

THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDSHIP IN JOHN STEINBECK'S *OF MICE AND MEN*

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Abstrak. *Of Mice and Men* adalah salah satu karya John Steinbeck yang populer. Artikel ini ingin mengupas tema persahabatan yang terkandung dalam novel pendek ini. Untuk sampai pada pengungkapan tema tersebut, penulis melakukan analisis terhadap plot. Plot novel ini termasuk plot lurus. Artinya kejadian-kejadian dipaparkan berdasarkan urutan waktu kejadian dan tidak ada cerita yang bercabang. Cerita berkisar pada tokoh-tokoh, yaitu Lennie, Goerge, Curley, dan istri Curley. Konflik yang membangun plot terjadi tokoh-tokoh tersebut yang memuncak pada pembunuhan; pembunuhan yang tidak disengaja terhadap istri Curley yang dilakukan oleh Lennie, dan pembunuhan terhadap Lennie yang dilakukan oleh George. George membunuh Lennie karena tidak ingin melihat sahabatnya ini di penjara seperti hewan.

Kata Kunci: analisa plot, urutan sesuai waktu, unsur-unsur plot

INTRODUCTION

John Steinbeck is one of the outstanding authors of the twentieth century for his "realistic and imaginative writing, combining as it does sympathetic humor and keen social perception" in 1962. Most of Steinbeck's novel character was filled with love and pain, the life story of poor Californian, the homeless, the migrant worker, the poor fisherman, and the farmer. All of them are based on his real life story in California. As title *Of Mice And men* (1937) portrayed a class of ranch workers in California whose plight had been previously ignored in the early decades of the twentieth century, who was drawn by Steinbeck through the workers' life in California in experience living and working as an itinerant farmhand-during the 1920s because his life was spent on adventures and works as a carpentry, stone craft, artist assistant, and journalist. In an interview in *The New York Times*, Steinbeck said that *Of Mice And Men* based on a true story. Lennie's character was real. It was based on a man's limited mental abilities which Steinbeck met in his travel as a bindlestiff. Lennie was an insane asylum in California and he worked alongside him for many weeks. Lennie did not kill a girl, but he killed a ranch foreman.

The above facts motivate the writers to explore the theme of *Of Mice and Men*. The discussion will start with revealing the plot structure of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice And Men*. There are two questions to answer: 1) what are the elements of plot in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice And Men*?; and 2) how the plot structure and point of view reveal the themes of friendship? The objective of the study to describe the elements of plot in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice And Men* and the way of the plot structure and the point of view revealing the theme of the novel.

ABOUT PLOT

There are some definitions on meaning of plot but they have in common. According to M. Atar Semi (1988: 43-44) plot is a framework of a story which guides the readers to understand the story inside a novel. It presents sequence of events which

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consist of cause and effect relationship. A good plot has connected events and is enable. Similarly, Tri Budhi Sastrio (2003:11) states that plot is sequence of related events that make up a story. A plot shows the readers a relationship among events. In line with M. Atar Semi and Tri Budhi Sastrio, Glenceo (1985:41) explains that plot is the sequence of events, or what happens in a story. Each event in plot causes or leads to the next story. As the readers read the story, they wonder how it will end and they become involved in the chain of events.

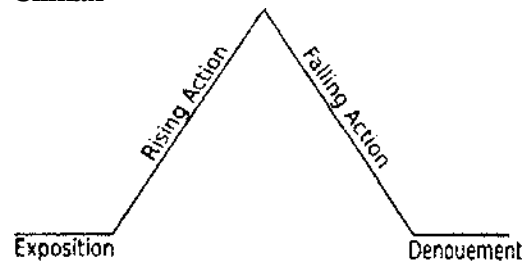
Aminuddin (1982:30-31) explains that to understand the sequence of events in a story of a novel is not a difficulty to the readers. On the other hand, the readers will get difficulty when they have to identify the elements of plot inside the story. This may pen for two reasons. First, the plot may be overlapping. For example, an event can belong to exposition as well as complication. Second, a story sometimes does not include elements of plot because the author immediately presents conflict, tells the story at length and ends it with resolution.

The Structure of Plot

Gustav Freytag in Abdullah et. al. (1985:15) explains that plot is often designed with a narrative structure, storyline or story that includes exposition, conflict, climax, and rising action, and is followed by a falling action and resolution. In addition, William Kenney (1966: 9-14) divides the structure of plot into beginning, middle, and end. The beginning of plot is called exposition. The exposition is followed by the middle which is recognized as a pattern of conflict, which includes complication and climax. The last part, the end, is called denouement or the outcome of the story.

Abdullah et. al. (1985:15) explains that a good plot can be described in a triangle, and the climax must be in the middle of the story. "[http://plot_\(narrative\)>](http://plot_(narrative)>) describes the elements of plot in a pyramid form as the following:

Climax



RESEARCH METHOD

This article applied the qualitative research as a method of analysis. Blaxter (1996:60) stated that qualitative was concerned with collecting data and analyzing information in as many forms, chiefly non-numeric form. In analyzing the plot and the theme of *Of Mice And Men*, the novel functions as the source of data. The data are quotations from the novel that support the analysis. The analysis would be conducted by confirming the theories and the data. Therefore, this study applied descriptive confirmatory method. Roth (1986:75) defined that confirmatory method was the analysis of the study which was based on the confirmatory of the theories and the data taken. Since the discussion was concerned with the intrinsic elements of the novel, the approach used in the analysis is intrinsic approach.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Plot Structure of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice And Men*

Of Mice And Men is told as a chronological order plot from narrator's third person point of view. The first chapter is largely introductory which presents the setting, the main characters and their relationship, and the situation faced by the main characters. The rest of chapter one and the following chapters successively present conflict, climax, falling action, and resolution.

Exposition

The exposition of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice And Men* informs the readers about the setting, the main characters and their relationship, and the situation faced by the main characters. The setting presented in the exposition is the view of nature around Salinas River, a few miles south of Soledad. It is described that the river runs deep and green, drops in close to the hillside, and the water is warm. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan Mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees-willows fresh and green. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp. There is a beaten path through the willow and among the sycamores and in front of the low horizontal limb of the giant sycamore there is an ash pile made by many fires, and then in evening of a hot day will start the little wind to moving among the leaves.

A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees-willow fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covering with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.

The characters introduced in the exposition are two main characters, George Milton and Lennie Small. They are described as two people with opposite characteristics. George is described as a small and quick man with dark of face. He has restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him is defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, and a thin and bony nose. On the contrary, Lennie is a huge man who walks heavily. He has shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, and wide sloping shoulders. His arms hang loosely.

They had walked in single file down the path, and even in the open one stayed behind the other. Both were dressed in denim trousers and in denim coats with brass buttons. Both wore black, shapeless hats and both carried tight blanked rolls slung over their shoulders. The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with

restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arm, a thin and bony nose. Behind him walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide, sloping shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely (Steinbeck, 1937:2).

Lennie is a mentally retarded man who has immense physical strength, and he loves petting soft things. Although he means no harm, with the physical strength he has, he often accidentally kills them.

Lennie held his closed hand away from George's direction. "It's on'y a mouse, George."

"A mouse? A live mouse?"

"Uh-uh. Jus' a dead mouse, George. I didn't kill it. Honest! I found it. I found it dead."

"Give it here!" said George.

"Aw, leave me have it, George." (Steinbeck, 1937: 6).

Lennie's love for something soft combined with his limited mental ability as well as his immense physical strength always brings about trouble to them like what has just happen in Weed. He feels the girl's dress, and the girl squawks. It makes him mix up, and hold on the girl, but she squawks more over, and people in Weed accuse him of trying to rape the girl. This incident has cost them their last job, so they have to go to Salinas to get a job.

The exposition also informs that George and Lennie are ranch hands who build friendship which is not a common for the society. Mostly, the ranch workers spend their times alone, without a close friend and family, so they always feel lonely. Even though George often complains loudly that his life would be easier without having to care for Lennie, it is apparent that their friendship and devotion is mutual. From George, Lennie gets protection and guidance, but George also needs Lennie to help him to make money to buy the land they dream.

"... if I was alone I could live so easy. I could go get a job an' work, an' no trouble. No mess at all, and when the end of the month come I could take my fifty bucks and go into town and get whatever I want. Why, I could stay in a cat house all night. I could eat any places I want, hotel or any place, and order any damn thing I could think of. An, I could do all that every damn month, Get a gallon of whisky, or set in a pool a room and play cards or shoot pool." Lennie knelt and looked over the fire at the angry George. And Lennie's face was drawn with terror. "An' whatta I got," George went on furiously. "I got you! You can't keep a job and you lose me ever' job I get. Jus' keep me shovin' all over the country all the time. An' that ain't the worst. You get in trouble. You do bad things and I got to get you out." (Steinbeck, 1937:12).

"Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world . . . Lenni was delighted. "That's it – that's it. Now tell how it is with us."

George went on. "With us it ain't like that. We got a future. We got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about us. We don't have to sit in no bar room blowin' our jack jus' because we got no place else to go. If them other guys gets in jail they can not for all anybody gives a damn. But not us."

Lennie broke in. "But not us! An' why? Because...because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you, and that's why" (Steinbeck, 1937:15).

The description about George and Lennie's friendship and the description of other ranch workers' life (who are described as the loneliest guys) also seem to function as the social setting of the novel.

Moreover, the exposition also explains that George and Lennie are in search of money for one big reason. They have got a dream of owning a little place of their own: "O.K. Someday – we're gonna get the jack together and we're gonna have a little house and a couple of acres an' a cow and some pigs and- " (Steinbeck, 1937: 15).

Conflict

The conflict found in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice And Men* is external conflict. It is a conflict of a character against characters. This can be found at number one to number nine of the events. From the exposition it is known that George and Lennie are in search of money so that they can have their own small farm. However, Lennie's mental deficiency and physical strength are not a good combination, as they get Lennie into trouble easily and it has cost them their last job. Now that, they are going to meet the boss of the ranch where they are going to ask for a job, George's hope is to keep Lennie quiet and out of trouble on this one.

"I...I." Lennie thought. His face grew tight with thought. "I...ain't gonna say nothin'. Jus' gonna stan' there."

"Good boy. That's swell. You say that over two, three times so you sure won't forget it."

Lennie droned to himself softly, "I ain't gonna say nothin'....I ain't gonna say nothin'....I ain't gonna say nothin'."

"O.K.," said George. "An' you ain't gonna do no bad things like you done in Weed, neither" (Steinbeck, 1937:7).

However, their encounter with Curley and Curley's wife ensures that George's hope is something impossible. The complication can be sensed as George and Lennie meet Curley, the boss's of the ranch son. Curley is newly married, possessive of his flirtatious wife, and full of jealous suspicion. He is a small lightweight boxer who hates big guys. He is immediately interested in Lennie because Lennie is big and dumb, and thus an ideal candidate for Curley to abuse. The atmosphere of complication is stronger when George and Lennie meet Curly's wife. When George and Lennie are alone in the bunkhouse, Curley's wife appears and flirts with them. Sensing the trouble that can come from Curly and his wife, George warns Lennie to stay away from them.

"Look Lennie! This here ain't no set up. I'm scared. You gonna have trouble with that Curley guy. I seen that kind before. He was kinda feelin' you out. He figures he's got you scared and he's gonna take a sock at you the first chance he gets." . . .

“. . . Don't never speak to him. If he comes in here you move clear to the other side of the room. Will you do that, Lennie?" (Steinbeck, 1937: 32-33).

"Listen to me, you bastard," he said fiercely. "Don't you even take a look at that bitch. I don't care what she says and what she does. I seen 'em poison before, but I never seen no piece of jail bait worse than her. You leave her be." (Steinbeck, 1937: 35-36).

The rising action begins when Lennie unintentionally has a fight with Curley. This happens when Candy, George, and Lennie are in the bunkhouse discussing their plans to buy a small ranch. Candy decides to join in George and Lennie's dream when he overhears George and Lennie are discussing their plans to buy land, and offers his savings if they will permit him live with them. The three make a pact to let no one else know of their plan. Slim who has just had an argument with Curley returns to the bunkhouse. He is berating Curley for his suspicions. Lennie is smiling with delight at the memory of the ranch when Curley enters the bunkhouse and Lennie becomes an easy target for his anger. He smashes down Lennie's nose. George asks Lennie to fight back, so Lennie crushes Curley's hand in the fight.

Blood ran down Lennie's face, one of his eyes was cut and closed. George slapped him in the face again and again, and still Lennie held on to the closed fist. Curley was white and shrunken by now, and his struggling had become weak. He stood crying, his fist lost in Lennie's paw.

George shouted over and over, "Leggo his hand, Lennie. Leggo. Slim, come help me with the guy got any hand left."

Suddenly Lennie let go his hold. He crouched cowering against the wall. "You tol' me to, George," he said miserably.

Curley sat down on the floor, looking in wonder at his crushed hand (Steinbeck, 1937: 70).

George's fear that he and Lennie will get punishment and lose their job because of the fight is disappeared when Slim gets Curley to agree on a cover story that he got his hand caught in a machine. Slim warns Curley that if he tries to get George and Lennie fired, he will be the laughingstock of the farm.

George said, "Slim, will we get canned now? We need the strake. Will Curley's old man can us now?"

Slim smiled wryly. He knelt down beside Curley, "You got your senses in hand enough to listen?" he asked. Curley nodded. "Well, then listen," Slim went on. "I think you got your han' caught in a machine. If you got your han' caught in a machine. If you don't tell nobody what happened, we ain't going to. But you jus' tell an' try to get this guy canned and we'll tell ever'body, an' then will you get the laugh."

"I won't tell," said Curley. He avoided looking at Lennie (Steinbeck, 1937: 70-71).

After the incident between Lennie and Curley, things seem to go well until Curley's wife approaches Lennie and tries to make friend with him. Curley and his wife are newlyweds, but Curley's wife is not happy with the marriage. She dreams to become an actress in Hollywood but in fact she is stuck at the marriage. She feels that her life at the ranch is lonely, so she often flirts with the guys at the ranch.

The girl flared up. "Sure I gotta husband'. You all seen him. Swell guy, ain't he? Spends all his time sayin' what he's gonna do to guys he don't like, and he don't like nobody. Think I'm gonna stay in that two-by-four house and listen how Curley's gonna lead with his left twict, and then bring in the ol'right cross? 'One-two' he says. 'Just the ol' one-two an' he'll go down.'" (Steinbeck, 1937: 85).

Curley's wife is interested in Lennie as she thinks that Lennie is a nice guy. It is Lennie's meeting with Curley's wife that leads the story into its climax. This occurs when Lennie accidentally kills his puppy in the barn and he feels sorry and worried that it will make George gets angry with him and does not permit him to tend rabbits.

And Lennie said softly to the puppy, "Why do got to get killed? You ain't so little as mice. I didn't bounce you hard." He bent the pup's head up and looked in its face, and he said to it, "Now maybe George ain't gonna let me tend no rabbits, if he fin's out you got killed." . . . Suddenly his anger arose. "God damn you," he cried. "Why do you got to get killed? You ain't so little as mice." He picked up the pup and hurled it from him. He turned his back on it. He sat bent over his knees and he whispered, "Now I won't get to tend the rabbits. Now he won't let me." He rocked himself back forth in his sorrow (Steinbeck, 1937:93).

While Lennie is in mourning over his dead puppy, Curley's wife enters the barn. Lennie hides the dead puppy under hay and tries to resist her for he is afraid that she will give him trouble.

Lennie said, "Well, I ain't supposed to talk to you or nothing."
"I get lonely." She said. "You can talk to people but I can't talk to nobody but Curley. Else he gets mad. How'd you like not to talk to anybody?"
Lennie said, "Well, I ain't supposed to. George's scared I'll get in trouble."
(Steinbeck, 1937:95).

"If George sees me talkin' to you he'll give me hell,' Lennie said cautiously. "He tol' me so."

Her face grew angry. "Wha's the matter with me?" she cried. "Ain't I got a right to talk to nobody? Whatta they think I am, anyways? You're a nice guy. I don't know why I can't to you. I ain't doin' harm to you."

"Well, George says you'll get us in a mess." (Steinbeck, 1937:96)

When Curley's wife finds out that Lennie has just accidentally killed a puppy, she tries to console him. She tells Lennie that life with Curley is a disappointment, and wishes that she had followed her dream of becoming a movie star. Lennie tells her that

he loves petting soft things, and she offers to let him feel her soft hair. When he grabs too tightly, she cries out.

“Look out, now, you’ll muss it.” And then she cried angrily, “ you stop it now, you’ll mess it all up.” She jerked her head sideways, and Lennie’s fingers closed on her hair and hung on. “Let go,” she cried. “You let go!” (Steinbeck, 1937: 99).

Climax

The conflict reaches its climax when Lennie accidentally kills Curley’s wife. In Lennie’s attempt to silence her, he breaks her neck. This is stated at number ten of the events.

She struggle violently under his hands. Her feet battered on the hay and she writhed to be free; and from under Lennie’s hand came a muffled screaming. Lennie began to cry with fright. “Oh! Please don’t do none of that,” he begged. “George gonna say I done a bad thing. He ain’t gonna let me tend no rabbits.” He moved his hand a little and her hoarse cry came out. Then Lennie grew angry. “Now don’t” he said. “I don’t want you to yell. You gonna get me in trouble jus’ like George says you will. Now don’t you do that.” And she continued to struggle, and her eyes were wild with terror. He shook her then, and he was angry wth her. “Don’t you go yellin’.” He said, and he shook her; and her body flopped like a fish. And then she was still for Lennie had broken her neck (Steinbeck, 1937: 99-100).

Lennie is panic when he knows that Curley’s wife died. He puts hay over Curley’s wife dead body until it is partly covered.

Falling Action

Falling action is the part of a story following the climax. This part of the story shows the result of the climax and effect on the character, setting, and proceeding events. When Lennie is aware that he has killed Curley’s wife, he flees back to a pool of the Salinas River that George has designated as a meeting place if either of them gets into trouble. The men at the ranch discover that Lennie has killed Curley’s wife. Curley orders his men to search for Lennie, and he decides that he himself will shoot Lennie. George realizes he has to do something. He discusses options with Slim.

Curley came suddenly to life. “I know who done it,” he cried. “That big son-of-a-bitch done it. I know he done it. Why-ever’body else was out there playin’ horseshous.” He worked himself into a fury. “I’m gonna get him. I’m going for my shot gun. I’ll kill the big son-of-a-bitch myself. I’ll shoot ‘im in the guts. Come on, you guys.” He ran furiously out of the barn. Carlson said, “I’ll get my Luger,” and he ran out too. . . .

Slim went on, “Maybe like that time in Weed you was tellin’ about.” Again George nodded.

Slim sighed. “Well, I guess we got to get him. Where you think he might of went?”

It seemed to take George some time to free his words. "He-would of went south," he said. "We come from north so he would of went south."

"I guess we gotta get 'im." Slim repeated.

George stepped close. "Couldn't we maybe bring him in an' they'll lock him up? He's nuts, Slim. He never done this to be mean."

Slim nodded. "We might," he said. "If we could keep Curley in, we might. But Curley's gonna want to shoot 'im. Curley's still mad about his hand. An' s'pose they lock him up an' strap him down and put him in a cage. That ain't no good, George." (Steinbeck, 1937:106).

George knows that he can not let Curley shoots Lennie in the guts, and he also can not receive the idea of having his friend locked up in a cage like an animal. Thus, George tries to get to Lennie before Curley can find him. George meets Lennie at the pool of the Salinas River. Lennie is delighted that George is not mad at him for doing a bad thing. George begins to tell Lennie the story of the farm they will have together. As he describes the rabbits that Lennie will tend, the sound of the approaching lynch party grows louder.

Denouement

The Resolution is very tragic. George shoots his friend, Lennie, in the back of the head.

Lennie turned his head and looked off across the pool and up the darkening slopes of the Gabilans. "We gonna get a little place," George began. He reached in his side pocket and brought out Carlson's Luger; he snapped off the safety, and the hand and gun lay on the ground behind Lennie's back. He looked at the back of Lennie's head, at the place where the spine and skull were joined. (Steinbeck,1937:115).

And George raised the gun and steadied it, and he brought the muzzle of it close to the back of Lennie's head. The hand shock violenty, but his face set and his hand steadied, 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 (Steinbeck, 1937:117).

When the other men arrive, George lets them believe that Lennie had the gun, and George wrestled it away from him and shot him.

But Carlson was standing over George. "How'd you do it?" he asked.

"I just done it," George said tiredly.

"Did he have my gun?"

"Yeah. He had your gun."

"And' you got it away from him and you took it an' you killed him?"

"Yeah. Tha's how." George voice was almost a whisper. He looked steadily at his right hand that had held the gun (Steinbeck, 1937:118).

Only Slim understands what has really happened, that George has killed his friend. Slim leads him away, and the other men are completely puzzled and watch them leave.

From what has been done by George, it can be concluded that George has killed Lennie for a reason. He does not want to see Lennie is lock up in a cage or dies at Curley's hands. From George behavior, it can be seen that George's decision to kill Lennie is the hardest thing that he has done in his life. He continues his life without Lennie and he loses his dream to have a small farm of his own.

The Themes of *Of Mice And Men*

From the discussion on the plot, it can be drawn that *The importance of friendship* is a possible theme for *Of Mice And Men*. Several characters in *Of Mice And Men* suffer from Loneliness. Candy, one of the minor characters, is lonely after his dog is gone: "I'd make a will an' leave my share to you guys in case I kick off, 'cause I ain't got no relatives nor nothing" (Steinbeck, 1937: 65). Curley's wife is lonely because her husband is not the kind of husband she hopes for: "'I get lonely," she said. "You can talk to people, but I can't talk to nobody but Curley. Else he gets mad. How'd you like not to talk to anybody?" (Steinbeck, 1937: 95). The friendship between George and Lennie is the result of loneliness.

George's voice became deeper. He repeated his words rhythmically as though he had said them many times before. "Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong to place. They come to ranch an' work up a stake and then they go into town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch. They ain't got nothing to look ahead to." (Steinbeck, 1937: 14).

George's statement indicates the bad nature of loneliness. Loneliness gives bad effect to someone's behavior. The bad effect of loneliness is reflected in Curley's wife behavior. Because of her loneliness, she likes to flirt with the men on the ranch.

"Well – she got the eye."

"Yeah? Married two weeks and got the eye? Maybe that's why Curley's pants is full of ants."

"I seen her give Slim the Eye. Slim's a jerkline skinner. Hell of a nice fella. Slim don't need to wear no high-heeled boots on a grain team. I seen her give Slim the eye. Curley never seen it. An' seen her give Carlson the eye." (Steinbeck, 1937: 31).

Curley's wife loneliness evokes further bad effect. Since she likes to flirt with the men on the ranch, this causes Curley to increase his abusiveness and jealousy.

Carlson said casually, "Curley been in yet?"

"No." said Whit. "What's eatin' on Curley?"

Carlson squinted down the barrel of his gun.

"Lookin' for his old lady. I seen him going round and round outside."

Whit said sarcastically, "He spends half of his time lookin' for her, and the rest of the time she's lookin' for him."

Curley burst into the room excitedly, "Are you guys seen my wife?" he demanded. "She ain't been here," said Whit.

Curley looked threateningly about the room.

"Where the hell's Slim?"

"Went out in the barn," said George. "He was gonna put some tar on a split hoof."

Curley's shoulders dropped and squared. "How long ago'd he go?"

"Five – ten minutes."

Curley jumped out the door and banged it after him (Steinbeck, 1937: 58 - 59).

The bad nature of loneliness is also indicated by George when he tells Slim the reason of his friendship with Lennie.

"I ain't got no people," George said. "I seen the guys that go around on the ranches alone. That ain't good. They don't have no fun. After a long time they get mean. They get wantin' to fight all the time." (Steinbeck, 1937: 45).

Because knowing the bad nature of loneliness, George emphasis the importance of friendship. Friendship prevents someone from being lonely because he/she has someone to talk to.

George went on. "With us it ain't like that. We got a future. We got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about us. We don't have to sit in no bar room blowin' our jack jus' because we got no place else to go. If them other guys gets in jail they can not for all anybody gives a damn. But not us."

Lennie broke in. "But not us! An' why? Because...because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you, and that's why" (Steinbeck, 1937:15).

Friendship gives positive effect toward someone's life. George states that because he and Lennie are friends, so they have a future. Lennie states that because he and George are friends, so they can look after each other. That George and Lennie considers the importance of friendship can also be seen from their nature of friendship. Although George complaint loudly that his life would be easier without Lennie, but he is grateful that he has Lennie.

"Course Lennie's a God damn nuisance most of the time," said George. "But you get used to goin' around with a guy an' you can't get rid of him." (Steinbeck, 1937: 45).

The importance of friendship is also stated by one of the minor characters, Crooks. Crooks is a Negro stable buck who is isolated from the other men because of the color of his skin.

"... A guy needs somebody – to be near him. He whined, "A guy goes nuts if he ain't got nobody. Don't make no difference who the guy is, long's he's with you. I

tell ya,” he cried, “I tell ya a guy gets too lonely an’ he gets sick.” (Steinbeck, 1937: 80).

Because Crooks experiences loneliness, he can see the importance of friendship. He describes what he feels to Lennie. Crooks’ statement directly tells the reader the theme of the novel.

Through the social setting in the novel and the description of some of the characters’ thought and experiences, it seems that John Steinbeck wants to emphasize the bad effects of loneliness. Because of the bad effects of loneliness, he gives further emphasize on the importance of friendship.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the plot of Steinbeck’s *Of Mice And Men* reveals several points. The plot of *Of Mice And Men* belongs to chronological order plot due to the fact that the story is told in sequence from exposition, conflict, climax, falling action, and resolution. The exposition presents information about the setting of the novel, the main characters and their relationship, and the situation faced by the main characters. The setting includes natural setting and social setting. The natural setting is the view of nature around Salinas River, near Soledad. The social setting is the life of the ranch workers. It is described that most of the ranch workers are lonely because they do not have friends or family. Based on the plot and the point of view used in the novel, it is inferred that the theme of John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice And Men* is *the importance of friendship*. Some characters in the novel are described as people who suffer from loneliness. Loneliness is the worst enemy of human beings due to its bad nature. Because of the bad nature of loneliness, people need companionship in their life. Having friends prevents people from being lonely. Thus the bad effects of loneliness can be avoided.

John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice And Men* reveals everyone has a dream in life and one must struggle to make the dream comes true. However, whether or not one’s dream comes true, it is a matter of destiny. In addition, the writer also finds out that everyone can not live alone without having friends. Living alone makes someone suffers from loneliness, but having friends can make someone’s lives more colorful. A good friend is someone who can accompany in happiness and sorrow, always supports and protects each other. A good friend will feel happy if he or she sees his or her friend is happy. However, make a friendship is not easy since friends must understand each other. The relationship must be mutual.

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