

Of Mice and Men

"Of Mice and Men", by John Steinbeck, is composed of four major themes.

These themes are the value of dreams and goals, moral responsibility, social injustice,

and the bond of friendship and loyalty.

The value of dreams and goals are that they provide hope and the desire to keep

going in life, rather than laying down to die. When Lennie is feeling depressed in the

woods he asks George to tell him about the "dream farm" again. This is the farm that

George and Lennie hope to own someday. Even though this dream seems almost

impossible at the time it still generates enough hope to keep Lennie and George going.

When George starts talking about it Lennie gets all excited and happy and so does

George. Another example of the power of dreams is when Candy over hears George

and Lennie's "dream farm" and becomes a part of the dream. Candy goes from a

depressed sad attitude to a cheerful excited one. He now has hope of doing something

and it came from the "dream farm". A final example of the value of dreams and goals is

when Crooks hears of the farm. Crooks is a lonely black man who has no future, but

when he starts to think of how he can be a part of the dream he also gets happy and excited, until his dream is crushed.

Many people of good character have to honor certain moral responsibilities.

George is bound by his own moral to take care care of Lennie. No one makes him do it,

he just does it because it feels like the right thing to do. Candy felt like he neglected his

moral responsibility to shoot his own dog. Candy felt real bad inside because it was his

job to shoot his dog but instead Carlson shot him. This shows that when a person goes

against what is morally right to them, they hate themselves for it. At the end of the

story George is forced, out of moral, to shoot Lennie. It was the right thing to do, and

even though it almost killed George inside to kill his best friend, he still did it.

Social injustice is when a person or a group of people feel they are better than

people who are different by race, intelligence, age, sex, or other differences. Curley is

rude and mean toward Lennie for the sole reason that Lennie is a big guy. Curley

doesn't like big guys so he singles out Lennie and attacks him. Another good example of

social injustice is Crooks. Crooks has to be alone all the time because he is black.

When Crooks tells Miss Curley to leave his room Miss Curley threatens that she can get him lynched. This reduces Crooks to a big pile of nothing and crushes Crooks dreams of going to the "dream farm". Crooks only responds with a series of "yes mam" 's then becomes beyond depressed. The power that one person can end another's life with a single lie without and evidence is a prime example of social injustice. A final

example of social injustice is Candy being old. He is treated old and useless, if he stuck

up for Crooks about the Miss Curley lie no one would believe him. Miss Curley laughs

at Lennie, Crooks, and Candy because to her they are all below her.

The bond of friendship and loyalty is a force that keep people looking out for

each other, rather than themselves. When Lennie is getting beat up by Curley and

Lennie, Lennie wasn't fighting back because he was being loyal to George's request for

him not to make trouble. George sees Lennie getting beat up and tells Lennie to fight

back out of friendship. When Crooks starts telling Lennie that George might die or get

hurt Lennie gets mad. He feel that someone, Crooks, might hurt his friend and almost

fight Crooks to defend his friend. Candy shows loyalty when he tells Miss Curley that

he would stick up on Crooks behalf if she tried to lie and yell rape.

Steinbeck used these four themes to show what problems America was facing at the time. A time of racial injustice, loss morals, tainted loyalties, lost hope and smashed dreams. The people needed their eyes opened to what is important to everyone as a whole rather than to one. In the battle to rise up in the world, people rarely care who is on the bottom and why they are there.