

# Of mice and men

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



The novel “ Of Mice and Men” was written by John Steinbeck in 1937. He wrote the novel to illustrate the pain and misery of the migrant workers during the Great Depression in America. The novel also illustrated the difficulty for ordinary people to reach the American Dream. Steinbeck represents the relationship between George and Lennie, who are the main characters, in different ways. The word “ relationship” is described in the dictionary “ as the way in which two or more groups or people behave towards each other.

” The friendship between George and Lennie is represented both through the spoken relationship and body language. This is shown in the constant different behaviours Lennie has towards George. Throughout the novel, this becomes more and more visible by portraying Lennie of being simple minded and “ like a kid.” Lennie is incapable of surviving on his own and needs George to look after him. One realises that Lennie and George become dependent on each other. This is because the one needs the other to survive.

George is instantly interpreted as of being the leader, or parent role towards Lennie. This can be quickly interpreted when George says : “ Lennie! “ “ Lennie for God’ sakes don’t drink so much.” (page 20) We also find George taking the leadership role when he tells Lennie to hand over the dead mouse to him. “ Come on, give it here.” (page 22) George is very authoritative over Lennie and is a very independent person. He is also very sociable and makes many friends in little time. George is “ small and quick,” is “ dark of face,” and has “ restless sharp eyes.” He also has very “ strong features.” George is small, has strong hands, slender arms and a thin bony nose. (page 19)

Lennie has a very plain outlook and mentality. He is physically large, “ huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping shoulders, walking heavily and dragging his feet.” (page 19) His strength is his main asset to find work. Lennie does not understand things from an adult perspective. Especially understanding what can and cannot be done in an adult context. This tells us that Lennie has a childlike behavior. We also find in the novel that Lennie likes touching and stroking soft things. This is because he enjoys textures and the sense of touch. We are exposed to this right in the beginning of the novel already, when he petted a mouse to death. This shows us that Lennie is very tactile. He cannot take care of himself and sadly brings misfortune to anyone he crosses path with. Therefore we can also say that Lennie is very unlucky. BUT Lennie is also very loyal, as he maintains absolute faith and trust in George throughout the novel.

The friendship of George and Lennie is represented in the novel through body language. This is shown to us in the constant varying behaviors of Lennie towards George. This becomes increasingly visible throughout the novel when we find out that Lennie is simple minded and “ child-like.” With the quote: “ his face grew tight with thought,” (page 24) it is brought across to us, that Lennie is incapable of surviving on his own and that he constantly has to seek for George’s approval. We find in the opening chapter of the novel that Lennie idolizes George which we are exposed to when Steinbeck writes: “ Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly.” (page 21)

From this we also learn that Lennie cannot control himself, and has no moral judgement. In their friendship, George makes all the valid decisions and takes care of Lennie. Things for Lennie are either good or bad depending on what George thinks of them. Lennie and George become foils for each other as they are both mutually dependent characters who need each other in order to survive. Although Lennie causes a lot of problems for George, he is better for him. Without Lennie, George would have way less employment opportunities and much more lonely.

The relationship between the two characters depends on their benefits and mostly about their dream. It is George and Lennie's dream to own their own piece of land with their own little house and their own crops on it and "tend the rabbits." (page 33) Their dream connects them to each other very strongly. Despite the fact that they want to achieve their dream together, they are also satisfying their fear of loneliness. Just like George says to Lennie: "Guys like us, that work on ranches," (page 31) "...are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place." (page 32) George brings openness to their social situation through this. George also says: "With us it ain't like that." (page 32)

Lennie interrupts George and says: "An' why? Because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you, and that's why." (page 32) Their relationship is about them depending on each other to fulfill their dreams, to look after each other and to fulfill their fear of loneliness. George knows that Lennie's friendship is better than being completely on his own. He fears to be thrown out when he becomes useless and therefore he holds on to his dream as much as he can. Everyone in the ranch has dreams. Candy's dream is to

become involved in George and Lennie's dream, not for security but to fulfill his desire for company. George knew that if people work together, dreams come true much faster.

Therefore when Candy offered his partnership they looked at each other amazed and George's eyes were full of wonder. We find in the novel that George is growing hope about their dream. He understood that the best way to make their dream come true was through unity. George endured his relationship with Lennie because Lennie had unrivaled strength which enabled them to do much more work than the others. George had a fear of being thrown out and being left alone, therefore he held on to Lennie's friendship.

The relationship between George and Lennie as it comes across in the way they speak is as George is depicted of being the leader or parent role towards Lennie. He tells Lennie not to drink of the water, not to pet the mouse, to keep quiet and let him do all the talking. We interpret him of being the parent to a child. George repeatedly shouts at Lennie what to do and how to do it. He uses strong language towards Lennie as it is the only way that George can "show" his worry and frustration to Lennie. He frequently loses his temper towards Lennie as he does not want him to get into anymore trouble. George easily "snaps" or "demands" things which tells us that he is very short tempered and impatient man.

Lennie adores George which comes across clearly in the first chapter of the novel. Lennie even tries to act like George when he: "... drew up his knees, embraced them," (page 21) " He pulled his hat down just a little more over his eyes, the way George's was." (page 21) This also shows us that Lennie

really looked up to George and saw him as his “ Idol.” All Lennie ever wished to do was make George happy. He even suggested that he “ could go off in the hills there.” (page 30) He would do so just so that George could have his ketchup if there were some. Through this we find that George often loses his temper towards Lennie yet Lennie has learnt how to approach him when he is this upset. It is clear that Lennie could not alone survive in the harsh world. Through Lennie’s use of child-like speech and pleading, we understand that he is very simple and the “ child” in the relationship. As George tells Lennie the story of their dream, a different demeanour overcomes him.

He is still seen as the parent role as he tells a “ bed time story” deepening his voice. We see a more compassionate side of George as he speaks much softer, as if he would love to believe in the dream he made up. Lennie is cheered up by the story and George praises him for remembering not to talk. In the second chapter a less demanding and more protective George appears. When the boss of the ranch comes down on Lennie with questions, George is there to help him. He makes up a lie to protect Lennie and praises him. As the boss leaves George becomes the leader again as he “ preaches” Lennie again. When Curley’s wife appears for the first time, George makes it clear to Lennie that he doesn’t want him near her as she would bring him into trouble. He warns Lennie taking the role of protecting parent.

The Speech and Dialogue used in the novel is used to represent how all the working class ranch people of the Depression era America would speak. Most of the vocabulary used is of everyday kind except those used for equipment and jobs. Steinbeck used slang, non-standard terms and vulgarities in the

dialogue. The speech patterns help to recreate a specific time, place and social strata which make the book sound real. Everyone in the book uses similar language and style of speech. An example is that the boss of the ranch does not speak any different than the ranch workers. The language used in the novel is put to work as an equalizing force. As long as each man can speak for himself, his story is equally as important.

In my view the relationship of George and Lennie is that even though George and Lennie have each other to trust and depend on it should still be classified as loneliness. They only have each other to depend on and trust no one else. This is also a type of loneliness as you don't have anyone else if you lose that one person. George holds onto the friendship of Lennie because he is afraid of being alone. In my opinion he is still alone even though he has Lennie because he has too much fear. The fact that George is afraid of being alone makes him desperate for company, yet the company which he has he does not appreciate. George is only seen as a good friend because he helps Lennie out of trouble and helps him to get work.

Lennie is the one who is a true friend because he does not demand things from George, he does not ask things from him all he needs is someone to look after him and that person is George. Lennie thanks George for this by always trying to keep Lennie happy. This is seen where Lennie offers to run for the hills when George complains about the ketchup and how much better his life would be without Lennie. In the end of the novel we find out that George kills Lennie before he can be cruelly killed by Curley. In my view this shows true friendship even though he committed a crime yet he kept Lennie

from experiencing a horrible death. Legally murder is a crime yet morally he did what he had to as a friend towards Lennie.

In my opinion is the only reason that George stayed with Lennie because he could not survive without him due to his fear of loneliness and his lack of employment opportunities without Lennie. Yet even though they have each other they are still lonely s the only have each other to depend on and no one else. Lennie and George decided to be alone together as it would mean that they would be safe. Due to the fact that Lennie was mentally disabled he got into a lot of trouble and George knew that someday he would also get in trouble for the mistakes of Lennie. This is because George knows what Lennie is capable of.

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