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Black Resistance in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*

Soumaya Bouacida & Taki Eddine Lahmar

University of Skikda, Algeria

soumayabouacida@gmail.com, takilahmar40@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper aims to demonstrate how black resistance is alive in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Morrison's *God Help the Child* respectively. It equally emphasizes that Booker and Crooks, the characters through which the two Authors have typified the enormous misery of black-skinned people, attempt to resist racism through knowledge and self-pride. Foremost, racism is one of the most nefarious acts that both Crooks and Booker suffer from. Crooks dwells in the stable with all the animals of the ranch. Likewise, Booker witnesses racism in the indifference of cops to search his disappeared brother because he is a black kid. Plus, Booker is grown up in a warm familial ambiance surrounded by his father, mother, and siblings. The parents consider reading books as the most suitable means which can polish and refine their children's minds. On the other side, Crooks, the sharp-witted black man who is in charge of the barn in the ranch, entertain himself by reading a lot of books. Moreover, self-pride is depicted clearly when Booker ends up with his girlfriend Bride when he figures out that she goes to help Sofia Huxley that was thrown in jail for fifteen years for a crime she perpetrates against children. Similarly, Crooks scowls and explodes in Lennie's face to leave his room as a counter reaction to his exclusion from playing cards with whites in the bunkhouse.

Keywords: Steinbeck, Morrison, African Americans, knowledge, identity, self- pride, racism

I wonder how many people I've looked at all my life and never seen.
John Steinbeck.

For me the history of the place of Black people in the country is so varied, complex, and beautiful. And impactful.
Toni Morrison

Introduction

In their attempt to reach a reconciliation about the issue of race in the American society, both John Steinbeck and Toni Morrison, two of the most attention-capturing authors in the history of American literature, have exhibited many sorts of likeness. Regarding the fact that the American Author does not partake the same ethnicity as Morrison, his sympathetic stance with Black Americans who are a fundamental ingredient in the composition of the nation since its birth is connotatively salient despite being qualified as reticent by numerous literary critics when the discourse is triggered on the racial confabulations. Aside from the temporal distance that separates each of the authors' artistic pinnacles, their voices, attitudes, and interpretation are tacitly blended. In this way, this study pays heed to the abridgement of the intellectual chasm that sunder the analogical ideologies of the two novelists. When the discourse is set on the subject of race in America, John Steinbeck has always eschewed any aspect of direct

implication unlike Toni Morrison who gives full expression to her attitudes towards the prejudice that works to divest the community from its appreciated high values. The secretiveness of John Steinbeck is justified by his unwillingness to escalate the congestion between the two ethnicities; however, Toni Morrison is more explicit in her stance towards her community where she was born and reached her full womanhood. In their chief oeuvres, *Of Mice and Men* and *God Help the Child*, both novelists manifest several sides of African American multitudes and their disfigured identity. These coordinated stands have led to devise a one-dimensional picture in which the authentic Black identity and the Black moral codes are displayed.

Some Steinbeck scholars have engaged in a comparative study between Steinbeck's oeuvre and that of Morrison. In a relevant context, Shade (2007) speculates that the commonalities between these authors are pinpointed in many of their previous plots. He maintains that George in *Of Mice and Men* and Sethe in Morrison's *Beloved* are mirror images of one another and that the compatibility of both works in the manifestation of the concepts of care and harm. Both characters are involved in having the hands stained with the blood of heinous crimes. George decides to end the life of his mindless friend Lennie with whom he is frustrated. He shoots him at the back of his head which renders him a still cadaver immediately. Likely, Sethe splits her daughter's neck, *Beloved*, with a saw. It is worth mentioning that though both George and Sethe are portrayed as caregivers at the beginning of each novel, they killed their cherished ones. Besides, the merciful killing to which Lennie and *Beloved* are exposed to is a such vivid concept that persists in both masterpieces. Shade argues that the relationships that are noticeable between George and Lennie, and Sethe and her children sprouted from an unwavering consciousness concerning the most favourable way to end a whirl of pain for their endeared persons (p. 171). George thinks that confining his friend who admires keeping soft pets in a cage will damage his soul. Thus, he opines that shooting him at the back of his head will save him from the chastisement he will sustain at the hands of the mob (p. 175). On the other hand, Sethe has a clear view that there is no better salvation from the injustice of the world than death. She does not want to ford her children in the same sufferings she has endured as a slave. She believes that dying as a free human is far better than living dead as a slave that is why "she chooses a quick death for her children at her own hands" (Shade, 2007, p. 177).

In a related area of concern, Heavilin (2007), in her "There is one story": Good and Evil in Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and Morrison's *Sula*", maintains that Steinbeck and Morrison are agreed upon the fact that the world is given instinct of two sides; good and evil are ingrained in the human psyche with a thin line of separation drawn. She admits that though John Steinbeck and Toni Morrison are neither contemporaneously liked, nor they share any connection in terms of gender, cultural background, and geography but still propound many commonalities in many of their novels especially as touched upon in the annexation inferred from the characterization of many sonorous characters such as Sula, George, Lennie, and Curley's wife (p.183). In *The East of Eden*, Steinbeck positions himself as a narrator to deliver his idea through the memories of the Hamilton family. Steinbeck's idea is that the concept of self is dichotomized into two dichotomies that exist side by side. He annotates that making relationships with others is the point of emanation of the human good-naturedness or the loss of self under the effect of evilness that springs from the social interaction with individuals. However, Morrison, in *Sula*, gives life to the protagonist attiring her with unsociable peculiarities as an expansion to her steadfast beliefs that goodness and evilness are far from being easily detected in one's nature because they are intertwined in the psyche. Heavilin

(2007) further states that both Steinbeck's and Morrison's voices are unified when it comes to the necessity to be knowledgeable of good and evil in order to survive (p. 189).

The pieces of information discussed above have given an outlet on the several similarities that both authors display in their works and strengthened the claim that though John Steinbeck and Toni Morrison are neither contemporaneously linked nor they share any connection in terms of gender, cultural background, and geography, they still propound many commonalities in many of their novels especially in the characterization of many echoing characters as exemplified in Sula, George, Lennie, and Curley's wife. However, this study aims to bridge the gap between two of the most echoing African American characters, Crooks and Booker Starbern, in relation to black resistance that takes a form of knowledgeable and self-pride. The animalistic treatment that Crooks receives, the phantoms of subordination that haunt him, and his resistance to stereotypes are all manifest in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. This goes in parallel with what Booker Starbern witnesses in *God Help the Child*. In this respect, what can be said about John Steinbeck and Toni Morrison is that when it comes to the Black question in the American society, the voices of both novelists become unified, and their attitudes equalized. So, the presence of Resistance in *Of Mice and Men* and *God Help the Child* is a remarkable addition to this study that has never been touched into before and an immense contribution to this fund of knowledge that aims to detect parallelism in the ideologies of both authors.

1 Blackness as an Anathema

In his book, *The Afrocentric Idea*, Molefi Asante (2011) responds to the transgressions that seek to vacate the African American community from its substantial values, stating: "there is no loss of values in the African American community, and the values that we honor and respect are as strong today as they have ever been" (p. 07). He continuous to mention that noble traits such as harmony, justice, equality, patience, diligence, and good-naturedness "are rarely represented in the media which instead produces a flood of images and ideas about how nihilistic we have become" (p. 07). Both John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Morrison's *God Help the Child* display the Anathema that befalls African Americans because of the colour of their skin. In regard with this, Shane Lynn (2015) argues that John Steinbeck always obviates to dive in any racial confabulations, and the African American element in his work is rarely represented, but when it is propounded, it is always portrayed as being lofty but psychologically damaged (p. 150). Indeed, in the fourth chapter of *OMAM*, Steinbeck opens with a well-detailed description of the heart-breaking living conditions of the African American Stable buck Crooks who dwells in the barn with the animal he breeds and who sleeps on a long box filled with straw on which his blankets were flung (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 68). He is marginalized by his white co-workers who do not give him permission to enter their bunkhouse to play Solitaire card game. They disdain him by expressing their repugnance of his bad smell: "They play cards in there, but I can't play because I'm black. They say I stink. Well, I tell you, you all of you stink to me" (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 70). Moreover, Crooks is seen as a brute not as a human being. He uses the same liniment of horses to mitigate the pains of his bow-like spine. Speaking of the horses, the fact that Crooks dwells in the harness room with animals "is a symbolic indication of being restrained by the White bunkhouse community" (Ali, 2019, p. 53).

Similarly, it is plainly expressed that Crooks' hostile deportments are generated from his demolished soul because of the excruciating treatment he receives from the white ranchers. In

this course, Steinbeck denounces the dehumanization and nothingness ascribed to this ethnic community due to a personal experience traced back to his childhood in his hometown Californian. In his memorable travelogue of 1961 known as "Travels with Charley: In Search of America", he perceives Black-skinned people with respect, loyalty, and sublimity. Steinbeck's word on the prevalent chicaneries upon African Americans is that "when he heard, for example, that Negroes were an inferior race, I thought the authority was misinformed. When I heard that Negroes were dirty, I remembered Mrs. Cooper's shining kitchen. Lazy? The drone and clop of Mr. Cooper's horse-drawn dray in the street outside used to awaken us in the dawn. Dishonest? Mr. Cooper was one of the very few Salina's who never let a debt cross the fifteenth of the month (Steinbeck, 1986, p. 213). The solid beliefs of John Steinbeck are molded due to the social interaction that he had with Blacks. Their good manners encompassing commitment, cleanliness, and sincerity all have contributed in shaping his stand towards this outcast ethnic category.

Treading the same steps, Ali (2019) pinpoints another aspect of warm-heartedness towards African Americans from the part of the American author. He maintains that Steinbeck was involved in the making of Alfred Hitchcock's screenplay "life boat" in 1944. He was the scripter of the movie; however, he attacked the production because his tendencies were altered in terms of the characterization of a Black character on the boat. The character, Joe Spencer, was designed by Steinbeck to be wise and mindful, but the director immersed it in sarcastic ambiance. This manipulation angered the author who asked the producing Studio to delete his name from the credit (Ali, 2019, p. 53). In a letter sent to Twentieth Century Fox studios, Steinbeck elucidates this misconstruction saying: "While it is certainly true that I wrote a script for Lifeboat, it is not true that in that script as in the film there were any slurs against organized labour nor was there a stock comedy Negro. On the contrary there was an intelligent and thoughtful seaman who knew realistically what he was about. And instead of the usual-coloured travesty of the half comic and half pathetic Negro, there was a Negro of dignity, purpose and personality. Since this film occurs over my name, it is painful to me that these strange, sly obliquities should be ascribed to me" (SLL, 195, p. 266).

Like Crooks who is subjugated by his surrounding white society, the character of Booker Starbern in *GHC* notices that his coloured skin submerges him in an ocean of nihilism and contemptuousness. More pointedly, the destructive effect of the white racist gaze in this novel is not limited to stereotypes and maltreatment against blacks as it is the case of Crooks, but it takes the form of an outright physical violence which is represented in the assassination of Booker's brother 'Adam' by a white pervert man nicknamed 'the nicest man in the world'. Morrison attempts to deliver a message behind the murdering of Adam. The connotative name 'Adam' is employed to hint at the stifled humanity and the partition of the black life. It refers to the name of the first human being from whom the entire mankind has spouted. Therefore, killing Adam in the novel symbolizes the violation of humanity for black people. The white man attempts to evacuate the African Americans from their human values and reduce them to objects manipulated by the white power. The life of a black individual has no worth, and this is evident when Booker observes the dereliction of the policemen in investigating the circumstances of Adam's disappearance, "then they dropped it. Another little black boy gone. So?" (Morrison, 2016, p. 114) Furthermore, Booker has felt a sense of injustice when he notices the indifference of the public towards the crime committed against his murdered brother, "Adam's calamity, he thought, was not public fare to be confined to one line in a newspaper's list of the six victims" (Morrison, 2016, p. 120). Blacks are visible to the white community and

seen as human only if they follow prescribed white patterns. In line with this, Cynthia A. Davis (1982) states that “[b]lack is visible to white culture only in so far as they fit its frame of reference and serve its needs. Thus, they are consistently reduced and reified, losing their independent reality” (p. 324).

There is a huge discrepancy between the nickname ‘the nicest man in the world’ and its reality. This white man who is portrayed as the cruellest one on earth has not only snatched the life of Adam, but he also destroys the harmony and unity of Booker’s family. His poisonous intrusion on the black life of this family has led to the evaporation of its substantial values, which is manifest through the forgetfulness of Adam who symbolizes the human and cultural standards of the Starbarn family. Before the assassination event, the family members were used to organize a Saturday conference where they gather happily and exchange ideas and horizons; however, with the absence of Adam, the solidarity of Starbarn family falls apart. The rapidity in which the Starbarn family throws their son Adam in obliviousness chocks Booker especially in the scene when his mother invites him to a celebratory dinner after he assures his master degree. That joyous ambiance turns to become a berserk verbal squabble with his family members when Booker goes upstairs and sees the modification in his childhood room where he lives the most convivial days of his life. When he figures out that skateboard which reminds him of his brother is gone, he goes downstairs and pick quarrels with his siblings and parents. The tension is appeased with parting ways: “father and son stared at each other, their eyes locking in military aggression. Mr. Starbarn won the battle and Booker left the house, closing the door firmly behind him” (Morrison, p. 112).

Unlike his parents, Booker is reluctant at forgetting the memory of Adam, and in order to re-enact his brother’s memory, he tattoos a small rose on his left shoulder. By tattooing, Booker wants to inscribe the black history and culture on his body, to pay heed to his own African heritage and mostly to defy the dominant truth that is recorded on the body of the nicest man in the world who has tattooed the names of his victims across his shoulders. Noting that the colour of his tattoo is “orangish kind of red”, this reveals Booker’s rage at the unforgettable injustice and segregation that his community encounters.

2 Knowledgeability

Black men’s knowledgeability, the most essential form of black resistance, is writing back to the white man’s racial stereotypes that accused blacks of ignorance and animality. This property is effectively represented in the novels under scrutiny through the characters of Crooks and Booker Starbarn. To start with, John Steinbeck vests his African American character Crooks with a such notable yearn for readability. Despite of being psychologically damaged, Crooks does not abstain himself from sinking in the depths of the numerous books in his room, “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” (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 69). The reading skill grants him a sharp shrewdness and clairvoyance which prevent him from being enmeshed in vicissitudes of time. Crooks manifests his intelligibility and far-reaching look when he gives an undesirable truth to the mentally disabled Lennie about the impossibility of attaining their dream of having their own ranch. Crooks, hence, is completely aware that the concept of “The American Dream” does not have its place during that suffocating economic crisis (the Great Depression). He breaks the spirits of the intrusive Lennie after he learns about his out-of-reach ambition.

Again, Crooks corroborates that his certitude springs from the books he reads: "I seen hundreds of men come by on the road na' on the ranches, with their bindles on their back na' that same damn thing in their heads. Hundreds of them. They come, na'they quit an' go on;an' every damn one of 'em's got a little piece of land in his head. Na' never a God damn one of 'em ever gets it. Just like heaven. Ever 'body wants a little piece of lan'. I read plenty of books out here. Nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land. It's just in their head. They're all the time talkin' about it, but it's jus' in their head. (Steinbeck,1937, p.77). Relevantly, the abominated nigger shows a peerless adroitness in daily work. As being the harness room hand, Crooks is in charge of reparation of wrecked tools. Chaker (2019), on this point, comments that the well-whisked room of Crooks and its soft light is a symbolic hint that Black man's small space is a locus of wisdom and knowledge. Crooks enlightens Lennie who is lured to his room by the yellow light of the lamp (p. 53). Widely, the concept of history does creep to Steinbeck's *OMAM* through the character of Crooks. The latter tells Lennie about his former conditions of his childhood. He seems to be yearning for a past that can never be retrieved. His smile is robbed under the impact of an unexampled loneliness. The joyful past and the mournful current day form an allusion to show that the black history in America is obfuscated and castrated. Accordingly, Crooks says: "I was born right here in California. My old man had a chicken ranch, 'bout ten acres. The white kids come to play at our place, an' sometimes I went to play with them, and some of them was pretty nice. My ol' man didn't like that. I never knew till long later why he didn't like that. But I know now.' He hesitated, and when he spoke again his voice was softer. 'There wasn't another colored family for miles around. And now there ain't a colored man on this ranch an' there's jus' one family in Soledad.'" He laughed. 'If I say something, why it's just a nigger sayin' it' "(Steinbeck, 1937, p.73).

In a similar manner, Booker, in *GHC*, do embody the same afore-mentioned concepts. He opens his eyes in a family that sanctifies knowledge and books. The Starberns are an intellectual couple who makes sure of providing a good education to their alphabetically-named children. The Starberns believe that the book is indispensable in building their children's characters; that is why, they conceal all sources of distraction and brainwash from sight. The Starberns habituate their children to participate in their held conferences every Saturday morning. They require them to answer a couple of questions centred on their studies and personal problems. This warm familial ambiance opens the channels for such fascinating mental capacities that enable the children to learn how to gain what is benevolent and how to throw aside what is detrimental: "Booker had been raised in large, tight family with no television in sight... and after their problems were solved or left pending, the children were sent to bathe and dress the older ones helping the younger" (Morrison, 2016, p. 101). Morrison's use of this scene spouts from her belief in the importance of the transmission of the ancestral high values to the next generations. She reckons that the accounts of sacrifice, resistance, and heroism of forefathers are seen as secret ingredients in the formula of the black culture. At a personal level, Booker is a good asset to his highly and well-mannered family. The cultural background that he has absorbed within his family drives him to comment on his peers ridiculously. His cultural background is the motor of his matured personality that refrains him from being swamped in mind-emptiness: "[h]aving grown up in a book-reading family with only radio and newspapers for day-to-day information and vinyl records for entertainment, he had to fake his classmates' enthusiasm for the screen sounds of games blasting from every dorm room, lounge and student-friendly bar. He knew he was way, way

out of the loop—a Luddite incapable of sharing the exciting world of tech, and it had embarrassed him as a freshman” (Morrison, 2016, p. 102).

Booker is longing for knowledge and education. At University, his professors have been astounded by his enthusiasm for learning about diversified spheres. The huge amount of knowledge he has acquired from different curricula leads him to pose bigger questions that continuously leave the finest instructors speechless especially those questions that commence with “why”. Remarkably, Booker refuses to be a container of what have been discussed and interpreted by historians. The dubiousness he finds in the documents that show the historical stream that trenches the African American presence in the making of history is evidence of the critical thinking of the Black trumpet-player: “he’d taken multiple courses in African-American Studies, where the best professors were brilliant at description but could not answer to his satisfaction any question beginning with ‘Why’. He suspected most of the real answers concerning slavery, lynching, forced labour, sharecropping, racism, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, prison labour, migration, civil rights and black revolution movements” (Morrison, 2016, p. 99). Since culture is an important component of the American society that is the product of the union of a variety of races, the truncation of the African American culture from this cultural blend is an unreserved obfuscation to the African American identity. Emulating Crooks’ clairvoyance that ascertains the hollowness of the American dream, Booker discerns that money is the focal evil in the world. After his graduation, Booker becomes mesmerized with economics, and which gives him a clear view of the sources of the oppression that engulfs the whole world. He realizes that the avidity of humans for money is the real genesis of the universal perturbation.

The strong beliefs of Crooks and Booker in their African American culture and history is an ample evidence of Morrison’s and Steinbeck’s support for black resistance. The frequent accentuation on ‘books’ in the scenes where the African American characters appear is a symbol of their knowledgeableness and, therefore, the knowledgeableness of the whole black community. The expressions of Crooks “if I say something, why it’s just a nigger saying it.” (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 73), and that on Booker “could not answer to his satisfaction any question beginning with Why” (Morrison, 2016, p. 90) show the attempts of the bound-minded White man to wipe the values of the black community. The struggle of Crooks and Booker to preserve the essence of their culture and history is what Asante (2011) refers to as “the escape from the western hegemony” (p. 62). The remarkable attachment of these self-possessed characters with the historical and cultural values of their black identity serves as the best shield against the white hegemony. Respectively, Sifa Dei (1994, p. 8) contends that “the retention of the African cultural patterns in the diaspora was and continues to be a response to, and a strategy for dealing with the hardships and contradictions lived out at the juncture of being black in a white-dominated society”. Reading both Crooks and Booker from the perspective of knowledgeability demonstrates that both voices are in a notable consonance, which puts emphasis on the multiculturalism of the world in the sense that no culture should be held as a normative one so as to reach, as Oyeade (1990, p. 234) addresses, “the possibility of looking at the world from different centers rather than from one single angle” to gain a better understanding of the multicultural universe”.

3 Self-pride and rehabilitation

Self-pride is another form of Black resistance that is indicated in Crooks’ and Booker’s behaviours in many scenes. To open with, Steinbeck points out to the neatness of Crooks’ room that is localized in the barn, a filthy place that is rife with dung. The cleanness of his room that

is surrounded with dirtiness represents the flawless dignity of the African American ranchman despite of the animalistic stereotypes that are imputed to him. Also, the dignity of Crooks and his self-praise are evident in the scene in which he deters Lennie from entering his fairly neat room. since a black man is not given permission to join the white ranchers in their bunkhouse to play Solitaire card game, whites are interdicted to set their feet on the sill of Crooks' door though he lives in a such tormenting solitude, "You got no right to come in my room. This here's my room. Nobody got any right in here but me" (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 70). Likewise, the terrifying game that he plays with Lennie is another indication to his self-pride. In "Moral Experience in *Of Mice and Men*: Challenges and Reflections", Hart (2004, p. 40) affirms that Crooks "in his mind he can justifiably reject just as much as he is rejected". When he realizes that Lennie lives in the shadow of his caregiver George and that he is totally dependent on him, he decides to frighten him by telling him that he will not be reunited with the one and only person who looks after him. The pleasurable smile of Crooks when he sees Lennie anxious tells everything about the happiness that crossed his heart since that game gives him a feeling of nemesis. The last scene in which the self-esteem of Crooks appears is when Curley's wife practices her power upon him with a humiliating punishment if he keeps disrespecting her. Crooks' reaction in which he grows smaller is not a sign of fear but a sign of self-respect because he cannot afford to be demeaned by whites.

In parallels with Crooks, Booker shows an equal amount of self-respect in two different scenes. The first scene is when his lover's white girlfriend, Brooklyn, seduces him to make a sexual intercourse with her. Booker twigs to her intention and looked upon her. His refusal to her temptations is a meaningful reply to those flooding stereotypes that portray the African American individual as an animal driven by his instinctive desires. Analogously, Booker breaks up with his beloved girlfriend, Bride, immediately when he finds out that she has gone to the house of a convict who has been thrown in jail for more than a decade for being accused of molesting children at school; Sophia Huxley is the pervert teacher's name. When Booker realizes that his woman has gone to offer help to a delinquent woman who provokes children, he breaks up with her telling her some disappointing words: "you're not the woman I wanted" (Morrison, 2016, p. 08). Brides' behaviour leads her boyfriend to retrieve the sufferings of his childhood when he has lost brother Adam. The image of the nicest man in the world who kills his elder brother comes back to his mind when he has heard about the misdemeanours of Sofia Huxley that she has never committed. As time goes by, Booker figures out that the abhorred woman has been wronged in trial by Bride who has given a false attestation against her in order to run bigger in her mother's estimation. Booker's reaction is justified by his intention to keep faith in the values of his community that refuses to be an object in the white man's hand. Booker is all-knowing about this particularity that his self-esteem becomes confirmed only when he follows the pattern of his ethnic group that obliges him not to bow down to the white control. This action is the only thing that makes him rejoice a feeling of self-definition and humanity.

The scene of Crooks' recoil against Curley's wife and that of Booker who flares in the face of his girlfriend up are certainly correspondent. They imply that the African American individual extremely refuses to be manipulated by his oppressor. The reader can, with some degree of effort, understand that the Black individual is self-satisfied with his blackness and can never be forced to abandon his honour to gain recognition from the part of his tormentor. Additionally, not allowed to hang around with the other white workers, Crooks resorts to his books to bondage his wounds. Much alike, Bookers' books never leave his hands. Morrison, in

all the scenes where Booker faces provocations, mentions books as the real company of her African American character: "Booker's fist was in the man's mouth before thinking about it. A light spray of blood dappled his sweatshirt, and when the man lost consciousness, Booker grabbed his book bag off the ground and walked away, not too fast, but fast enough to cross the road" (Morrison, 2016, p. 98). What can be extrapolated from these parallel behaviours is that the African Americans individual is self-satisfied and refuses to embrace Americanization. The trope of books symbolizes the African Americans' independent way of thinking and genuine cultural beliefs.

Conclusion

Of Mice and Men and *God Help the Child* are two works that tackle many issues in the American society, the most prominent of which is the issue of the colour bar that produces a vast chasm between two confronting ethnicities for decades. Though they were set in different periods of time which means by necessity the absence of any aspect of connection, both novels display a sympathetic stand with coloured people in USA through the characters of Crooks and Booker Starbern. These two characters are devoted to block the stream of the degenerating stereotypes that strip the African American individual from the constituents of his black identity. Both Steinbeck and Morrison maintain how resistance against racism occurs by upgrading the black race through knowledgeability and self-pride. Holding these two properties, both character attempt to resist and to subvert the racial discrimination they receive from the white community.

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Contacts

Soumaya Bouacida & Taki Eddine Lahmar

University of Skikda, Algeria

BP 26. Road

El Hadaiek

Skikda 21000

Algeria

soumayabouacida@gmail.com

takilahmar40@gmail.com