

## Psychological Analysis on The Impact of Depression in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aims at investigating the symptoms and the impact of depression experienced by Lennie Small, the main character in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. This research is in the form of words which means this research was done qualitatively. The data comes from the novel *Of Mice and Men* which was written by John Steinbeck in 1937. The data were collected by reading thoroughly the novel and taking notes about the evidences of the impact of depression. In administering this research, psychological approach was used as data analysis method in order to discover the symptoms of depression of Lennie Small. The result of the study explains that Lennie had several symptoms of depression, they are; 7 symptoms of sadness, 8 symptoms of helplessness and 5 symptoms of worthlessness. The impact of each symptom made the depression to become worse and elevated to the next level of depression, at the first place it started with sadness then elevated to helplessness then to worthlessness, which in the end took the life of Lennie Small. It can be concluded that Lennie Small did have symptoms of depression which is shown throughout the story. This research hopefully could assist people in learning the symptoms of depression and become a reference for those who wants to research about depression.

## INTRODUCTION

John Steinbeck, an American writer renowned for his novels depicting the challenges faced by the working class and marginalized individuals during the great depression, often captured the essence of American society, with a particular focus on migrant workers, farmers, and those on the fringes of society. *Of Mice and Men*, published in 1937, stands as one of his most acclaimed works. Set in California during the great depression, the novella recounts the journey of George Milton and Lennie Small, two wandering ranch laborers in search of work. George, characterized by intelligence and pragmatism, contrasts with Lennie, who possesses physical strength but faces mental challenges. Together, they nurture a dream of owning their own land and living independently, yet their ambitions are repeatedly thwarted by the harsh realities they encounter. Through the lens of their friendship amidst economic hardship and societal injustice, Steinbeck delves into themes of loneliness, companionship, and the innate human longing for belonging. The tragic finale of the novella serves as a poignant reminder of the vulnerability of dreams and the inescapable grip of fate in a world marked by poverty and inequality. *Of Mice and Men* is lauded for its compelling narrative, intricate character development, and exploration of universal truths. It endures as a timeless masterpiece in American literature, revered by readers worldwide for its enduring relevance and emotional depth.

In John Steinbeck's novella *Of Mice and Men*, depression is a central theme affecting multiple characters. As the story is set during the Great Depression, a period of economic struggle and sadness that forms the backdrop for the characters' emotional challenges. The main characters, George and Lennie, illustrate how depression impacts people. Lennie, who has limited understanding, faces difficulty navigating the world. His childlike innocence contrasts with moments

of frustration and confusion, revealing how he copes with emotional issues. In *Of Mice and Men*, depression is not just a backdrop but a powerful influence on how characters behave and relate to each other. Steinbeck's depiction of these emotional struggles provides insight into the impact of a challenging era, underscoring the enduring effects of depression on human lives.

Depression is a type of mental disorder that will make the one affected to become sad resulting one to be unable to fully perform activities. It is supported by Idayu (2021), as one said that depression is a mental health disorder which is characterized by certain symptoms like sad mood, loses interest in doing certain activity which affects one's quality of life. Furthermore, Bhowmik (2012) supported the statements above by saying that depression a disorder that is commonly happen in the society which can be seen with lack of interest, feeling of guilt, having low energy and having poor concentration as its symptoms. Moreover, Febrianti (2020) described that the symptoms of depression are self-loneliness, loss of hope, having the feeling of unhappy, one can get angry easily, lost interest in doing things, fatigue and loss of energy.

Furthermore, Aina (2008) categorizes depression into different types, each associated with distinct feelings and reactions. These include sadness and inadequacy, lack of optimism, excessive worry about harm to loved ones, anger due to threats, fear from danger, deep isolation and emptiness, regret for past actions, frustration from blocked goals, and intense dislike or aversion towards a person or object. These emotions collectively influence the character's actions and experiences. Depression is a complex and often enigmatic emotional state, has woven its somber threads into the fabric of literature throughout history. As Idayu (2021) stated that depression is a mental health disorder that has the characterization of constant sad mood, having no interest in doing activities which in the end will affect someone's life. Just as the human experience encompasses a spectrum of emotions, literature too reflects the intricate interplay between light and shadow, joy and despair.

Based on Higinik, Oroh & Kumayas (2023), the symptoms of depression are divided into three category; sadness, helplessness and worthlessness. Sadness is an emotional state characterized by feelings of unhappiness and low mood. It is considered one of the basic human emotions. It is a normal response to situations that are upsetting, painful, or disappointing. Sometimes these feelings can feel more intense, while in other cases the might be fairly mild. Helplessness is the psychological state that frequently results when events are uncontrollable. Helplessness is not only involved in failure of motivation early in life, but has some of its most dramatic effects at the end of life (Reivich *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, in the book *Psychological Perspectives of Helplessness and Control in the Elderly* (Elliott & Lachman, 1989) said that Personal helplessness exists when the individual believes that he or she has failed to achieve control because of an internal fault or deficit. In contrast, universal helplessness involves the attributional conclusion that everyone in the same situation would also fail to demonstrate control over the outcome (Hendricks & Leedham, 1988). The last symptom, worthlessness, is a state of being unimportant and useless. The noun worthlessness can describe an object's lack of value, but it is more often used to describe a person especially the way one feels about oneself.

Novel is the literature that is used in conducting this research. Novel is a literary creation that captures and narrates the events and experiences of a person's life, encapsulating inherent significance. Novel is the place where the writers express themselves through their writings, where those writings could be a fiction or even based on a real event in someone's life. Similarly, Kojongian *et al.* (2023) convey a comparable sentiment, defining a novel as a written medium for articulating the facets of human existence. The definitions of novel are in line with Rorintulus *et al.* (2022), a novel is characterized as a written representation or mirror of an individual's life journey. It can be concluded that novel is a type of literature that is created by a writer's expressive imagination about story or events either based on real event or fictional that is neatly arranged for the reader.

In novel, which is an object of enjoyment for people (Griffith, 2011), depression often appears as a haunting presence in characters' minds, casting a gray cloud over their thoughts and actions. It acts like a mirror, reflecting their struggles and vulnerabilities, allowing readers to understand their inner conflicts. Through literature, we glimpse into the complex depths of the human psyche, where depression silently observes.

There are several studies which discuss the theme of depression in literary works, namely the research that was done by Sukmaiza (2015) entitled *The Great Depression Impacts on American*

*Society in 1930s as Reflected in George S Kaufman Play You Can't Take It With You*, and Higinik, Oroh & Kumayas (2023) with the title of *The Psychological Effects of Slavery in Toni Morrison's Beloved* which both discussed about depression, the researcher intends to analyze the depression of the main character in the novel which is Lennie Small. Furthermore, in analyzing the depression of the main character which is Lennie Small, the researcher intended to analyze the symptoms, causes and impacts of depression on Lennie Small. The similarity of this research and all the previous studies is that, all of the researches are discussing about depression. The differences of this research and previous studies are: Rudy, Sukmaiza (2015) uses mimetic theory and a sociological approach while the author uses a historical approach; Nurlatifah's (2013) study tells about the Great Depression in general it happened in America not to specify one area and in this study the writer specify one area it is California.; Higinik et al. (2023) talks about broader aspects of psychological effects while the researcher's is more focused on depression.

This research has the aim of investigating the impact of depression on Lennie Small as the main character in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Furthermore, this research hopefully can be used as a reference to enrich people's knowledge about the impact of depression and be useful for those who is interested in investigating depression and its impact on someone's life.

## METHOD

This research proceeded qualitatively. Qualitative is a type of research that will be done in the form of words without any numbers in it. It is supported by Gerungan *et al.* (2021) in Sumakul *et al.*, (2023) as he stated that qualitative research is a type of research that is constructed in the form of words. Qualitative method is considered as the most suitable in doing this research as it tries to elaborate in the form of words about the depression without using any number as the data. The data came from Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* which was published in 1994. The data were collected by taking note technique, where the researcher carefully read the novel, taking notes on relevant information of the problem then analyse the information with the help of outer source information such as articles.

The obtained data were then analysed using psychological approach. Psychological approach is a type of criticism in literature that analyses psychological condition of a person. It is supported by Atar Semi in Kambey, Andries & Maukar (2022) which said that psychological approach is stressed on analysing psychological elements in a literary work. It is said that psychological approach fits the most with this research as Meyer in Onthoni, Rorintulus & Lolowang (2022) said that psychological approach is an approach that is focusing on human's emotion and behaviour.

## FINDINGS

After conducting the research, the researcher found that there are evidences of depression in Lennie Small in the novel *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. In line with Higinik, Oroh & Kumayas (2023) whom stated that there are three symptoms of depression; sadness, helplessness and worthlessness, the researcher found 28 evidences of depression which are divided into 7 symptoms of sadness, 8 symptoms of helplessness and 5 symptoms of worthlessness. The symptoms of sadness can be seen when Lennie was being pushed in doing something by someone or being prohibited from doing something. The symptom of helplessness can be seen when Lennie he was forced to not being able to do anything about the current situation. Lastly, the symptom of worthlessness can be seen when he was asked by the people around him to go away from them. In the next section, the researcher explained the symptoms, effect, along with its cause.

### Sadness

The first data of Lennie's showing sadness as symptom of depression is when it was caused by George keep trying to make Lennie remembered what he said, especially about things that he had to do when he kept forgetting things.

"The little man jerked down the brim of his hat and scowled over at Lennie. "So you forgot that awready, did you? I gotta tell you again, do I? Jesus Christ, you're a crazy bastard!"

"I forgot," Lennie said softly. "I tried not to forget. Honest to God I did, George."

"O.K.- O.K. I'll tell ya again. I ain't got nothing to do. Might jus' as well spen' all my time tellin' you things and then you forget 'em, and I tell you again."

"Tried and tried," said Lennie, "but it didn't do no good. I remember about the rabbits, George."

*"The hell with the rabbits. That's all you ever can remember is them rabbits. O.K.! Now you listen and this time you got to remember so we don't get in no trouble. You remember settin' in that gutter on Howard Street and watchin' that blackboard?"* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.4)

Furthermore, the evidence of Lennie being sad as the symptom of depression is when Lennie is being prohibited by George, in which George did not want Lennie to play with a mouse as his pet.

*"George stood up and threw the mouse as far as he could into the darkening brush, and then he stepped to the pool and washed his hands."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.9)

As another evidence of sadness symptom of Lennie small can be seen when he saw Curley's wife. As George keep reminding him to not be doing that.

*"Listen to me, you crazy 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, pp.31-32)

*"Another evidence of sadness can be seen below when Lennie wanted to pet the puppy but instead George confronted that Lennie would only make it killed. In this case, Lennie was being told that he could not be able to take care of his pet.*

*Lennie held out his hands pleadingly. "Give 'um to me, George. I'll take 'um back. I didn't mean no harm, George. Honest I didn't. I jus' wanted to pet 'um a little."*

*George handed the pup to him. "Awright. You get him back there quick, and don't you take him out no more. You'll kill him, the first thing you know." Lennie fairly scuttled out of the room."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.42)

Furthermore, when Lennie was talking with Crooks, Crooks persuaded that George will not come back for him. He did it several times as the quotations below showed how Crook tried to convince Lennie that George will not come back for him. In this case, the sadness Lennie had, came from the knowledge of George not coming back, which causing the sense of feeling emptiness and loneliness of the loved ones could not be present in one's side anymore.

*I said s'pose George went into town tonight and you never heard of him no more." Crooks pressed forward some kind of private victory. "Just s'pose that," he repeated.* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.70)

*"Nobody can't tell what a guy'll do," he observed calmly. "Le's say he wants to come back and can't. S'pose he gets killed or hurt so he can't come back."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.70)

*"Well, s'pose, jus' s'pose he don't come back. What'll you do then?"* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.70)

Moreover, as an evidence of sadness when his pet died he saw the pet in sorrow while keep petting it. It can be seen as an evidence of sadness as it is common to mourn when someone's pet dies.

Only Lennie was in the barn, and Lennie sat in the hay beside a packing case under a manger in the end of the barn that had not been filled with hay. Lennie sat in the hay and looked at a little dead puppy that lay in front of him. Lennie looked at it for a long time, and then he put out his huge hand and stroked it, stroked it clear from one end to the other.

*And Lennie said softly to the puppy, "Why do you 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."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.83)

*As his pet has died, Lennie get sad as he knew that George will never again let him to tend any rabbit, as George would be mad at him knowing that the puppy had died. Lennie said, "I might jus' as well go away. George ain't gonna let me tend no rabbits now."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.98).

### Helplessness

The first data of Lennie Small showing helplessness as symptom of depression is when the main cause was, he was forced to not to speak anything when he and George were going to see the boss, which is Curley's father, resulting in him stuttered when he spoke. The stutter that he had indicates the first symptom of being helpless. The evidence can be seen below.

*"O.K. Now when we go in to see the boss,"*

*"I.... I," Lennie thought. His face grew tight with thought. "I.... ain't gonna say nothin'. Jus' gonna stan' there." ... Lennie droned to himself softly, "I ain't gonna say nothin'.... I ain't gonna say nothin'.... I ain't gonna say nothin'." (Steinbeck, 1937, p.6)*

Another data of Lennie Small being helpless is when he was asked to give George the mouse. George sat up. "Awright," he said brusquely. "Gi'me that mouse!" (Steinbeck, 1937,p.8).

In human's life, people sometimes hesitate in doing something as the result of helplessness, in this case, the hesitation of Lennie came from George asking Lennie to give him the mouse. The evidence of the impact can be seen in the quotation below.

*"Lennie hesitated, backed away, looked wildly at the brush line as though he contemplated running for his freedom.*

*Lennie reluctantly reached into his pocket. His voice broke a little. "I don't know why I can't keep it. It ain't nobody's mouse. I didn't steal it. I found it lyin' right beside the road."*

*George's hand remained outstretched imperiously. Slowly, like a terrier who doesn't want to bring a ball to its master, Lennie approached, drew back, approached again. George snapped his fingers sharply, and at the sound Lennie laid the mouse in his hand." (Steinbeck, 1937, p.8).*

Furthermore, another sign of helplessness came from the times where someone is being angry at us for asking something. This time, the sign of helplessness came from when Lennie was asking something that George considered as impossible, as when Lennie asked for ketchup, and there was no ketchup, George was angry with him for keep asking. He felt helpless, not knowing what to do at the angry George, instead he just sat there, near the fireplace, terrorized by George's madness.

*"Lennie watched him from over the fire. He said patiently, "I like 'em with ketchup."*

*"Well, we ain't got any," George exploded.*

*Lennie knelt and looked over the fire at the angry George. And Lennie's face was drawn with terror." (Steinbeck, 1937, p.10)*

Moreover, Lennie showed the symptom of helplessness when he could not entice George after he was mad at Lennie, where he could only looked ashamedly at the flames of the fireplace when George talked about George had to watch over everything he did, in order to get him out of trouble, without being able to do anything. As in human's life, what Lennie had, often happen to us, as we could not entice someone when they were mad at us, leaving us being helpless with the current situation just like Lennie. The evidence can be seen below.

*"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 m get you out." His voice rose nearly to a shout. "You crazy son-of-a-bitch. You keep me in hot water all the time." He took on the elaborate manner of little girls when they are mimicking one another.*

*He looked across the fire at Lennie's anguished face, and then he looked ashamedly at the flames. (Steinbeck, 1937, pp.10-11).*

Furthermore, this could often happen in the real life, when someone is being asked a question suddenly, one will be in a status of panic resulting of someone not being able to do something, which in this case is Lennie being speechless when he was asked and could only rely on George. "In a panic, Lennie looked at George for help. "He can do anything you tell him," said George." (Steinbeck, 1937, p.21).

Another evidence of Lennie being speechless as a symptom of helplessness is when Curley asked him if they were the ones that his father was waiting for.

*"Curley stepped gingerly close to him. "You the new guys the old man was waitin' for?"*

*"We just come in," said George.*

*"Let the big guy talk.""*

*(...)*

*Curley lashed his body around. "By Christ, ' he's gotta talk when he's spoke to. What the hell are you gettin' into it for?" (Steinbeck, 1937, p.24)*

Furthermore, when Lennie was looking at Curley's wife, he was confronted to not to do so, which resulting in him unable to avoid being confronted. The evidence can be seen below. In real life, avoidance is often seen when someone is being faced with certain problem, they will try to deny or even lie in order to avoid the problem.



*"Listen to me, you crazy 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."*

*Lennie tried to disengage his ear. "I never done nothing, George."*

*"No, you never. But when she was standin' in the doorway showin' her legs, you wasn't lookin' the other way, neither."*

*"I never meant no harm, George. Honest I never." (Steinbeck, 1937, p.32)*

Furthermore, another sign of helplessness is showed by Lennie when he did not want to fight Curley but he had to. Instead of seeing this evidence as a self-defense action, the researcher saw this as an act of helplessness, because even if he fought, he was repeatedly asking George to stop Curley as he did not want to fight. In real life, someone is often wants to avoid problem, however, sometimes problem is unavoidable, which made one had to be in a situation where one has to struggle and fight. The evidence can be seen below.

*"Candy joined the attack with joy. "Glove fulla vaseline," he said disgustedly. Curley glared at him. His eyes slipped on past and lighted on Lennie; and Lennie was still smiling with delight at the memory of the ranch. 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."*

*Lennie looked helplessly at George, and then he got up and tried to retreat. Curley was balanced and poised.*

*He slashed at Lennie with his left, and then smashed down his nose with a right.*

*Lennie looked helplessly at George, and then he got up and tried to retreat. Curley was balanced and poised.*

*He slashed at Lennie with his left, and then smashed down his nose with a right. Lennie's hands remained at his sides; he was too frightened to defend himself*

*Lennie covered his face with his huge paws and bleated with terror. He cried, "Make 'um stop, George." Then Curley attacked his stomach and cut off his wind.*

*"I didn't wanta," Lennie cried. "I didn't wanta hurt him." (Steinbeck, 1937, p.62).*

### **Worthlessness**

The first sign of Lennie Small felt worthless is after Lennie argued with George about having ketchup. As George spill his rage upon Lennie, he felt worthless and he asked George if he should go away. He told George that he could go away, find his own food, pet and moreover, nobody would hurt him. In relation with real life, the feeling of worthlessness like this is often found, such as the inability to make one's parents happy, resulting in the one to try to go away from the family. The evidence could be seen below.

*"George," very softly. No answer. "George!"*

*"Whatta you want?"*

*"I was only foolin', George. I don't want no ketchup. I wouldn't eat no ketchup if it was right here beside me."*

*"If it was here, you could have some."*

*"But I wouldn't eat none, George. I'd leave it all for you. You could cover your beans with it and I wouldn't touch none of it."*

*George still stared morosely at the fire. "When I think of the swell time I could have without you, I go nuts. I never get no peace."*

*Lennie still knelt. He looked off into the darkness across the river, "George, you want I should go away and leave you alone?"*

*"Where the hell could you go?"*

*"Well, I could. I could go off in the hills there. Some place I'd find a cave."*

*"Yeah' How'd you eat. You ain't got sense enough to find nothing to eat."*

*"I'd find things, George. I don't need no nice food with ketchup. I'd lay out in the sun and nobody'd hurt me; An' if I foun' a mouse, I could keep it. Nobody'd take it away from me."*

*George looked quickly and searchingly at him. "I been mean, ain't I?"*

*"If you don' want me I can go off in the hills an' find a cave. I can go away any time." (Steinbeck, 1937, p.12)*

The next evidence of Lennie felt so worthless can be seen when he met Crooks and he wanted to meet his puppy. Crooks said to go meet his puppy but then go away since Crooks did not want him there. In real life, this feeling that Lennie had could often be found when someone is being confronted that others do not wanted one in certain environment. The evidence can be seen below.

*"Crooks stared at Lennie, and he reached behind him and took down the spectacles and adjusted them over his pink ears and stared again. "I don't know what you're doin' in the barn anyway," he complained. "You ain't no*

skinner. They's no call for a buckner to come into the barn at all. You ain't no skinner. You ain't got nothing to do with the horses."

"The pup," Lennie repeated "I come to see my pup."

"Well, go see your pup, then. Don't come in a place where you're not wanted."

Lennie lost his smile. He advanced a step into the room, then remembered and backed to the door again. "I looked at 'em a little. Slim says I ain't to pet 'em very much."" (Steinbeck, 1937, p.67)

Another evidence showed Lennie felt worthless, just like the evidence above, Lennie thought that George did not want him to be by his side, which made him would go far away from George.

"Lennie said softly, "I di'n't forget, you bet, God damn. Hide in the brush an' wait for George." He pulled his hat down low over his eyes. "George gonna give me hell," he said. "George gonna wish he was alone an' not have me botherin' him." He turned his head and looked at the bright mountain tops. "I can go right off there an' find a cave," he said. And he continued sadly, "-an' never have no ketchup-but I won't care. If George don't want me . . . I'll go away. I'll go away."" (Steinbeck, 1937, p.97)

Furthermore, when being confronted by Aunt Clara about George constantly helped him every time he was in trouble without being able to help George, he felt worthless and he wanted to go away rather than to be a burden to George. In relation to real life, when a person is relying on someone close and is confronted to leave the person is relying to, one would want to go away so one would not be a burden anymore to the person one is relying onto.

"And when she spoke, it was in Lennie's voice. "I tol' you an' tol' you," she said. "I tol' you, 'Min' George because he's such a nice fella an' good to you.' But you don't never take no care. You do bad things."

And Lennie answered her, "I tried, Aunt Clara, ma'am. I tried and tried. I couldn't help it."

"You never give a thought to George," she went on in Lennie's voice. "He been doin' nice things for you alla time. When he got a piece of pie you always got half or more'n half. An' if they was any ketchup, why he'd give it all to you."

"I know," said Lennie miserably. "I tried, Aunt Clara, ma'am. I tried and tried."

She interrupted him. "All the time he coulda had such a good time if it wasn't for you. He woulda took his pay an' raised hell in a whore house, and he coulda set in a poolroom an' played snooker. But he got to take care of you."

Lennie moaned with grief. "I know, Aunt Clara, ma'am. I'll go right off in the hills an' I'll fin' a cave an' I'll live there so I won't be no more trouble to George."

"You jus' say that," she said sharply. "You're al-ways sayin' that, an' you know sonofabitching well you ain't never gonna do it. You'll jus' stick around an' stew the b'Jesus outa George all the time."

Lennie said, "I might jus' as well go away. George ain't gonna let me tend no rabbits now." (Steinbeck, 1937, p.98)

In the end, because he felt that he is worthless, he wanted to be dead, this time by George pulling the trigger to kill him. In real life, this is the final stage of worthlessness and depression in general. When someone felt that there are too many problems that would made one unable to handle problems, it is possible that one would want to be dead as the only way to escape depression, like what happened to Lennie in the novel. The evidence can be seen below.

George raised the gun and listened to the voices.

Lennie begged, "Le's do it now. Le's get that place now."

"Sure, right now. I gotta. We gotta."

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 shook violently, 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, p.104)

## DISCUSSIONS

### Sadness

Depression does have symptoms. According to Torres (2020) in psychiatry.org, depression can be said as a common but serious illness which affect the way someone feels in a negative way, specifically in someone's way of thinking and action. Furthermore, depression causes the feeling of sadness which can decrease the ability to function as a human being. Sadness can be said as the feeling of loss, despair and grief. Supporting the statements before, according to Lokko & Stern (2014), sadness can turn into depression. In the novel, there are 7 times when Lennie Small showed sadness as the symptoms of depression in several occasions.

The impact of George confronting him to remember things made him sad, it can be seen from the evidence below. Even if the evidence is showing that he smiled, but then he startled which indicates the sadness he felt. It can be defined that in this point, he started to feel that he was being pressured by George. *"Lennie's face broke into a delighted smile. 'Why sure, George. I remember that.... but.... what'd we do then?'"* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.4). Another evidence of Lennie being sad as he keeps forgetting things can be seen in the quotation below, when Lennie forgot where the work cards and bus tickets were. *"George.... I ain't got mine. I musta lost it,"* He looked down at the ground in despair. (Steinbeck, 1937, p.4)

The impact of the prohibition can be seen when George threw the mouse away made Lennie sad as he started crying and then sat on the ground which indicates his sadness as he was being prohibited in petting his pet. There are two quotation that showed the impact.

*"Lennie's lip quivered and tears started in his eyes."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.9)

*"Lennie sat down on the ground and hung his head dejectedly"* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.9)

As the result of what were said by Crooks, Lennie was struggling with his sadness, trying to convince himself that George will come back for him. The evidences of Lennie trying to convince himself while being sad can be seen in the quotations below. In this case, Lennie was trying to convince that George would not leave him and would come back for him.

*"'He won't do it," Lennie cried. "George wouldn't do nothing like that. I been with George a long time. He'll come back tonight-" But the doubt was too much for him. "Don't you think he will?'"* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.70)

*"Lennie struggled to understand. "George won't do nothing like that," he repeated.. "George is careful. He won't get hurt. He ain't never been hurt, 'cause he's careful. '"* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.70)

*"Lennie's face wrinkled with apprehension. "I don' know. Say, what you doin' anyways?" he cried. "This ain't true. George ain't got hurt. '"* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.70)

In human's life, sadness is sometimes unavoidable, one would feel it in one point of life. Sadness, as the first symptom of depression, could occur in someone's life and would affect how someone will react against the situation. In this novel, Lennie had several occasion of sadness as the first symptom of depression as the result of being pressured by others, being prohibited from doing something, being confronted and the mourning of losing the loved ones. It can be concluded that, Lennie Small had sadness occurred as symptom of depression, like when George was mad at him, sadness of being mocked by others, sadness of losing something or someone he loved and sadness of knowing that George would not come back for him.

### Helplessness

Another symptom of depression is helplessness (Wittig & Belkin, 1990). In this novel, Lennie Small showed signs of having this symptom 8 times, which makes the highest occurrence in the symptoms of depression. Below is the elaboration of the data about Lennie Small being in the state of helplessness. The impact made him had to give the mouse to George even if he was reluctant to do so. In the first place, he would not give the mouse to George, but as George said so, he was helplessly giving it to George. The action when he gave the mouse to George hesitantly indicates his feeling of helplessness.

The result showed that Lennie could not do anything but waiting for George instruction about what to do, which can be seen below. In real life, the symptom is often seen to those whom is having depression, even if they could, but they seem to have no power in doing something without the help of someone else around them. One with depression could know what he has to do in certain situation, however, when the symptom kicks in, one would be helpless, not being able in doing anything. *"Lennie twisted with embarrassment".* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.24) and, *"Lennie was looking helplessly to George for instruction."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.25).

In human's life, when someone is seen as helpless, it is possible that one is having a big problem. As helpless is the second symptom of depression which could occur when someone is suddenly faced with certain problem without the ability to avoid or to fight. In this novel, it can be seen that there are several occasion of helplessness in Lennie as the result of someone being mad at us, got into certain problem suddenly and sometimes one is being forced to fight even if one does not want to.

It can be concluded that, Lennie had some struggle which left him helpless such as not being able to speak or stutter when he spoke when he was questioned or when he had to do an action, also, he



showed a sign of helplessness when he fought Curley as he had to fight even if he did not want to and keep asking George to stop him.

### **Worthlessness**

The last symptom of depression is worthlessness. In this novel, Lennie Small showed signs of having this symptom 5 times.

In relation with real life, the feeling of worthlessness like this is often found, such as the inability to make one's parents happy, resulting in the one to try to go away from the family. Because he felt that he is worthless, he wanted to be dead, this time by George pulling the trigger to kill him. In real life, this is the final stage of worthlessness and depression in general. When someone felt that there are too many problems that would make one unable to handle problems, it is possible that one would want to be dead as the only way to escape depression, like what happened to Lennie in the novel.

Through all the evidences that were found by the researcher in the novel about the symptoms of depression in Lennie Small, it can be concluded that through the novel, Lennie did feel worthless, like when he was constantly being a burden to George no matter what he did.

### **Lennie's progression with depression**

Lennie did suffer from depression in the novel. It can be seen from the evidences above about the symptoms that he had. In the beginning, the progression of the depression started with sadness. In his state of having depression symptoms the first progression that can be seen is that he became dependent on George, as the quotation stated below.

*"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 rot 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." He laughed delightedly. "Go on now, George!"*" (Steinbeck, 1937, p.13)

*The next progression of Lennie in his depression is that he would rather live alone when he could not get what he wanted. "Cause I can jus' as well go away, George, an', live in a cave."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.16).

However, there are some positive progression in the novel despite having depression symptoms. It can be seen from the evidence below.

*Lennie raised up on his elbow. His face contorted with thought. Then his eyes moved sadly to George's face. "If I get in any trouble, you ain't gonna let me tend the rabbits."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.29)

*"I ain't done nothing, George. Slim says I better not pet them pups so much for a while. Slim says it ain't good for them; so I come right in. I been good, George."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.54)

*"Yeah. That's the one. You can remember anything if there's anything to eat in it."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.55)

Lennie could become obedient to George even if George constantly mad at him for being in trouble. He could do things right when he was told well. Also, his senility could be lessened when he eats. Furthermore, he felt helpless when he had to defend himself. He felt it this way because he was rarely seen to be fighting alone since George was constantly helping him out of trouble. The evidence can be seen below.

*But Lennie watched in terror the flopping little man whom he held. 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 shrunk; by now, and his struggling had become weak. He stood crying, his fist lost in Lennie's paw.* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.63)

*Progressing with his depression, he knew that George would not leave him, "Lennie said miserably, "George won't go away and leave me. I know George won't do that."* (Steinbeck, 1937, p.72)

Not being able to cope with the depression that he had, he wanted to die. In the end he asked George to end his life as a result of feeling worthless especially to George.

*"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 shook violently, 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, p.104).

The researcher did this research with the focused intention of finding out the impact of depression on Lennie Small's as the main character of the novel *Of Mice and Men* by Steinbeck in 1937. Which as described above has the outcome of Lennie showing the symptoms of sadness, helplessness and worthlessness as he was progressing being depressed. In the end as the result of the depression that he had, he took his own life.

## CONCLUSION

From the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that Lennie Small did have symptoms of depression which is shown throughout the story. As the findings and discussion above explained that there are 28 evidences of depression which are divided into 7 symptoms of sadness, 8 symptoms of helplessness and 5 symptoms of worthlessness. The impact of each symptom made Lennie to become depressed and descend deeper onto the next and worse symptoms which in the end took his life away. It can also be concluded that, being pushed by someone or prohibited from doing something will make someone sad, while being in a state of not being able to do anything will make someone feel helpless and when people were dumping someone's away from them will make one to feel being worthless.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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