only cause behind their suffering and terrible conditions is the American society.

Similarly, it is clear from the novel that Faulkner sympathizes with people with disabilities. He does not tackle the theme of disability at random, and it is through Darl that he wants to transmit his message. Despite the fact that he does not call for equality between the whites and the blacks in the novel like Steinbeck does in *Of Mice and Men*, he seems to be utterly against the otherness of the disabled citizens in the United States of America. Therefore, both authors share the same attitude towards people with disabilities.

### **Endnotes:**

<sup>113</sup>Josh Lukin, “Disability and Blackness” in Lennard J.Davis’s *Disability Studies Reader*, ed.Lennar J.Davis (New York :Routlege ,2013),

<sup>114</sup>Ibid

<sup>115</sup> Gater, Vicki .Effects of Segregation and “ Jim Crow” Laws on life in Virginia For African Americans.

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/tah-loudoun/blog/lessons/effects-of-segregation-and-jim-crow-laws-on-life-in-virginia-for-african-americans/>

<sup>116</sup>The Jackson Sun “ Jim Crow Laws denied blacks dignity,vote ” -225 W .Lafayette Street ,Jackson ,Tennessee -731-427-3333

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<sup>117</sup>HansanJ.E, “Jim Crow laws and Racial Segregation” (2011) .viewed on 25 August, 2016 from /eras/jim-crow-laws-andracial-segregation/.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid

<sup>119</sup> Dr- Pilgrim David, “Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia” Using Objects of Intolerance to Teach Tolerance and Promote Social Justice. Edited 2000.(Ferris State University ,Sept ,2000).

<sup>120</sup>Earl Ofari Hutchinson, “Still Second Class Citizens”.Ph.D.

<http://www.afrocentricnews.com/html/ofariclass.html>.

<sup>121</sup>The Jackson Sun “ Jim Crow Laws denied blacks dignity, vote ” -225 W .Lafayette Street, Jackson ,Tennessee -731-427-3333

<sup>122</sup> J.E, “Jim Crow laws and Racial Segregation” (2011).Viewed on 25 August 2016 from /eras/jim-crow-laws-andracial-segregation/.

<sup>123</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA: Penguin Books ,1994),67.

<sup>124</sup>Alexander Price, “A Study of” Whiteness “in William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* : The Tentions between Archaic and Emerdent ideas of race” .

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<sup>125</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA :Penguin Books ,1994),66.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid,68.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid,72.

<sup>128</sup> Alexander Price, “A Study of” Whiteness “in William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* :The Tentions between Archaic and Emerdent ideas of race” .

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<sup>129</sup>Ibid.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (USA:Vintage ,1996),195.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid,247-248.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid,26.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid,209.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid,209.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid,209.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid,209.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid,210.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid,210.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid,210.

<sup>142</sup> William Uzgalis, "John Locke", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). First published Sun Sep 2,2000, substantive revision Tue Jul 10,2012.  
URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/locke/>.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid

<sup>144</sup>Sharon Smith, “Black feminism and intersectionality” . <http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>

<sup>145</sup>Josh Lukin, “Disability and Blackness” in Lennard J. Davis’ s *Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York :Routledge ,2013),

<sup>146</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* ( USA: Penguin Books, 1994) ,22.

<sup>147</sup>Lennard J. Davis, “The End of Identity Politics :On Disability as an Unstable Category” in *Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York : Routledge ,2013),266.

<sup>148</sup>Wendy Taormina-Weiss, “Rights of Persons with Disabilities in America” Published 2012-02-27 (Rev. 2016-04-10)

<http://www.disabled-world.com/editorials/6786854.php>

<sup>149</sup>Polly Welch “A Brief History of Disability Rights Legislation in the United States” in *Strategies for Teaching Universal Design* (Adaptive Environments Center and MIG Communications,1995 ) .University of Oregon ,Eugene ,Oregon ,USA .

<sup>150</sup>Steinbeck, John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA: Penguin Books ,1994),68.

<sup>151</sup>Lennard J. Davis “The End of Identity Politics: On Disability as an Unstable Category” in *Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davies (New York: Routledge, 2013), 266.

<sup>152</sup> Eric Rosenthal and Arlene kanter. “The Right to Community Integration for People with Disabilities Under United States and International Law. Disability Rights Education & Defence Fund.3075 Adeline Street, Suite 210, Berkeley,CA 92703 [info@dredf.org](mailto:info@dredf.org).

<sup>153</sup>A Bief History of the Disability Rights Movement .

[http://archive.adl.org/education/curriculum\\_connections/fall\\_2005/fall\\_2005\\_lesson5\\_history.html](http://archive.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/fall_2005/fall_2005_lesson5_history.html)

<sup>154</sup>Ibid

<sup>155</sup>The Jackson Sun “Jim Crow Laws denied blacks dignity, vote” -225 W .Lafayette Street, Jackson ,Tennessee -731-427-3333

The Jackson Sun | Jackson Sun News | Jackson Sun Homes  
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<sup>156</sup>Robert W .Hamblin,” As I Lay Dying: The Oprah Book Club Lectures “.Southeast Missouri State University.

[www.semo.edu/cfs/teaching/20735.html](http://www.semo.edu/cfs/teaching/20735.html)

<sup>157</sup>HansanJ.E, “Jim Crow laws and Racial Segregation” (2011).viewed on 25 August, 2016 from /eras/jim-crow-laws-andracial-segregation/.

<sup>158</sup>Ibid.

<sup>159</sup>Ibid.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid.

<sup>162</sup>Lennard J. Davis “The End of Identity Politics: On Disability as an Unstable Categor” in *Disability Studies Reader*, ed.Lennard J.Davis (New York: Routledge ,2013),266.

<sup>163</sup> Sharon Smith, “Black feminism and intersectionality”. <http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>

### **Chapter Three: Disability's Intersection with Class in *Of Mice and Men* and *As I Lay Dying*:**

Our purpose in this chapter is to examine disability's intersection with class in *Of Mice and Men* and *As I Lay Dying*. In addition to race, disability influences another social group which is class in both novels. Hence, we will attempt to show that people with disabilities are suffering and living under bad conditions just like people from working class. In other terms, our focus in this third chapter is to show how disability intersects with class in both novels in the light of the "Intersectionality" theory. Crenshaw is a strong believer that disability may influence more than one social group at the same time<sup>164</sup>. We applied this theory on *Of Mice and Men*, and we find out that Lennie is just like people from the working class. To make it clear, we draw a comparison between Lennie and his friend George to see if there are any similarities, and if really disability influences class in *Of Mice and Men*. Similarly, disability in *As I Lay Dying* intersects with class. Our focus in this chapter will be on Cash and not on Darl since Cash is the best example of disability's intersection with class in this novel. Cash has physical disability, and he belongs to the working class at the same time. We applied Crenshaw's theory of intersection on *As I Lay Dying*, and we conclude that people with disabilities share similar fates and experiences with citizens from the working class.

People with disabilities in the 1930s were not employed<sup>165</sup>. It is believed that disabled people are unable to do their jobs properly due to their disability<sup>166</sup>, and most of the time the managers had negative attitudes towards them<sup>167</sup>. Lennie in *Of Mice and Men* reflects the rejection of the bosses of the disabled citizens. Without the help of his companion George, Lennie will never get a job in the ranch. The new boss does not recognize that he is a disabled person, and he accepts to employ him since George speaks in his place in the first meeting and contact with him. In other words, George deceives the new manager so that Lennie will be employed. We cite the writer:



“where you boys been working?”  
“up around weed ,”said George.  
“you ,too ?” to Lennie  
“yeah,him too, “said George  
The boss pointed a playful finger at Lennie .”he ain’t much of a talker ,is he ?”  
“no ,he ain’t ,(...)”<sup>168</sup>

It states that George does his best to hide Lennie’s disability. George is aware of the negative attitudes of the managers towards people with disabilities, and he is sure that if the new boss discovers that Lennie is mentally retarded, he will certainly refuse them to work in the ranch . In fact, during 1930s, it is rare when a disabled citizen is employed<sup>169</sup>, and in case he is accepted to a job, the manager will certainly take profit from his disability and exploit him as much as possible <sup>170</sup>.

The characters in *Of Mice and Men* powerfully reflect the misery and the terrible conditions of the workers during the Great Depression, a dark period in the history of United States of America<sup>171</sup>. Because of this economic crisis several companies dismissed workers <sup>172</sup> and these workers suddenly found themselves jobless and homeless at the same time <sup>173</sup>.The workers were forced to work with the knowledge that they were exploited because they did not have other choice <sup>174</sup>. Unfortunately for them, they worked for long hours<sup>175</sup> and were ill-paid and lived under bad conditions <sup>176</sup>. Some of them did not bear the exploitation and the terrible conditions, and they started to move from one place to another looking for better wages <sup>177</sup>. Those workers were called later on “migrant workers” <sup>178</sup> because they did not have a fixed job.

Equivalently, the story of *As I Lay Dying* takes place during the Great Depression <sup>179</sup>. The author describes how poverty spread all over the South due to this economic crisis<sup>180</sup>. Unlike Steinbeck who focuses in his novella on the “migrant workers” <sup>181</sup>, Faulkner turns his attention to the terrible situations and the unpleasant experiences of the farmers. It is worth to mention that the farmer’s bad situation was caused by over production in agriculture followed by the Dust Bowl<sup>182</sup>. The farmers hardly found what to eat and some of them were

forced to leave their farms looking for better conditions and jobs elsewhere<sup>183</sup>. The Bundren family in *As I Lay Dying* strongly reflects how the farmers used to live during the Great Depression, and how they struggled to survive the terrible conditions of that time.

The majority of the characters in *Of Mice and Men* are from the working class. The story takes place in a farm. Steinbeck chooses this setting to recount the daily suffering of the workers during the Great Depression. Steinbeck claims:

The bunk house was a long ,rectangular building ,inside ,the walls were whitewashed and the floor unpainted in three walls there were small ,square windows ,and in the fourth ,a solid door with a wooden latch ,against the walls were eight bunks ,five of them made up with blankets and the other three showing their burlap ticking ,over each bunk there was nailed an apple box with the opening for-ward so that it made two shelves for the personal belongings of the occupant of the bunk<sup>184</sup>

It claims that Steinbeck turns his attention to the bunk houses in this novella .Unlike Faulkner who focuses on the farmers in *As I Lay Dying*, Steinbeck prefers to deal with the “ migrant workers”<sup>185</sup> to show their miserable states, and how they are suffering in the bunk houses .

Similarly in *As I Lay Dying*, Cash exemplifies people from working class for three main reasons. First, throughout the novel, Cash is speechless; he works silently, and he never complains about the difficulties and hardships of the work. In fact, working hard makes him happy and satisfied, and he cannot imagine his life without work .Unlike the other characters, Cash has only three sections, and he does not say too much in them. Faulkner wants to show that the working class is voiceless and marginalized. No one listens to them or cares about their suffering. Second, Cash bears his pain stoically, and he never complains. His family insists to take him to Peabody. However, he refuses, and he asks them to take him to the doctor after the burial of his mother .Faulkner states:

“ won’t we get to Jefferson to-morrow ?” he says ,he is watching us, his eyes interrogatory ,intent ,and sad , “I can last it out”  
“it’ will be easier on you ,” Pa says , “it’ will keep it from rubbing together  
“I can last it,” Cash says, “ we’ll lose time stopping”<sup>186</sup>

It suggests that Cash is suffering because of his injury, but he never confesses this to his family. He does not want to be an obstacle since they should bury Addie as soon as possible. Hence, he sacrifices his health for the sake of the family. The author wants to say that people from the lower class have dignity, and they never complain despite suffering and hardships.

Third, Cash is suffering all the time, but no one provides him with help. He is neglected, and it is only Darl who sometimes looks after him. His family rather causes him a handicap by putting cement on his leg. Faulkner writes:

They wanted the cement to fix the fellow's broken leg, somehow, " why , you'll kill him ," the marshal said , " you'll cause him to lose his leg, you take him on to a doctor, and you get thing buried soon as you can " (...) " we're doing the best we can ," the father said .<sup>187</sup>

This implies that the members of the Bundren family are uncaring and thoughtless since they know that the cement is dangerous. In other words, they put the cement with the knowledge that it will cause him a handicap. It is clear that no one of them cares about his health, and what matters them is how to get to Jefferson. The writer wants to show that it is the society which is behind the suffering of people from the working class.

It is worth to note that Cash is totally the opposite of his brother Jewel who wants to belong to the upper class. Jewel does not believe in hard work, and he works hard only once in order to buy his horse. Having a horse makes him seem as someone from the upper class, and having a broken leg makes Cash to be considered as a person from the working class. We cite Faulkner:

I reckon I wouldn't never get no work done a -tall for listening to it ,I don't know if a little music ain't the nicest thing a fellow can have ,seems like when he comes in tired of a night, it ain't nothing could rest him like having a little music played and him resting<sup>188</sup>

It suggests that Cash is afraid that music will push him to neglect his work. He wants to have fun through listening to music but not at the expense of his work.

There are three pieces of evidence from the novel that show how Jewel acts and behaves as someone from the upper class. First, he refuses to go to Jefferson in the wagon

believing that he is more superior than his siblings and prefers to ride his horse. Darl and Anse try hard to convince him to keep the horse at home, but he refuses since he believes that he is different. Faulkner claims:

Pa and Cash are coming down the hill, but Jewel is going to the barn , “Jewel” ,Pa says, Jewel does not stop , “where you going?” Pa says , but Jewel does not stop , “you leave that horse here ,” Pa says , Jewel stops and looks at Pa , Jewel’s eyes look like marbles , “you leave that horse here” ,pa says “we’ll go in the wagon with ma ,like she wanted” <sup>189</sup>

It states that Jewel is arrogant, and he considers himself superior. He disobeys his father and does not respect his mother’s last wish. It is clear that having a horse pushes him to act as someone from the high class.

Second, Jewel always takes the lead as superior, and this is shown right at the beginning of the novel “and into the path again just as I come around the corner, in single file and five feet apart and jewel now in front, we go on up the path toward the foot of the bluff” <sup>190</sup>. This statement shows that Jewel is more superior than his brother Cash. The author wants to show that Jewel and Cash are utterly the opposite. The former wants to belong to the upper class, and he behaves just like them. However, the latter is a hard worker, and he believes that life without work is meaningless.

Third, Jewel in the novel is jealous of his brother Cash. Jewel is arrogant, and he believes that he is better than his siblings. He is annoyed since Cash is a very skilful carpenter, and he is afraid that he will be better than him. We cite the writer:

where every breath she draws is full of his knocking –ing and sawing where she can see him saying see see what a good one I making for you , I told him to go somewhere else I said good god do you want to see her in it <sup>191</sup>

It implies that Jewel believes that he is superior to his siblings, and he does not want to see one of them better than him. It is clear that he is annoyed since Cash builds his mother’s coffin skillfully and he does not even bear to listen to the sound of sawing. This sound

reminds him how good a carpenter Cash is .Therefore, we conclude that it is Cash that the author uses to show the suffering, marginalization and exploitation of the working class.

Moreover, in *Of Mice and Men* the workers in the ranch are exploited by the boss<sup>192</sup>. They work for eleven hours a day<sup>193</sup>, and their wages are very low<sup>194</sup>. Worse than this, the conditions of the work are terrible<sup>195</sup>. Working in the farm is not easy, and the workers make too much effort in order to finish their work. At the end of the day, the workers do not go home since they are homeless and they are obliged to sleep in the bunk house. In fact, they are aware that they are exploited<sup>196</sup>, but they know that it is not easy to find elsewhere because of the economic crisis<sup>197</sup> and believe that they are luckier than a huge number of jobless and homeless people. In this concern, Fatma Balci states:

George and Lennie, as well as the other workers ,work eleven hours a day in poor conditions ,without ever questioning it, capitalist society had normalized long workdays and bad conditions to the degree where the workers expect it before George and Lennie arrived at the ranch ,they knew what the conditions would be like ,how the boss would be and what type of job they would be doing<sup>198</sup> .

From this quotation we understand that the workers are suffering because of Capitalism. In other words, Balci argues openly that it is the major factor behind the miserable conditions of the workers. Capitalism is in favor of the wealthy people while it makes the conditions of the poor worse.

There is a constant reference in the novella to the migrant workers. The majority of the workers in the bunk house do not stay for a long period of time since they are not able to bear the exploitation and the bad conditions of the work. We cite Steinbeck:

I hardly never seen two guys travel together, you know how the hands are, they just come in and get their bunk and work for a month ,and then they quit and go out alone<sup>199</sup>.

Because they are exploited and live under bad conditions in the bunk house, the workers move from one ranch to another looking for better wages and conditions.

Likewise, Cash is exploited by his own family. He works hard for the sake of his family. In return, his family takes profit from him, and no one is interested in him. Faulkner writes:

A good carpenter ,Cash is ,he holds the two planks on the trestle ,fitted along the edges in a quarter of the finished box, he kneels and squints along the edges of them, then he lowers them and takes up the adze, a good carpenter, Addie Bundren could not want a better one, a better box to lie in <sup>200</sup>.

It suggests that the Bundren family takes profit of Cash's skills. They are not able to buy a coffin, but they make Cash to build one at hope. Cash works hard to finish the box in a very short period of time, and no one of his siblings provides help to him. He uses his skill to help his family, but when he is in need of help, they decide to put the cement on his injury with the knowledge that it will cause him to lose his leg.

In their struggle for survival in a stratified society, the workers have high hopes of improving their conditions. George and Lennie, for example, wish to have their own farm so that they will no longer be exploited. Then, they dream of having a house in order not to sleep in the bunk house any more. They are very hopeful, and they speak constantly about this dream. Steinbeck claims:

“oksome day \_ we’re gonna get the jack together and gonna have a little house and a couple of acres an’ a cow and some pigs and \_”  
“an’ live off the fatta the lan” Lennie shouted “an’ have rabbits go on George ,tell about what we’re gonna have in the garden and about the rabbits in the cages and about the rain in the winter and the stove ,and how thick the cream is on the milk like you can hardly cut it tell about that ,George<sup>201</sup>.

The statement above implies that Lennie and George have hope, and they believe that they can change their conditions in the future. It is clear that working in the ranch is unbearable, and the workers accept to work there because there is no other choice.

However, just like the workers in the ranch, Lennie and George do not accomplish their dream despite the fact that it seems easy to be achieved. Steinbeck wants to show the

workers during the Great Depression are destined to suffer and to be exploited. We cite the writer:

“You’re nuts “ crooks was scornful ,” I seen hundreds of men come by on the road an’ on the ranches ,with their bindles on their back an’ that same damn thing in their heads ,hundreds of them , they come, an’ they quit an’ go on ; an’ every damn one of ‘em got a little piece of land in his head , an’ never a god damn one of ‘em ever gets it just like heaven(···) nobody never gets to heaven ,and nobody gets no lands <sup>202</sup>.

The implication is that class struggle prevails, the poor conditions of the workers remains unchanged.

Due to his disability, Lennie is not only marginalized and ill-treated, but he is suffering and exploited. In the second chapter, we showed how Lennie is excluded from society and treated badly like black people. However, in this section we intend to compare Lennie to people from the lower class. Similarly, we compare Cash to citizens from the working class. In this chapter, our emphasis will be on Cash since he is the best example of Disability’s intersection with class .

According to Crenshaw, disability intersects with other identities like class, race, and sexual orientation<sup>203</sup>. To show how disability intersects with class in *Of Mice and Men*, we draw a comparison between Lennie and George. Lennie is a disabled person, and a worker in the ranch at the same time .He is a diligent worker, and he does his job seriously. His physical strength helps him to satisfy his manager so as to keep him working in the ranch “But if he sees ya work before he hears ya talks, we’re get set ,ya got that “<sup>204</sup>. The quotation above suggests that despite the fact that Lennie is mentally retarded, he has a very strong body. Therefore, Steinbeck sympathizes with people with disabilities, and he opposes the idea that they are not fit to get jobs.

While comparing Lennie and George, we notice that people with disabilities and individuals from the working class have a hard life, and they are living under terrible conditions. In fact, Lennie and George share two major points. First, both are exploited. The

former is exploited due to his mental disability while the latter is exploited because he belongs to the lower class. Second, both of them live under harsh conditions because they are homeless and migrant workers.

Unfortunately for him, Lennie does not recognize that he is exploited. The major problem of people with disabilities is that they are not aware that they are exploited by their manager. The bosses in 1930s generally refused to employ disabled citizens<sup>205</sup> but some of them accepted to employ them not because they pitied them but because they intended to take profit from them<sup>206</sup>. In fact, Lennie is not only exploited by his manger, but even by his companion George. George relies on Lennie's physical strength in order to find a job, and this is why he always praises his abilities at work when they met the new boss." (···) , but sure a hell of a good worker, strong as a bull"<sup>207</sup>.It states that Lennie is not aware that he is exploited by his closest friend .He believes that he takes care of him, but, in reality, he praises him so that the manger will accept them at work.

Similarly, George is exploited. He has not a fixed job, and he moves from one place to another .He looks for better conditions, for he is exploited and ill-paid<sup>208</sup>. Steinbeck states:

“Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world, they got no family they do not belong no place ,they come to a ranch an' work up a stake and then they go into town and blow their stake ,and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch they ain't got nothing to look ahead to.”<sup>209</sup>

It implies that George shares the same experiences with Lennie. George is parentless and he lives under bad conditions because he has not someone to care about him, and he is exploited at work.

The major difference between Lennie and his companion is that George is aware of his exploitation, but he cannot do anything to stop it because job opportunities were scare and exploitation was generalized<sup>210</sup>.



Moreover, Lennie has not an easy life, and he lives under bad conditions. He is homeless and parentless, and except George he has not someone to look after him or to worry about him. Steinbeck writes:

I knowed his aunt Clara, she took him when he was a baby and raised him up ,when his aunt Clara died, Lennie just come along with me out workin' got kinda used to each other after a little while<sup>211</sup>.

It states that Lennie is parentless, and thanks to George he survives. Due to his disability, he is always in need of someone to protect him. Thus, George sympathizes with Lennie's disability and promises his aunt Clara to take care of him. Similarly, the life of George is not better than Lennie's. It is true that George is an able-bodied person, but he lives just like the disabled people. George is homeless, and he is obliged to sleep where he works with a huge number of workers in the same room.

Disability also intersects with class in *As I Lay Dying*. The disabled character Cash is neglected and voiceless like people from the working class. The concept of “*Intersectionality*” by Crenshaw helps us to come to this conclusion. While studying the character Cash as a disabled person, we notice that he is neglected. The Bundren family is so selfish and does not take care of him. Cash is injured because of the journey. He was an able-bodied person, but due to the trip and the selfishness of his family he becomes a disabled citizen. Since the Bundren family is responsible for his injury, we expect that it will take him to the doctor as soon as possible. However, every one of them is interested in his own business and problems, and they are negligent towards Cash. It is only Darl, the mentally disabled character, who takes care of him. Normally his family should provide him with help, but his father's decision to put cement on Cash's leg makes us sure that his family is certainly careless and thoughtless. Faulkner claims:

“God amighty ,why didn't anse carry you to the nearest sawmill and stick your leg in the saw? Then you could have stuck his head into the saw and cured a whole family, where is

Anse, anyway? what's he up to now?" "he's takin back them spades he borrowed," he said  
 "that's right," I said, "of course he'd have to borrow a spade to bury his wife with,(...)"  
 212

It shows that Anse is a negligent father since it is his decision to put the cement on Cash's leg. Peabody gets angry when he sees Cash's state, and he puts the blame on Anse. Faulkner wants to show that people with disabilities are neglected, and the able-bodied citizens do not care about their suffering and situations.

Moreover, the disabled character Cash is voiceless. People with disabilities generally do not complain, and they accept their bad conditions. Cash in the novel seems to be someone who has a weak personality. He is all the time silent and obedient. For instance, he knows that putting cement on his leg is wrong and illogical, but he does not object or complain. The writer states:

I mix the cement in the can, stirring the slow water into the pale –green thick coils, I bring The can to the wagon where cash can see ,he lies on his back ,his thin profile in sillouette, ascetic and profound against the sky "does that look about right ?" I say .  
 "you don't want too much water ,or it won't work right ," he says 213

It implies that Cash does not mind to put the cement on his leg. Cash accepts his father's decision, and he does not question its negative effects. Faulkner wants to show that people with disabilities are voiceless, and they do not struggle to get their civil rights. It is clear that Faulkner sympathizes with the disabled people. He is calling them to be conscious and to put an end to their otherness and miserable state.

Similarly, the working class is voiceless. People from the lower class generally do nothing to change their situation and some of them accept their miserable state. For example, they hesitate to ask the government to guarantee their rights like the right of assurance and the right to vote.

It is worth to mention that Lennie is the best example of disability's intersection with class in *Of Mice and Men* .The protagonist of the novella is a person with mental retardation,

and he belongs to the working class at the same time .The theory of “*Intersectionality*” helps us to go beyond ,and to discover the unspoken and the implicit similarity between Lennie and the other workers in the ranch .We notice that what Lennie suffers from is exactly what the other ranch workers are suffering from. It is clear that Steinbeck is utterly against the exploitation of the workers, and he strongly opposes the exploitation of people with disabilities at the same time. For him, workers are victims of the economic situation of the 1930s while disabled citizens are victims of their disabilities.

Faulkner also shows in the novel sympathy to people from the working class. He pities the farmers. For this reason, he recounts their daily suffering and hardship. He also shows sympathy towards people with disabilities through the protagonist Darl and later on Cash. While analyzing Cash as a disabled and as a hard worker, we come to the conclusion that having disability is like being from working class.

### **Endnotes:**

<sup>164</sup>Sharon Smith, “Black feminism and intersectionality” . <http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>

<sup>165</sup> Welsh, Poll “A Brief History of Disability Rights Legislation in the United States” in *Strategies for Teaching Universal Design* (Adaptive Environments Center and MIG Communications,1995 ) .University of Oregon ,Eugene ,Oregon ,USA .

<sup>166</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup>Elizabeth F .Emens, “Disabling Attitude: U.S .Disability Law and The ADA Amendements Act” in Lennard J. Davis’s *Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York:Routlege ,2013),42.

<sup>168</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA: Penguin Books ,1994),23.

<sup>169</sup>A Bief History of the Disability Rights Movement

[http://archive.adl.org/education/curriculum\\_connections/fall\\_2005/fall\\_2005\\_lesson5\\_history.html](http://archive.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/fall_2005/fall_2005_lesson5_history.html)

<sup>170</sup> Anil, Lewis. “Is Goodwill Tricking or Treating its Contributions?” in *Unmasking The Exploitation of Workers with Disabilities*, submitted by Alewis on Tue, 10/29/2013-08:29 .Blogdate : Tuesday, October 29, 2013.

<sup>171</sup> Jenny Higgins, “About the Great Depression.” newfound and Labrador heritage web site. (2007) <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/politics/great-depression-government-response.php>

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>173</sup>Ibid

<sup>174</sup> Fatma Balci, "The Marxist Concept of Alienation and Exploitation in *Of Mice and Men*" D. level paper, 15hec (University of Gothenburg, 2012),10.

<sup>175</sup>Ibid,10.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid,10.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid,10.

<sup>178</sup>Hannah Maclean and Maria Elena, "How did the Great Depression affect migrant workers ? How did the Great Depression affect Mexican American migrant workers?." (28november2014).

[https://prezi.com/59\\_utyvgppj2/how-did-the-great-depression-affect-migrant-workers/](https://prezi.com/59_utyvgppj2/how-did-the-great-depression-affect-migrant-workers/)

<sup>179</sup> Jolene Hubbs, "William Faulkner 's Rural Modernism" . University of Alabama.

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<sup>180</sup>"Causes of the Great Depression." *Great Depression and the New Deal Reference Library*. Ed. Allison McNeill, Richard C. Hanes, and Sharon M. Hanes. Vol. 1: Almanac. Detroit: UXL, 2003. 1-20. *U.S.* ( 25 Aug. 2016).*History in Context*. Web

<sup>181</sup>Hannah Maclean and Maria Elena, "How did the Great Depression affect migrant workers ? How did the Great Depression affect Mexican American migrant workers?." (28november2014).

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<sup>182</sup> Claudia Reinhardt and Bill Ganzel, the Ganzel Group, "Farming in the 1930s :Migration out of the Plains" .First written published in 2003.

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA: Penguin Books ,1994),19.

<sup>185</sup>Hannah Maclean and Maria Elena , "How did the Great Depression affect migrant workers ? how did the Great Depression affect Mexican American migrant workers ?." (28november2014)

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<sup>186</sup>William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (USA:Vintage ,1996),195.

<sup>187</sup>Ibid,192.

<sup>188</sup>Ibid,245.

<sup>189</sup>Ibid,90.

<sup>190</sup>Ibid,1-2.

<sup>191</sup>Ibid,11.

<sup>192</sup> Fatma Balci , "The Marxist Concept of Alienation and Exploitation in *Of Mice and Men*" D.level paper ,15hec(University of Gothenburg, 2012),10.

<sup>193</sup>Ibid,10.

- <sup>194</sup> Ibid,10.
- <sup>195</sup> Ibid,10.
- <sup>196</sup> Ibid,10.
- <sup>197</sup> Ibid,10.
- <sup>198</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>199</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA: Penguin Books ,1994),40.
- <sup>200</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (USA:Vintage ,1996),2.
- <sup>201</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA :Penguin Books ,1994),16.
- <sup>202</sup> Ibid,73.
- <sup>203</sup> Sharon Smith , “Black feminism and intersectionality” . <http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>.
- <sup>204</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA :Penguin Books ,1994),8.
- <sup>205</sup> Polly Welch, “A Brief History of Disability Rights Legislation in the United States” in Strategies for Teaching Universal Design (Adaptive Environments Center and MIG Communications,1995 ) .University of Oregon ,Eugene, Oregon ,USA .
- <sup>206</sup> Jihan Abbas, “A Legacy of Exploitation: Intellectual Disability, Unpaid Labor ,& Disability Services” Vol:XIV-1(Canada ,summer 2012)
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- <sup>209</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA: Penguin Books, 1994), 15.
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- <sup>211</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA: Penguin Books, 1994),40.
- <sup>212</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (USA: Vintage ,1996),227-228.
- <sup>213</sup> Ibid,195.

#### Chapter Four: “ Authorial Ideology” and the Intersectionality Issue:

The study of disability and its intersection with race and class in the preceding chapters has revealed that the two authors focus on disability as an identity category similar to class and race. While both authors sympathize with the disabled, differences emerge as to the other categories. Steinbeck is more sympathetic with both categories, and he blames capitalism for their alienation<sup>214</sup>. However, Faulkner is more sympathetic with the Southern workers and farmers blaming the abolition of slavery for their poverty<sup>215</sup>.

The reading of *Of Mice and Men* shows that Steinbeck is totally against racial discrimination that existed in the 1930s. As a Southern writer, we expect that he will be for the Jim Crow Laws that allowed segregation mainly in the South<sup>216</sup>, but there are three pieces of evidence from the novella that prove the opposite. First, he shows the daily suffering of Crooks because of segregation. Crooks is not allowed to enter to the bunk house or to play cards with the other workers in the ranch and the workers in the ranch never enter his room. Crooks is all the time alone, and he has no friends to talk to. Steinbeck claims:

Candy leaned against the wall beside broken collar while he scratched the wrist stump “I been here a long time” .he said. “an’ crooks been here a long time. This’ the first time I ever been in his room.

Crooks said darkly , “guys don’t come into a colored man’s room very much .nobody been here but Slim.Slim an’ the boss” <sup>217</sup>.

It states that Crooks lives in isolation due to his skin color .Because he is different, he is otherized and marginalized. It is clear that Steinbeck is against the marginalization of the blacks. He uses Crooks to show the extent to which blacks were suffering from segregation policies. He also calls for putting an end to the racial discrimination and establishing the equality between the white people and the blacks.

To reinforce his call, Steinbeck associates Crooks with positive qualities. For example, he is educated and literate, spending most of his time reading books. Steinbeck writes:

Crooks possessed several pairs of shoes, pair of rubber boots, a big alarm clock and a single – barreled shot gun ,and he had books, too ;a tattered dictionary and a mauled copy of the California civil code for 1905, there were battered magazines and a few dirty books on a special shelf over his bunk, a pair of large gold –rimmed spectacles hung from a nail on the wall above his bed <sup>218</sup>.

It suggests that Steinbeck opposes associating the blacks with stereotypes of ignorance. The author associates Crooks with erudition to correct some negative ideas that the whites have about the blacks.

Besides, he mentions that the white people ill-treat “people of color” <sup>219</sup>. Crooks in the novel is miss-treated by Curley’s wife. We cite the author:

She closed on him. “ you know what I can do ?”  
Crooks seemed to grow smaller, and he pressed himself against the wall. “Yes, m am.”  
“Well, you keep your place then , nigger .i could get you strung up on a tree so easy it ain’t even funny.”  
Crooks had reduced himself to nothing.there was no personality, no-ego \_nothing to arouse either like or dislike. He said , “yes, ma’ am,” and his voice was toneless . <sup>220</sup>

It implies that the white people still consider the blacks as inferior. Curley’s wife deals with Crooks in very bad manner not because he is poor but because he is black .The author wants to say that the blacks continue to be ill-treated and there are no laws to protect their rights. Clearly, he is calling for bringing back dignity to the blacks by establishing laws that will protect them. Thus, it is clear that Steinbeck opposes the Jim Crow Laws which turn the life of the blacks into disaster and causes their marginalization and otherness. He calls for the equality between the white people and the blacks. His novella serves a didactic purpose calling Southerners to consider the blacks as their equals and stop their segregationist attitude.

Unlike Steinbeck who sympathizes with the blacks, Faulkner in *As I Lay Dying* sympathizes with white Southerners who were impoverished by the abolition of slavery. We had mentioned in the previous chapters that even if there are no black characters in the story, the author deals with the theme of racism in his own manner, and we had brought examples from the novel that prove this. Throughout our analysis of disability’s intersection with race in *As I Lay Dying*, we come to the conclusion that Faulkner is racist for three main

factors. First ,He does not show sympathy to the black, and he does not refer to their suffering or exclusion from society as Steinbeck does in *Of Mice and Men*. Moreover, it is through Jewel that he expresses his view towards “people of colour” <sup>221</sup>. When The Bundren family meets three black men walking in the street, they complain about the odour of the coffin. Jewel hears them, but instead of responding to them, he responds to a white man who does not say anything about the odour. Hence, for Jewel ,the blacks are absent . The writer states :

When we pass the negroes their heads turn suddenly with the expression of shock and instinctive outrage. “Great God,” one says ; what they got in that wagon ?” Jewel whirls. “Son of a bitches ,” he says .as he does so he is abreast of the white man, who has paused. It is through Jewel had gone blind for the moment, for it is the white man towards whom he whirls <sup>222</sup>.

It suggests that Jewel does not give any importance to the blacks. The author wants to mention that the blacks are needless, and they have no place in the white world. He sees them as inferior and not worthy to be American citizens.

Besides, we notice that he associates the abolition of slavery with the economic crisis in the South. We have relied on the novel and the author’s biography to come to this conclusion. In fact, it is through Anse that Faulkner shows his view towards the abolition of slavery, and there are two pieces of evidence that prove this. First, the nature of the relationship between the members of the Bundren family is strange. We had already mentioned that Anse behaves like a master. He is not able to get rid of the habit of behaving like a master like their ancestors who used to have slaves and servants. Because of the abolition of slavery, the former farmers are forced to deal with their children as slaves and exploit them. The writer wants to show that the Civil War is useless and ineffective since it does not succeed in making the Southerners to forget their past. .We cite Faulkner:

When he saw the money I said , “ it’s not my money ,it doesn’t belong to me .”  
 “Whose is it ,then ?”  
 “It’s Cora Tull’ s money . it’s Mrs.Tull’ s .i sold the cakes for it .”  
 “Ten dollars for two cakes ?”  
 “Don’t you touch it . it’s not mine .”



“You never had them cakes . it’s a lie .it was them Sunday clothes you had in that Package.”  
“Don’t you touch it! If you take it you are a thief”<sup>223</sup>.

It claims that Anse acts as a master. He imposes himself on Dewey Dell, and he takes her money without her consent. Faulkner wants to say that Anse is forced to deal with his children as slaves due to the abolition.

Second, Anse is a very lazy person. Throughout the novel, he puts the blame on the abolition of slavery and upper class exploitation of the poor for his bad conditions. In other terms, Anse justifies his laziness by two major factors: Abolition and capitalist exploitation. Faulkner writes:

Nowhere in this sinful world can a honest ,hard-working man profit. It takes them that runs the stores in the towns,doing no sweating ,living off of them that sweats. It ain’t the hard-working man, the farmer . (···) it’s because there is a reward for us above , where they can’t take their motors and such. Every man will be equal there and it will be taken from them that have and give them that have not by the Lord<sup>224</sup>

The author in this statement wants to say that the Southern farmers have become poor, and they are exploited by the upper class because of the abolition of slavery.

It is worth to mention that Faulkner’s family used to have slaves<sup>225</sup>, and he acquired some beliefs like blacks’s inferiority and their destiny to serve the white people<sup>226</sup> .Hence, there is no doubt that his family had a strong influence on him<sup>227</sup> . Cheryl Lester notes:

Belonging to the elite class of southerners, Faulkner belonged to a family that had already profited from life in Mississippi for generations, the Faulkners once owned slaves and later retained field lands and domestic servants, they owned land and leased their land to tenant farmers, they built homes, acquired education, became professionals, published books, held political office, and traveled outside the state of Mississippi and abroad, hence, Faulkner’s responses to the modernizing south were shaped by the knowledge, opportunities, and challenges he acquired and potential husband<sup>228</sup> .

Lester in the quotation above argues that Faulkner’s family has a strong impact on him. He belongs to a Southern family that used to have slaves and it is logical that he will acquire racist attitudes .In this concern, Philip Cohen claims:

True, as Arthur killney points out, Faulkner progressed from giving voice both in his life and work to some of the most pernicious racist beliefs about African -Americans that he had inherited from his family and his society<sup>229</sup> .

It implies that Faulkner's works reflect his attitude towards the blacks. His family and his society contributed in shaping this attitude.

Moreover, while analyzing *Of Mice and Men*, we come to the conclusion that Steinbeck is a communist. He believes that Capitalism is the major cause behind the suffering of the workers<sup>230</sup>. Steinbeck puts the blame on Capitalism<sup>231</sup>, and he believes that if it is replaced by Communism, the economic situation of the workers will be better<sup>232</sup>. It is worth to note that he expresses his viewpoint openly in the novella. He recounts the daily suffering of the workers and how they are exploited by their managers. In the story, the workers work for eleven hours a day under a very bad conditions<sup>233</sup> and at the end of the day they are obliged to sleep in the bunk house since they are homeless. Hence, it is clear that the writer sympathizes with the workers. We cite the author:

S'opose you get us canned. s'opose you do. you think we'll hit the high way an' look for another lousy two-bit job like this. You don't know that we got our awn ranch to go to, an' our own house. We ain't got to stay here. We gotta house and chickens an' friut trees an' a place a hundred time prettier than this. an' we got fren's, and that's what we got. Maybe there was time when we was scared of getting' canned, but we ain't no more. we got our own l'an, and it's ours an', we c'n go to it." <sup>234</sup>

It suggests that the workers are tired of their terrible condition and plan to have a farm of their own. They hate their job because they are exploited and live under bad conditions. If they have other choices, they will never accept to work under such situations<sup>235</sup>.

In fact, it is not only the novella that helps us to understand the attitude of Steinbeck towards Capitalism, but even his biography helps us to do so. It is worth to mention that Steinbeck used to work in the ranches<sup>236</sup>, and he experiences the bad situations of the workers in the South, and their exploitation by their managers<sup>237</sup>. Because he is aware of the terrible conditions of the workers, he is against Capitalism which turns the life of the workers into disaster<sup>238</sup>. In this concern, Fatma Balci claims:

When Steinbeck wrote of mice and men he was greatly influenced by his own personal experiences and personal interactions with migrant workers. It is through his personal mythos that the story comes to life and becomes conviving. By applying his own experiences to the novel, the story comes to life<sup>239</sup>.

Balci in this quotation states that Steinbeck is strongly influenced by his experiences. He lives under bad conditions, and he was exploited by his managers. He was in daily contact with migrant workers, and he knows their conditions and suffering. Hence, *Of Mice and Men* is based on his real experiences. For this reason, it powerfully reflects the situations of the migrant workers. In this concern, Eric Matthew Martin notes :

Some critics argue that the appeal of *Of Mice and Men* derives from its dramatization of universal themes, while others suggest that its continued popularity results from its depiction of the reality of the lives of migrant workers :from the power of realism and relevance<sup>240</sup>.

Moreover, Boris Bogdonowicz claims that Steinbeck is strongly influenced by Karl Marx<sup>241</sup> and *Of Mice and Men* strongly reflects this impact<sup>242</sup>. In this concern, he states:

Karl Marx is a man whose work had effected many great men ,while some of them, suh as Eugene debs and che guevena, went on to become revolutionaries and eventually die for their views ,others would be artists ,among these distinguished men are bob Dyla , langston hughes ,and George Orwell, but it is not unreasonable to hypothesize that John Steinbeck would be among them, his classic novel, of mice and men, could easily be classified as describing the class struggles ;in it, he explored the pratfalls of what Marx dubbed, idealist socialism, he also ,in an extremely metaphorical way, describes the downfall of capitalism, by ousting both capitalism and idealist socialism (two of things Marx hated most ) Steinbeck leaves the reader with only the option of communism ,a daring thing to do ,it is safe to assume that john Steinbeck's of mice and men is a case for Communism because Steinbeck describes both Socialism and Capitalism in the same way Marx did<sup>243</sup>.

This statement claims that Seinbeck is a communist and he is influenced by Marx's ideas. In *Of Mice and Men*, he describes the negative outcome of Capitalism and he is openly calling for replacing it by Socialism that is in favor of the workers.

However, throughout our analysis of *As I Lay Dying*, we notice that Faulkner does not dwell so much on Capitalism and prefers to extend his criticism to the Abolition of slavery and the State. Unlike Steinbeck who blames Capitalism for the bad conditions of the workers, Faulkner blames the State. He reproaches the State for prohibiting slavery which was one of the major factors that contributed in the prosperity of the South<sup>244</sup>. It is worth to mention that in the past, the economy of the South was completely based on slavery<sup>245</sup>. In other words, the economy was prosperous thanks to slavery<sup>246</sup>. Faulkner sympathizes with the farmers in the

South who hardly find what to eat during 1930s<sup>247</sup> and he assumes that the Southerners will never be affected by the Great Depression if slavery still exists<sup>248</sup>. We cite Faulkner:

Pa's feet are badly splayed, his toes cramped and bent and warped, with no toetail at all on his little toes, from working hard in the wet in home-made shoes when he was a boy. Beside his chair his brogans sit. They look as though they had been hacked with a blunt axe out of big – iron.<sup>249</sup>

It suggests that the Bundern family is poor. Anse has a hard life since the farmers in the South are suffering due to the Great Depression. Faulkner wants to say that the Southern farmers had a miserable life and they became poor because of the Abolition.

It is worth to mention that before Abolition, the blacks did all the work<sup>250</sup>. However, after the abolition, the former masters were forced to work and they found difficulties because they were not used to it since they relied completely on the blacks<sup>251</sup>. It is clear that Faulkner sympathizes with the farmers since his family used to have slaves and it became poor after the abolition<sup>252</sup>. Faulkner writes :

I have never seen a sweat stain on his shirt. He was sick once from working in the sun when he was twenty-two years old, and he tells people that if he ever sweats, he will die. I suppose he believes it.<sup>253</sup>

It claims that the Southern farmers are suffering and their conditions will be better if they have slaves. Thus, being a Southern writer, Faulkner puts the blame on the abolition. He does not care about the blacks as he does about white Southerners.

It is worth to mention that Faulkner falls into contradiction simply because he is a Southerner and he belongs to a family that used to have slaves. He is unable to get rid of his past, and this is greatly shown in his books. Philip Cohen notes:

Anyone seeking to shed light on the vexed subject of the racial convictions expressed by William Faulkner during his life and his fiction must, I think confront the central fact that Faulkner's racial attitudes, like his explorations of gender and class, were often contradictory, even violently conflicted at any given moment of his career<sup>254</sup>.

This statement states that Faulkner is ambivalent. Cohen argues that Faulkner is controversial in his works<sup>255</sup>. In other words, his racist attitude is revealed in certain works, but we can find a different attitude towards the blacks in other works<sup>256</sup>.

## Endnotes :

<sup>214</sup> FatmaBalci, “The Marxist Concept of Alienation and Exploitation in *Of Mice and Men*” . D.level paper , 15hec(University of Gothenburg, 2012),6.

<sup>215</sup> Anna Priddy, Bloom’s How To Write about William Faulkner: Introduction by Harold Bloom (New York:Infobase Publishing , 2010)

<https://books.google.dz/books?isbn=1438126514>

<sup>216</sup> Hansan J.E, “Jim Crow laws and Racial Segregation”(2011).Viewed on 25 August, 2016 from /eras/jim-crow-laws-and-racial-segregation/.

<sup>217</sup> John Steinbeck. *Of Mice and Men* (USA: Penguin Books ,1994),74-75.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid,66-67.

<sup>219</sup> Lennard J.Davis, “The End of Identity Politics :On Disability as an Unstable Category” in *Disability Studies Reader*,ed.Lennard J.Davis (New York :Routledge ,2013),266.

<sup>220</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA :Penguin Books ,1994),80.

<sup>221</sup> Lennard J.Davis, “The End of Identity Politics :On Disability as an Unstable Category” in *Disability Studies Reader*,ed.Lennard J.Davis (New York :Routledge ,2013),266.

<sup>222</sup> , William Faulkner , *As I Lay Dying* (USA:Vintage ,1996),215.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 243.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid,98.

<sup>225</sup> Cherly Lester, “Fifteen Ways of Looking at the Bundrens” . University of Kansas.

<http://www.semo.edu/cfs/teaching/10154.html>

<sup>226</sup> Ibid

<sup>227</sup> Ibid

<sup>228</sup> Ibid

<sup>229</sup> Philip Cohen “Faulkner and Racism :A Commentary on ArthurF. kenney’s “Faulkner and Racism” . Vol ,3.3(1993/94):265-78.University of Texas Arlington,108.

<<http://www.connotations.de/debkinney/00303.htm> <.

<sup>230</sup> Fatma Balci , “The Marxist Concept of Alienation and Exploitation in *Of Mice and Men*” . D.level paper ,15hec(University of Gothenburg, 2012),6.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid,6.

<sup>232</sup> Boris Bogdonowicz, “Influences of the Teaching of Karl Marx on *Of Mice and Men*,” (14Jan2004).

<sup>233</sup> Fatma Balci , “The Marxist Concept of Alienation and Exploitation in *Of Mice and Men*” . D.level paper, 15 hec(University of Gothenburg, 2012),10.

<sup>234</sup> John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* (USA :Penguin Books ,1994),78.

<sup>235</sup> Fatma Balci , “The Marxist Concept of Alienation and Exploitation in *Of Mice and Men*” . D.level paper, 15hec(University of Gothenburg, 2012),10.

<sup>236</sup>Ibid,6.

<sup>237</sup>Ibid,6.

<sup>238</sup>Ibid,6.

<sup>239</sup>Ibid,6.

<sup>240</sup> Eric Mathew Martin, “Of Mice and Myth: John Steinbeck, Carl Jung, and the Epic of Gilgamesh” (20 june ,2014).

<http://www.steinbecknow.com/2014/06/20/of-mice-and-men-john-steinbeck-carl-jung-epic-of-gilgamesh/>

<sup>241</sup>Boris Bogdonowicz,” Influences of the Teaching of Karl Marx on *Of Mice and Men*, “(14Jan2004)

<sup>242</sup>Ibid

<sup>243</sup>Ibid

<sup>244</sup>Anna Priddy , Bloom’s How To Write about William Faulkner: Introduction by Harold Bloom (New York :Infobase Publishing , 2010).

<https://books.google.dz/books?isbn=1438126514>

<sup>245</sup> Jenny Bource, “Slavery in the United States”. EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. (Carleton college, March 26, 2008). URL <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/slavery-in-the-united-states/>

<sup>246</sup>Ibid.

<sup>247</sup>Ibid.

<sup>248</sup>Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (USA:Vintage ,1996),8.

<sup>250</sup> Jenny Bource, “Slavery in the United States”. EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. (Carleton college, March 26, 2008). URL <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/slavery-in-the-united-states/>

<sup>251</sup>Ibid

<sup>252</sup>Cherly Lester, “Fifteen Ways of Looking at the Bundrens” . University of Kansas.

<http://www.semo.edu/cfs/teaching/10154.html>

<sup>253</sup>William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (USA: Vintage ,1996),13.

<sup>254</sup>Philip Cohen “Faulkner and Racism :A Commentary on ArthurF. kenney’s “Faulkner and Racism” . Vol, 3.3(1993/94):265-78.University of Texas Arlington, 108.

[<http://www.connotations.de/debkinney/00303.htm<.](http://www.connotations.de/debkinney/00303.htm)

<sup>255</sup>Ibid,108.

<sup>256</sup>Ibid,108.

## Conclusion:

Our work has examined disability's intersection with race and class in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. We tackled this issue in the light of three important disability studies concepts that we had borrowed from Lennard J. Davis's *Disability Studies Reader*: Davis's *Disability Study Consciousness*, Crenshaw's theory of *Intersectionality*, and Lukin's *Disability and Blackness*.

Our study revealed that disability intersects with race in both novels. Lennie, the mentally retarded in *Of Mice and Men* lives at the margin of the society and lives under bad conditions just like colored people. In other terms, because of his disability, Lennie is suffering exactly from what the blacks are suffering from. In fact, Crooks is the best example of disability's intersection with race in the novel since he is black citizen and has physical disability at the same time. Similarly, disability intersects with race in *As I Lay Dying*. The mentally disabled Darl is marginalized and ill-treated like the black citizens. Due to his disability, Darl is not wanted in the family, and he is otherized just like colored people. Our research also revealed that disability interacts with class in both novels. In *Of Mice and Men*, the disabled Lennie is exploited and lives under miserable conditions like the other workers in the ranch. We examined disability's intersection with class in *As I Lay Dying* through Cash and not Darl. Cash is the best example of disability's intersection with class since he has physical disability and he belongs to the working class at the same time. Finally, our investigation showed that Steinbeck and Faulkner do not share similar attitudes towards racism and Capitalism.

It is worth to mention that our aim was not to contradict what had been said about the two works, but we intended to go further and to study disability as a social category and not

mainly as major theme in both novels. In other terms, we wished to add to the existing knowledge and to permit the reader to read the two selected works in a different way.

This is our interpretation of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and As Faulkner's *I Lay Dying*, and we would like to pave the wave for further research and studies. In this work, we made a comparison between two American authors, and it will be a very interesting topic to compare one of the two selected novels with British works like William Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* (1915) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). The theory of "Intersectionality" extends over sexuality and gender. An interesting work would be the one that takes into consideration these elements in a "Disability Consciousness" reading of the novels mentioned above.



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