The Girl With No Name

I. There are several possible explanations for the only female character in John Steinbeck’s depression-era novel, *Of Mice and Men*, to be the only character that was not given a name.
   A. Steinbeck omitted a name because his writing reflected his own sexist feelings.
   B. Steinbeck neglected the name because he wanted her to be less human and therefore not become a sympathetic character.
   C. Steinbeck included her as a simple foil for the protagonists and therefore saw naming her as unnecessary.

II. John Steinbeck was sexist.
   A. He came from an earlier era when women weren’t valued as highly as they are now.
      1. Not intentional – just a product of his environment
   B. Steinbeck created her to be a purely sexual creature.
      1. Descriptions
      2. Her own language
   C. She is portrayed as a no-brained fool with one thing on her mind

III. Steinbeck didn’t give her a name in a conscious effort to dehumanize her so she would not receive sympathy from the reader.
   A. If the writer had given her a name, he could have been sympathetic to her as a writer and that would create sympathy for the reader.
   B. There is a hint of sympathy in his description of her after she dies.
   C. Further, he didn’t want the reader to hate her as much as the antagonist Curley so he didn’t name her.

IV. Steinbeck created her as a simple foil in the story.
   A. A foil is defined as a force or character that gets in the way of the protagonist’s goals.
      1. There are several foils in the story.
         a. Lennie’s disability
         b. The economic conditions
   B. By not naming Curley’s wife she becomes more of an object like Lennie’s disability or the economic conditions rather than a flesh and blood character.

V. Restate the thesis statement or controlling idea and sum it all up!