THE LEVEL OF MENTAL RETARDATION OF LENNIE SMALL in

JOHN STEINBECK’S *OF MICE AND MEN*

A THESIS

By

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1213005063

Supported by  : I-MHERE Student Research Grant

Contract Number: 30/ I-MHERE-UKWMS/ Student Grant/ IX/ 2008

Widya Mandala Catholic Surabaya

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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WIDYA MANDALA CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

SURABAYA

2009
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, the writer would like to express his greatest gratitude and honour to Jesus Christ who has supported, encouraged, and poured His constant love during his study and especially in the accomplishment of this thesis. Without Him, the writer would never have been able to finish this study.

Besides, the writer also wants to express his deepest gratitude to the following people who have helped and supported him in doing his thesis:

1. B. Himawan Setyo Wibowo, M.Hum, the first advisor, who has given his valuable time to guide him with some helpful suggestion so that the writer can finish this thesis soon.

2. Drs. Antonius Gurito, the second advisor, who also has helped and guided the writer with patience in completing his thesis.

3. Jessica Puspita Wijaya, Lenny Nurcahyani, Voni Yuniati, Sherly Cokrosaputro, Evelyne Pausisca Irawan, Angeline Nita, Sandy Sanjaya, and Jati, who has given their supports in finishing his thesis.

4. All the writer’s friends at English Department of Widya Mandala University, who have encouraged him in finishing his thesis soon.

5. Oky, the writer’s friend at Psychology Department of Widya Mandala University, who has helped him in looking for the theory of mental retardation.

6. Last, but not least, the writer would like to thank his beloved father, mother, and brothers who are always so supportive of his study. The writer thanks them for everything they do in his life.

7. The writer also thanks to all the lectures of English Department of Widya Mandala University.
8. Finally, the writer delivers his deepest gratitude to the director of
I-MHERE, who has given the financial support in doing this thesis.

The writer
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ABSTRACT


Key Words: Mental Retardation, The Level of Mental Retardation

Literature is one of the fields of English curriculum that the students should learn. Literature is so essential to be learnt since it contains people’s values, problems, thoughts, and the other realities of life. There are several forms of literature. One of them is novel.

The novel entitled Of Mice and Men is one of the popular novels, which contains the characteristics of a mentally retarded person. In this case, Lennie becomes the mentally retarded person. That is why the writer conducts this research to know Lennie’s characteristics as a mentally retarded person and his level of mental retardation. Besides, the writer also finds out how Lennie Small with his level of mental retardation copes with the other characters.

The writer’s study belongs to a qualitative research. To gain the data, the writer reads the novel several times in order to get the meaning of the content of the novel. Then, the writer finds facts in the novel in order to get the chronological starting point until the last point. Next, the writer lists the main characters and the other characters. After that, the writer notes the verbal expression of the main characters. For analyzing the data, the writer does the following procedures: (1) uses intrinsic approach only; (2) uses parameters of characteristics of a mentally retarded person. This parameters include the main character’s physical appearance, intelligence, social skill, communication skill, academic skill, independence, self-care skill, and behavior; (3) categorizes the facts found in the novel based on the parameters; (4) determines the main character’s level of mental retardation based on the main character’s characteristics; (5) finally, sees how the character with level of mental retardation copes with the other characters.

Based on the analysis, Lennie Small belongs to moderate mental retardation because Lennie’s communication skill is still good and he can travel alone in familiar places without supervision. Although he is a moderate retarded person, he can still know how to cope with the other characters in order that he is not treated badly by the other characters. How Lennie Small with his level of mental retardation copes with George Milton, Curley, and Curley’s wife is discussed. Firstly, how Lennie Small with his level of mental retardation copes with George Milton. When Lennie is asked a question by George Milton about something happened before, he always tries to remember it. He does not want to give up remembering it although his intelligence is low. He also imitates George’s action in order that his action is right as a normal person. Secondly, to cope with Curley, Lennie does not speak anything or respond Curley’s questions. He also keeps away from Curley if Curley approaches him. Thirdly, to cope with Curley’s wife, Lennie refuses Curley’s wife’s invitation to do sexual intercourse.