Winesburg Ohio Essay, Research Paper

Winesburg, Ohio

Final Essay

George Williard’s decision to depart Winesburg in Winesburg, Ohio by Sherwood Anderson is comparable to George Milton’s decision to leave the ranch in Of Mice of Men by John Steinbeck. Several factors activate Williard and Milton to depart, and one reason is they both long for a more fulfilling life. Also the voiceless people around Williard and the vulgar people around Milton drives them away. Finally the death of Elizabeth Williard pushes George Williard all the way out of Winesburg, and the death of Lenny Small gives Milton a final reason to leave the ranch.

First of all Williard and Milton long for a more fulfilling life and they realize their current homes will not supply a more fulfilling life. Anderson says, “In the first place he is capable of even more brutality than Seth because he is essentially a dreamer.” From this it is understood that Anderson knew if Williard remained in Winesburg he would become a grotesque, but if Williard left and accomplished some of his dreams he would have a superior life. All Williard had to do was realize his dream and in the story “The Teacher” Kate Swift makes his dream of being a writer a reality when she tells him of his potential. As for George Milton he desires a life of self-employment. Milton was only working on the ranch to achieve his goal of self-employment. Milton was going to save money he earned from working on the ranch, buy a small piece of land, and cultivate it.

Secondly, the silent grotesques around Williard gives him a reason to leave, and the vulgar ranch workers surrounding Milton leads him to the point of leaving. Looking at the people around Williard first shows Williard to be a voice for the grotesques and a youthful ear that receives valuable advice for the future. For example; Wash Williams warns young Williard of women, Wing Biddlebaum shows him how one moment changed his life forever, and Dr. Parcival illustrates what will happen if ones main goal is to be popular. And Williard saw these flaws transpiring in his life and knew the only way to escape becoming like his neighbors were to leave Winesburg. Next, the vulgar ranch workers encompassing Milton shows him a view of the future if he remains on the ranch. Milton sees the workers at their worst when they kill Candy’s old dog. From this he realizes that if they are that amoral they can not be controlled and might kill again. He knows he must leave the ranch because of them.

Finally, the death of George Williard’s mother is the biggest factor contributing to his departure. Also the death of Lenny Small is Milton’s biggest reason for leaving the ranch. In George Williard’s case his mother is the only thing holding him in Winesburg. George already experienced his awakening and knew what he was going to do, but one person he cared about still remained in Winesburg. Her death gives him no more reasons to stay. Also the days before Elizabeth Williard’s death she wanted to tell George about her concerns for his future and he knew it made her happy to see him succeed. So he decided the only way to make his mother happy after her death was to leave Winesburg and succeed. In George Milton’s situation he was Lenny Small’s killer, but he killed Lenny to end his suffering. So, if Milton remained at the ranch he could not deal with the stupidity of the ranch workers concerning him killing Lenny. An example of this is when Carlson asks the question, “Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin’ them two guys” concerning George and Slim’s sad mood after Lenny’s death.

In conclusion, George Williard left Winesburg for many of the same reasons that George Milton left the ranch. For example, Williard and Milton had a dream and they knew their current surroundings were not good conditions for their dreams to come true. Also the grotesques around Williard and the ranch workers around Milton contributed to their departures. Finally death led Williard out of Winesburg and Milton off the ranch. George Williard’s departure in Winesburg, Ohio and George Milton’s leaving the ranch in Of Mice of Men makes these two books alike.