

**POWER DYNAMICS AND INDIVIDUALISM IN JOHN STEINBECK'S *OF MICE AND MEN***

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**ÖZET**

This study attempts to analyze the power shifts between the characters based on their physical strength and mental aptitude conforming to Foucauldian power dynamics amid their wrangling with loneliness and identity loss during the Great Depression. In line with the interpretation of Foucault, power is founded on information and uses knowledge. In addition to that, power reproduces knowledge by forming it in line with its anonymous purposes. Through knowledge, power reconstructs its own fields of exercise. Nevertheless, power often requires a series of acts and responses executed on other individuals. While violence can be part of certain interactions of power, violence is not the exercise of power in itself. Steinbeck delves into this power dynamics by creating an imposing but dull character and clashing him with a witty protagonist. Protagonists accommodate distinct ways of power, and their powers are reacted separately. Lennie's physical power is appealing to ranchers, and he might look more authoritative, on the flip side, George is craftier in spite of his feeble appearance, and as others notice their domineering figure changes as well. Initially, power as in nature prevails and becomes a symbol of authority; however, Lennie's dimwitted and turbulent excessive force succumbs to universal laws of predatory human existence over time. Moreover, the characters suffer from profound loneliness which resulted from the Great Depression. They ceaselessly seek companionship, yet they fail. Even those who are not alone are left unattended in the end as they strive to gain the upper hand. In *Of Mice and Men*, Steinbeck interprets how the status quo and human nature encounter each other and the averse alienation they cause too.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Foucault, The Great Depression, John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*, power dynamics