

LENNIE SMALL'S SOCIAL INTERACTION IN JOHN STEINBECK'S OF MICE AND MEN

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to reveal Lennie Small's social interaction in the novel *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. This study was classified as a qualitative research because the writer gathered the data in the form of words as well as quotation from the work itself to support the research. The writer collected the data from two kinds of sources, namely primary source and secondary source. The primary source was taken from the novel *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, and the secondary sources are the other material that supports the research such as books, articles, and websites. This study also used a sociological approach to explain the situation that occurred to Lennie Small immigrant worker and how his character development in that time as described in John Steinbeck novel *Of Mice and Men*. The result of this study showed that there are two kind of social interaction to reveal the main character Lennie Small; associative and dissociative.

Keyword: *Associative, Dissociative, Sociological approach, Social interaction*

INTRODUCTION

According to Bardis (1979:147) "*Social interaction is the mutual influence between two or more individuals, a group, or a social system.*" The term makes it clear that when two or more people encounter one another, they may behave towards one another in a wide variety of ways. When a stranger or another individual provides further details, for example, they may claim that social interaction—which might involve two or more people who affect one another socially—has taken place. Interaction itself may encompass one and the same person alone. When a person weighs the advantages and disadvantages of a crucial choice or situation, they are engaging in this

type of engagement with themselves. Interactions in society cannot separate from each other, examples of which lecturers need college students, speakers need listeners, author need readers. Relationships like this are understood in exchange and being the most basic example of interaction between humans.

According to (Sjoberg, 2009:44) " Exchange is a more limited term than interaction, no doubt. But in human relationships, engagement typically takes on shapes that may be seen as exchanges. Everyday vicissitudes cause a constant oscillation of profit and loss, an ebbing and flowing of life's contents. By consciously exchanging one thing for another, exchange has the effect of rationalising these vicissitudes". This explanation clearly describes the specific indicators of social interaction of human relationship that there is a benefiting or detrimental exchange, rational thought in their life.

The description of human life in social interaction is contained not only in real life, but also in other media. For instance, in literary works, "*literature always reflects the social and cultural phenomenon that happened in society*" (Sabudu, 2012). Maru (2014) also stated that "*human's experience in a literary works presents a written story that can be felt and analysed by many people through reading. The story is not only to entertain but also to give a value of its own to each other.*" One of the literary works containing a description of a person's life is a novel. Many authors describe the social interaction in social life. One of the author who tried to described a social life story in a novel is John Steinbeck in one of his novel titled Of Mice and Men. The novel tell the social interaction for life of Lennie Small as a migrant labor, how he went through the social process of immigrant labor.

This novel takes the place in America during the period American great depression 1929-1940s. This research entitled *Lennie Small's Social Interaction in John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men* is certainly important and interesting to study as it is different and has never been studied in the Faculty of Language and Arts at Universitas Negeri Manado. In addition, Many people think that social interaction is the thing that will exhaust time and bring them to believe hoax, but few of them realize that social

interaction is a change a few and understand each other that given by the people realize who loved them.

Social Interaction

Social interaction is a social process that occurs as a mutual influence between two parties, namely between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups, or groups and groups (Abdulsyani, 2007: 151; Suyanto and Septi, 2007: 16). This reciprocal influence, according to Roucek and Roland (1963: 41), is carried out through social contact, either directly or indirectly. Direct social contact occurs through physical organisms, whereas indirect occurs through writing or long-distance communication. Social contact will not occur if there is no social communication, i.e. equality of views between people who interact with something (Abdulsyani, 2007: 155) because in communicating, there are many interpretations of the behavior and attitudes of each person who are interconnected. Therefore, contact and social communication is a condition of interaction.

Social interactions carried out by individuals or groups aim to achieve a better balance in relation to the world around them. This is mentioned by Goldmann (1981: 40) as human facts, namely the fact that humans and their surroundings are always in a process of reciprocal structuring which is not only contradictory, but also complementary.

Kinds of Social Interaction

As a social process, social interaction is the main problem because it is the basis of all social processes. Social interaction can be associative and dissociative. Interaction that is associative indicates a movement of approach or unification, whereas dissociative social interaction indicates conflict.

1. Associative

Norma (2007: 57) states that associative social interaction can consist of four forms, namely cooperation, accommodation, assimilation, and amalgamation. Cooperation is co-operation or joint effort between individuals or groups to achieve common goals. Roucek and Roland (1963: 41) said: "cooperation is fostered by

situations in which individuals stand to benefit more by pooling their efforts than by working individually." Cooperation does not only occur between individuals or groups. According to Robotca (1947:15) a cooperative is a form of business organization-an economic entity. It is an association whose members are its patrons. It is organized by them, is essentially owned and controlled by them, and is operated for their benefit as patrons.

Accommodation is a temporary agreement that can be accepted by both parties in a dispute (Roucek and Roland, 1963: 41). Accommodation is temporary which aims to reduce the conflict that occurs between the two parties.

Assimilation is a process of fusion of cultures between two parties who have different cultures (Roucek and Roland, 1963: 44). This smelting process can give rise to a new culture. Meanwhile, amalgamation, according to Norma (2007: 57), is a process of cultural fusion, of a particular culture that accepts and processes elements from a foreign culture without causing the loss of the personality of the culture itself.

2. Dissociative

Apart from being associative, social interaction can also be dissociative. This form of interaction can consist of three forms, namely competition, conflict, and convention (Norma, 2007: 65).

Competition is a person's effort to fight for certain goals which is carried out in a state of peace (conducive). Roucek and Roland (1963: 42) say that the contested goals can be both material and non-material.

In contrast to competition, conflict is competition that is extreme and accompanied by violence. The violence that occurred, according to Roucek and Roland (1963: 42)"is the attempt to eliminate a rival from the competitive process".

Another dissociative social interaction is contravention, namely the process of blocking, hindering, and thwarting other parties in achieving goals (Norma, 2007: 65).

The same principles that govern social interaction in human relations in real life apply to social interaction in literary works as well, notably the existence of motives that emerge during human interaction. These motifs will be demonstrated in literary works by the character interactions.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

To analyze this research, the writer used descriptive qualitative analysis, because that is suitable with the aim of this research. As stated by Bogdan and Bicklen (1982:27) as follows: Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected are in the form of words or picture rather than number.

The writer used library research to find the theories related to this research. The data sources were from the novel itself including some quotations and other sources were from external sources to support the research.

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Data Collection

In this research, the researcher used primary and secondary sources. According to (Griffith, 2011:301-302) "*Primary source as the study of a subject through firsthand investigation. secondary as the examination of studies that other researchers have made a subject*". The primary sources of this research was the novel itself Of Mice and Men and the secondary sources were from several books, articles, and other internet sources related to the novel.

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2014: 247-249) "In qualitative research, data analyze consists of six step: organizing and preparing the data, reading the entire data, coding the data, sorting the data, interrelating description, and interpreting the meaning of description'. In addition, the writer used sociological approach to analyze the novel. Wellek and Warren (1949) stated: "the study of sociological literature is divided into three kinds; sociological author, sociological literary work, and sociological reader". However, this research focused on sociological literary work. Sociology of literature is branch of literature that examines problems in literature, which includes aspects of

economic, politics, traditions, moral, ethics, love, relationships, etc. By this approach, the writer analyzed the Lennie Small's Social Interaction in John Steinbeck Of Mice and Men.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Associative

Associative is the first kind of social interaction where consists of for form, cooperation, accommodation, assimilation, and amalgamation. In the novel *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck there are only two form of associative, corporation and accommodation. Cooperation and accomodation performed by Lennie with several characters in the novel *Of Mice and Men*

The first form of associative social interaction is cooperation (Roucek and Roland 1963: 41) said that "cooperation is fostered by situations in which individuals stand to benefit more by pooling their efforts than by working individually".

A. Social interaction between George Milton and Lennie Small

The first Cooperation that can be seen in the novel are Lennie and George. They have been friends since they were young and they have each other's advantages and disadvantages Lennie who is big and has strong physicality but has mental retardation, while George is a normal human being but short physical and much weaker than Lennie so George often relies on his ideas while Lennie relies on his physique.

"Whatever we ain't got, that's what you want. God a'mighty, 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 . . . An' whatta I got," George went on furiously. "I got you!" (Steinbeck 1986: 10)

The quotation express that Lennie and George are together mostly because of George express, which is the way of life for traveling laborers. Lennie consistently forgets to take care of George's business, which enrages George, who understands

Lennie's mental retardation, to makes George have to explain repeatedly to Lennie about their goals and where they get jobs.

"Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. . . . They ain't got nothing to look ahead to. . . ."

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 1986:28)

Lennie definitely more than just George's pet, as the quotation makes apparent. He is the one who gives George's life purpose. They can only have a future, a place to belong, and someone to care about them together. The fact that they have each other sets them apart from the rest of the migrant labourers, who are the most alone individuals on earth. Since their relationship is built on genuine collaboration, Lennie is willing to put up with George's abuse, and George is prepared to put up with the aggravation and difficulties that come with caring for a childlike Lennie.

The cooperation that happened between George and Lennie revealed that they needed each other to get what they both dreamed of having their own farm without having to move places to get work.

B. Social Interaction Among George Milton, Lennie Small and Boss

The boss said suddenly, "Listen, Small!" Lennie raised his head. "What can you do?" In a panic, Lennie looked at George for help. "He can do anything you tell him," said George. "He's a good skinner. He can rassel grain bags, drive a cultivator. He can do anything. Just give him a try." (Steinbeck 1986:44)

The quotation above show that Lennie Small has difficulty interacting with new people he sees for the first time and also has difficulty adjusting to a new environment because his mental retardation. He needs a partner to make up for his flaws so that people don't feel weird when interacting with him.

"I said what stake you got in this guy? You takin' his pay away from him?" "No, 'course I ain't. Why ya think I'm sellin' him out?" "Well, I never seen one guy take so much trouble for another guy. I just like to know what your interest is." George said, "He's my cousin. I told his old lady I'd take care of him. He got kicked in the head by a horse when he was a kid. He's awright. Just ain't bright. But he can do anything you tell him." (Steinbeck 1986: 44)

The remark highlighting the rancher's tendency to avoid forming friends emphasises the boss's worry that George is mistreating Lennie. When George regularly speaks for Lennie and then Lennie argues for himself and shows his psychological condition, the employer is persuaded that George is taking advantage of Lennie. He asks whether George is subtracting Lennie's pay from him since a rancher 'doesn't take so much bother for another person' in this line of employment. Despite George's argument that Lennie is his cousin who was triggered in the head by a horse, the boss is sceptical and swears to keep an eye on George. A concise description of the boss is given. Casselman (1952:33) said that "*Cooperation is an economic system with social content. Cooperatives do not only work through the social elements in them but also must be based on economic systems.*" The form of cooperation that occurs between Lennie, George and Boss is cooperation with the economic system where George and Lennie work to get wages from Boss while they work in the garden.

C. Social interaction among George Milton, Lennie Small and Candy

Collaboration does not only occur between individuals. According to Robotca (1947) "a cooperative is a form of business organization—an economic entity." It is an association whose members are its patrons. It is organized by them, is essentially owned and controlled by them, and is operated for their benefit as patrons." Based on this definition, it can be understood that cooperation can take the form of an organization where the things they need can be controlled by the Organization itself.

In the novel *Of Mice and Men*, organization occurs among George, Lennie, and Candy. Candy is the longest worker in the boss' garden; he is often referred to as the handyman. He has worked for more than four years and had to give up losing an arm due to an accident that occurred four years ago on the ranch and get compensation of 250 dollars.

Candy interrupted him, "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. You guys got any money? Maybe we could do her right now?" (Steinbeck 1986:116)

"Maybe if I give you guys my miner you'll let me hoe in the garden even after I ain't no good at in. An' I'll wash dishes an' little chicken stuff like that. But I'll be on our place, an' I'll be le to work on our own place." (Steinbeck 1986:117-118)

The quotation express how Candy from him offer to convince George, and Lennie that his might join their plan. Candy offer to donate all of his savings and compensation money to get the farm faster. One part of the cooperative that Candy herself did was a coalition by convincing them that she also has the same goal as Lennie and George to soon have their own farm.

"In one month. Right squack in one month. Know what I'm gon'ta do? I'm gon'ta write to them old people that owns the place that we'll take it. An' Candy'll send a hunderd dollars to bind her." "Sure will," said Candy. "They got a good stove there?" "Sure, got a nice stove, burns coal or wood." "I'm gonna take my pup," said Lennie. "I bet by Christ he likes it there, by Jesus." (Steinbeck 1986:118)

According to the quotation show, their cooperation will last for a month to buy land with Candy's savings and the wages earned by George and Lennie. They will use the land as a place to live, cook crops, and raise their favorite animals.

D. Social interaction between Lennie and Crook

Accommodation is the second type of associative. Accommodation is a temporary agreement that can be accepted by both parties in a dispute (Roucek and Roland, 1963: 41). In the novel *Of Mice and Men*, accommodation occurs between Lennie and Crooks. Crook was the only African-American worker on the ranch. So he often gets discriminatory treatment from other workers. Because of the discriminatory treatment he received, he became a loner and very sensitive. Crooks' sensitive nature, on the other hand, did not happen to Lennie, and their relationship went well when Lennie interacted with Crooks.

"'Cause I'm black. They play cards in there, but I can't play because I'm black. They say I stink. Well, I tell you, you all of you stink to me."
Lennie flapped his big hands helplessly. "Ever'body went into town," he said. "Slim an' George an' ever'body."

George says I gotta stay here an' not get in no trouble. I seen your light."
"Well, what do you want?"

"Nothing-I seen your light. I thought I could jus' come in an' set." (Steinbeck 1986:132)

From the quotation above explain how other employees frequently handle Crook in a racist manner. Because he was a black man and smelled bad, he was not permitted to mix with them. As Lennie entered his room, he was equally troubled by it. Lennie simply intends to be friends with Crook because he is lonely as a result of George leaving for the entertainment bar. He didn't pay attention to Crook's socioeconomic standing or skin tone. "Nothing-I seen your light. I thought I could jus' come in an' set." (Steinbeck 1986: 132)

One of the accommodation factors that occurs between the two of them is tolerance. (Pangalila, 2020: 46) State that "tolerance is strongly related to attitudes and actions that respect different religions, ethnicities, opinions, attitudes, and other people's differences." Tolerance is defined in this statement as an attitude of accepting the differences that exist between people.

Dissocative

Each person's interactions with others don't necessarily point to an understanding or unification. Conflict-related things are one of the things that contribute to this interaction. The acts of characters with various viewpoints are used to actualize this dilemma, which is also present in the novel *Of Mice and Men*. Precisely through the complex interactions between them that result from their differences. According to Norma (2007:65) competition, conflict, and contravention are examples of dissociated social interaction. The novel *Of Mice and Men* also contains these two forms competition and conflict.

A. Lennie Small and Curley

(Mu, 2020:156) Said that "Competition is the struggle by individuals or groups for the possession and use of goods that are limited or are believed to be limited. The

demand for such goods is greater than their supply". In the novel *Of Mice and Men* Competition happen whit Lennie and Curley. This competition was started by Curley who did not accept Lennie's physical form.

The old man looked cautiously at the door to make sure no one was listening. "That's the boss's son," he said quietly. "Curley's pretty handy. He done quite a bit in the ring. He's a lightweight, and he's handy."

The swamper considered "Well tell you what. Curley's like alot of little guys. He hates big guys. He's alla time picking scraps with big guys. Kind of like he's mad at 'em because he ain't a big guy. You seen little guys like that, ain't you? Always scrappy?" (Steinbeck, 1986: 52)

The quote above shows that Curley does not accept his small physique and does not like people who are bigger than him. Curley, with his background as a lightweight boxer, often invites people to fight with him, and Lennie is no exception. Curley reckons that by fighting, people won't take him for granted. But he doesn't realize that with his status as the son of a landowner, the regular workers won't look down on him without challenging them.

Curley stepped over to Lennie like a terrier. "What the hell you laughin' at?" Lennie looked blankly at him. "Huh?" Then Curley's rage exploded. "Come on, ya big bastard. Get up on your feet. No big son-of-a-bitch is gonna laugh at me. I'll show ya who's yella."(Steinbeck, 1986:122)

From the quote, it can be seen that Curley wants to compete with Lennie. He wants to gain recognition from the other workers by challenging Lennie to a fight.

"Curley was white and shrunken by now, and his struggling had become weak. He stood crying, his fist lost in Lennie's paw. Curley sat down on the floor, looking in wonder at his crushed hand."(Steinbeck, 1986: 124)

Because he did not consider the strength of Lennie Curley, he had to accept the consequences of his actions, which resulted in his hand being crushed by Lennie's grip and them losing their fight. (Mu,2020:156) explain that "the process of competition, which is the opposite of cooperation, is due to the finite nature of our planet and the fact that human resources are rather scarce. Its specific goals may be material goods,

social status, power, positions, and the like". From the explanation above, it is understood that the purpose of the competition is to gain recognition. The recognition of the power that Curley wanted was lost because of his defeat by Lennie.

B. Conflict Between Lennie and Curley Wife

According to (Mu, 2020:158) "Conflict, the opposite of cooperation, is a form of social interaction involving two or more individuals or groups that consciously attempt to thwart one another's goals or to defeat, injure, or even destroy the opponen". Conflict is necessary since it will help with the communication function throughout the interaction process. Conflict enables the combatants to learn how to use the advantages of their adversaries, increasing the likelihood that they may approach one another or come to an agreement.

Curlye's wife with another character is the character who causes Lennie conflict in the novel *Of Mice and Men*. In accordance with the description of her character and the plot that surrounds her, Curley's wife is the culprit for the occurrence of various events in the novel *Of Mice and Men*. Curley's lonely wife often harasses the other workers on the farm without thinking about the misunderstanding of Curley's jealousy.

The conflict that occurred between Curley wife and Lennie occurred when Curley's wife approached Lenny the big idiot, at that time George had advised Lenny not to get close to Curley's wife who was sometimes flirtatious, because George was worried that Lennie would cause trouble, so he carried out the best advice. Even though Lennie tried to avoid Curley's wife, he forced himself to approach Lennie.

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. . . . 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, 1986; 176)

From the quote above, it can be seen that the cause of the conflict occurred when the imbecile Lennie could not control his emotions towards Curley's wife, and because he was worried that trouble would occur, Lennie killed Curley's wife by

breaking her neck. The form of covert conflict that occurs between Lennie and Curley's wife (Mu, 2020; 161) Explain that covert conflict involves hostile attitudes or clandestine destruction. This is typical of conquest, captivity, slavery, frustration, etc. Frustration can be seen clearly in Lennie's actions, as he is afraid that George will scold him for causing trouble with Curley's wife.

C. Conflict between Lennie and George

Lennie's hobby is to pet soft animals, like mice and puppies, but he is very strong and frequently kills his delicate pets, so in the beginning of the story, especially in chapter I of the book, George got very angry at Lennie for being such a big baby for some situations, such as: when George has to explain the same things to Lennie over and over again; when Lennie stops to drink from the river and George warns him not to drink too much or he will get sick, as he did. They almost made George feel sorry for the Lennie's appearance in his life and said angrily, this is supported by the quotation below:

All the time somethin' like that—all the time. I wisht I could put you in a cage with about a million mice an' let you have fun." (Steinbeck 1986:24)

Following this outburst, George feels bad about losing his cool and apologizes by retelling Lennie's favorite fantasy about their future happiness, in which they will own a ranch and keep some pet bunnies.

Lennie has been looked after by George, who has also done his speaking and thinking for him. He was expected to watch out for him and take responsibility for his safety. In the past, George could just move Lennie away from the issue to get him out of trouble. This time, Curley's wife resisted Lennie's attempts to stroke her hair until he broke her neck, at which point Lennie yelled: "Don't you yellin',"Lennie said, and he shook her. And her body flopped like a fish. And then she was still, for Lennie had broken her neck." (Steinbeck 1986: 176), and angrily Curley tried to find Lennie and with sadistic face he wanted to kill him. this is supported by the quotation below:

"Curley carried a shotgun in his good hand. Curley was cold now. "All right, you guys," he said. "The nigger's got a shotgun. You take it, Carlson. When you see 'um, don't give 'im no chance. Shoot for his guts. That'll bouble 'im over."(Steinbeck 1986:188)

It was, however, a completely different and more challenging scenario. George came to the realization that he couldn't talk Lennie out of it and that their dream of having their own farm would never come true. Lennie could never be trusted to keep them out of trouble since he lacked self-control. Lennie was running away, and George had to decide whether to kill him before Curley did. He would only keep going through difficulties if he was allowed to flee and hide. His mental illness, which resulted in out-of-control behavior, would always be a hindrance.

George trusted Lennie with his life since he was his best friend. George made the decision to carry out the execution personally since he did not want to see Curley kill Lennie. George was torn inside by this internal conflict as he debated what was "proper" to do. He always wanted the best for him, thus he had to help Lennie end his own suffering as a final choice. He located Lennie and sat next to him to relax.

"Go on, George. When we gonna do it?"

"Gonna do it soon."

"Me an' you."

"You... an' me. Ever'body gonna be nice to you. Ain't gonna be no more trouble. Nobody gonna hurt nobody nor steal from 'em."(Steinbeck 1986:202)

Lennie felt at peace after he was convinced that everything would turn out okay. This is when George drew a gun, pointed it at Lennie's back, and pulled the trigger. There was significant discussion about this choice, which George said was the hardest thing he had ever had to make. Finally, George came to the conclusion that their goal would never come true and that Lennie will always be a burden and a thorn in his side. There was nothing more he could do but to let him go in the only way he knew how, it can be proved by this quotation "George shivered and looked at the gun, and then he threw it from him, back up the on the bank , near the pile of old ashes. George sat on the bank and looked at his right hand thrown the gun away." (Steinbeck1986:204).

CONCLUSION

After doing an analysis, the researcher found out the several kind of the social interaction of the worker during the Great Depression. Lennie Small, the main character, needs to be killed by his best friend because he can't fit in with other people. Sociological approach and social proses by Roucek and Roland show that the social interaction in the novel has impact on associative and dissociative in the main character.

Associative, social proses on associative reveal to Lennie Small and George Milton, while dissociative, dissociative reveal to Lennie, Curley and Curley Wife. Competition and conflict are two dissociative forms of social processes that interact with one another. Lennie's mental retardation often makes him get into conflict with them, and he had to end Curley's wife's life by breaking her neck.

In addition, through his novel, Steinbeck reveals a social process in crisis, which is a human condition. He says that humans with mental retardation must be able to adapt to ordinary people who do not know their condition, but in the end he must realize that he is unable to adapt to that environment.

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