

Of mice men

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



In the Novel "Of Mice and Men" written by John Steinbeck, George and Lennie, the two protagonists of the story, are two men who travel around California together, looking for work on ranches, to get by in the depression. But, they don't just travel together; they have an inseparable bond. But suddenly, things go awry, and George is faced with the decision to kill his best friend in the act of mercy killing, or Euthanasia. George chooses to kill him rather than some stranger killing him.

Euthanasia, or Mercy Killing is "The act or practice of killing or permitting the death of hopelessly sick or injured individuals in a relatively painless way for reasons of mercy" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). The act of George killing Lennie was justifiable as a mercy killing because Lennie would have been faced with horrible torture and ultimately painful death if George did not kill him. To start off, George and Lennie have been friends for a very long time, and their story begins in a town called Weed.

Lennie, a "huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, and wide, sloping shoulders" (Steinbeck 2), is mentally retarded. Lennie lived with his Aunt Clara, and she treated him very well. Since he liked soft things, she would give him mice to pet, but, Lennie killed every one she gave him. So, when she died, George wouldn't give him mice to pet, and that ultimately led to them fleeing from Weed. Their departure from Weed was abrupt, and was caused when a woman in a red dress got the wrong idea. As stated before, Lennie liked to touch soft things, and he started to touch the women in the red dress' dress.

She thought that he was going to rape her, which is quite understandable, for him being a "huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, and

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wide, sloping shoulders" (2). So she screamed that he was going to rape her, and Lennie and George fled from Weed. George, a man that is "small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, and strong features" (2) gets him and Lennie a job at Ranch, and they go to the Ranch to work. Now, the book "Of Mice & Men" plays sort of like a circle, reintroducing three ideas throughout this story of George and Lennie's final days together, and they all have one similar idea, Lennie and death.

Now, this book purposely puts these two ideas together, because of the way Lennie likes to pet soft things. "I'd pet 'em, and pretty soon they bit my fingers and I pinched their heads a little and then they was dead- because they was so little" (5). Pretty much instantaneously, he would kill them because they would try to retaliate, for instance with the mouse, it tried to bite him. Then, Lennie wanted a cute puppy from Slim, a worker at the farm, and he agreed. He soon killed the puppy too. "Why do you got to get killed? You ain't so little as mice. I didn't bounce you hard. (42) The reoccurring theme pops up again. This time, the puppy tries to nip at him, so he "bounced" it. Next, the theme pops up again, this time with a woman. Not just any women, Curley's wife, and Curley is the Boss' son. "He shook her; and her body flopped like a fish. And then she was still, for Lennie had broken her neck." This time the victim was screaming, and he grabbed on harder in fear. He feared that if George heard her that he wasn't going to tend to the rabbits. The theme shows up once more in this story, and the object being killed is Lennie himself. 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" (53). The final full circle

ended with George killing Lennie. He did it for the sake of Lennie having a peaceful death, and not being tortured by Curley. But, was it Euthanasia? Yes, the act of George killing Lennie was justifiable as a mercy killing because Lennie would have been faced with horrible torture and ultimately painful death if George did not kill him. We can't let 'im get away. Why, the poor bastard'd starve. " (46) In this sentence, George states that he had to kill Lennie, because he will starve, and that was his justification. " Curley gon'ta wanta get 'im lynched. Curley'll get 'im killed. " George watched Candy's lips. " Yeah," he said at last, " that's right, Curley will. An' the other guys will. " He is also saying that Curley is going to kill him, so instead of him being tortured and letting him be killed by strangers, he decides that he has to kill him, that is his only way to get a peaceful death.

Now, this isn't the only case of Euthanasia. Mercy Killing is practiced in many places. For instance it is legal in Albania, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Oregon in the United States. For instance, there was a court case in Arizona where a man killed his wife in what he called an act of Euthanasia. Steve Sanders, a son of George and Ginger Sanders says, " I do not fault my father" (Arizona Man) in the case of his father killing his wife after she allegedly begged him to do it after being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and Gangrene.

The man was sentenced to unsupervised probation. Although this is an example of Mercy Killing, " the passive nature of allowing someone to die is not" (Facts and Ethics). " Legalizing Euthanasia would help alleviate suffering of terminally ill patients" (Facts and Ethics), so that a family doesn't have to continue to pay hefty hospital bills. But, there has to be some rules behind

Euthanasia. “ People who have an incurable disease, should be given the liberty to choose induced death” (Facts and Ethics).

In conclusion, the act of George killing Lennie was an act of Euthanasia because Lennie would have faced horrible consequences for killing Curley’s wife. Lennie would have been tortured, and according to Curley he states “ I’m gonna get him. I’m going for my shotgun. I’ll kill the big son-of-a-bitch myself. I’ll shoot ‘im in the guts. ” (Steinbeck 48) Lennie and George were really close, and letting someone else kill him just wouldn’t have been fair. But, the only way for George to have closure with Lennie was to make the final decision to kill him. How would of Lennie lived without George?