

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I would like to draw some conclusions from my analysis of contrasting major characters in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. The aims of this chapter are to conclude the portrayal of two contrasting major characters and the purpose of the author in creating such contrasting characters.

The first major character, George Milton, is an American migrant worker who tries to find a job in a farm. Life is very hard at that time because it is set in the Great Depression era, where the economic is in its worst condition. In this novel, George is depicted as a smart, mature, responsible, and weak man.

George is depicted as a smart man. It can be seen when he knows what to do to impress his boss by praising Lennie that he is strong and hardworking, and also by not letting Lennie to say any word to his boss. He is also able to calculate what he needs to achieve his dream, which is to own a farm.

George is also a mature person. He shows it by always being able to deal with Lennie. His maturity can be seen when he can control his emotion whenever he faces troubles. He knows what to do when things get out of control and he knows how to deal with the mentally defective Lennie.

George is a responsible man, and it can be seen through his action. He always takes care of Lennie although actually they are not relatives. George is always responsible whenever Lennie makes trouble to the point that he decides to kill Lennie at the end of the novel.

Physically, George is described as a small and weak person. Compared to Lennie, he is nothing, as seen when he cannot stop Lennie from breaking Curley's hand.

The second major character is Lennie Small. Lennie is a migrant worker and also a friend of George. He also has the same dream as George, which is to own a farm. He is depicted as a strong, immature, slow-witted, and carefree person. Being immature and slow-witted, he can only count on his strength. His being strong can be seen when he breaks Curley's hand only by grasping it. There are a number of occasions where he accidentally kills a lot of mice because he cannot control his strength. The worst thing happens when he unintentionally kills Curley's wife. He does not mean to do it; however, because he is incapable of controlling his own strength, he unintentionally breaks her neck.

Lennie's second characteristic is immature, which is actually caused by his being mentally defective. As a result, Lennie acts and thinks like a child: he cries when George gets angry at him and yells when there is no food. It seems like there is a ten-year old boy who lives in a thirty-year old man's body.

The third characteristic of Lennie is slow-witted. He cannot think as responsive as normal people. He also often forgets things, and it causes trouble for George and himself. Whenever George asks him to do something, he makes mistakes. Furthermore, Lennie is easily distracted by something and forgets to do what he actually has to do.

The last characteristic of Lennie is carefree. As a mentally defective grown up man, he does not really think or worry about his future. All that he cares about is to pet a mouse and rabbit.

Although Steinbeck never stated explicitly his purpose of creating the two contrasting characters, the analysis shows that the two characters become the representation of people who have to face hardship during the Great Depression. The fact that George and Lennie are contrast implies that they complement each other, even though George does not need Lennie as much as Lennie needs George. The immature, slow-witted Lennie needs George who is mature, smart and responsible to take care of him and guide him. George who is physically weak and small needs Lenny who is strong to ensure that they will always have a job. Besides that, in such a depressing time, George also needs the carefree Lennie who can entertain him and give him hope, even though at the end George unwillingly has to kill Lennie. They cover each other's weaknesses and support one another.

I argue that George's decision of killing Lennie is an act of responsibility. Although he kills Lennie, it does not mean that he hates Lennie; on the contrary, he loves Lennie. If George does not kill Lennie, Lennie will die anyway by the crowds. George's killing Lennie in a way reflects Steinbeck's purpose, that is to show hardship that people have to face, and in the context of George and Lennie, to the point that one of them has to die.

The proof that Lennie has to die also implies Steinbeck's purpose which is to show how cruel life is during the Great Depression era that someone, represented by George, has to make such a difficult decision, which is to kill his friend, and how someone, due to his mental condition, has to die for something that he does not intentionally do.