

Of Mice and Men

Literature Circle

Meeting 1- Fri. 20th

- Chapter 3

Meeting 2- Fri, 27th

- Chapter 6

Meeting 3- 4th

- Research Papers

Section 1-3

Elayna Pre- Notes-

- George and Lennie are opposites, which could foreshadow the differences the two will face later in the book. George is “small, wiry, and sharp-featured” while Lennie is “large and awkward”

- George is Lennie's caretaker, but how long can one man last in this time period constantly having to look after someone.
- George obviously doesn't like getting wronged or treated unfairly, based on his reaction of the bus driver dropping them off early
- Dead mouse- foreshadowing for other deaths in the book. Lennie just wants to hold or touch nice and soft things, but he doesn't know his own strength.
- George constantly complains about how much his life would be better if Lennie wasn't around, already setting the tone of negativity on their relationship, and putting stress on the "bond" they share. Which is truly more Codependency, than friendship.
 - But then George is very quick to follow up with an apology, and telling Lennie the story about their future, claiming "But not us, because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you and that's why". George tells this story over and over again as a way to comfort Lennie when George gets mad, as you would with a young child.
- Curley- Napoleon Complex
- George speaks for Lennie to hide his mental illness, and make sure he can still work.
 - But when Lennie disobeys him, he blows up on him and berates him.
- "Curley's Wife" never gets a name.
- Slim=Christ Figure???
- Candy's dog dying=foreshadowing
 - Candy says he should have shot to dog HIMSELF, definite foreshadow

Payton Pre- Notes-

- Lennie is compared to an animal a lot.
- George tells Lennie if he were to ever get in trouble to come back to the pond and hide in the bushes, which is foreshadowing the possibility of Lennie getting in trouble.
- Dialect with the time period.
- Racism apparent.
- Lennie guilttrips George and says he will go live in a cave if he doesn't want to take care of him. Shows Lennie isn't as dumb and reliant as he appears.

Elayna Seminar Notes-

- Slim= Maybe not christ figure, but definitely Richard Cory god-like.
- American Dream, Repetition of Farm Story shows the drive and eagerness to reach it.
 - George has his own dream that doesn't involve Lennie, that further illustrates the tension in their relationship.
- Curley's Wife= Over sexualisation
 - Critiques the idolization of women, treating her like a possession, or an evil figure of corruption.

- Later in the book we learn all she wants is recognition, and her own American Dream
- Relationship between George and Lennie's Aunt??
- **Main theme- American Dream, and who is ALLOWED to achieve it.**
 - **Privilege**
 - **Race**
 - **Mental health**
 - **Gender**

Payton Seminar Notes-

- George has his own American Dream without Lennie
- Curley's vaseline glove for his wife shows sexualisation, and "she's got that eye"
- Lennie's "Gentle Giant" character is what gets him in trouble the most

Section- 4-6

Payton Pre-Notes:

- Curley's wife threatens Crooks and says she could get him "strung up on a tree so easily it ain't even funny". This shows us that while women still aren't high up, they still have more authority than blacks.
- Lennie's childishness shows as he doesn't understand racial segregation when he goes into Crooks room.
- Lennie, Candy and Crooks are the outcasts of the ranch for different reasons. They each have their own "American dream". Lennie's is to tend to rabbits at the farm house with George. Candy's is to be able to do what he wants when he wants without having to be bound down by a real job, living off the 'fat of the land' (which folds over Lennie's dream) and Crook's wants to live as if he doesn't have to worry about racial prejudice.
- Curley's wife is a symbol of the fact that they will never be able to reach their dreams. She stomps on Crook's when she reminds him how much authority she has over him due to her being white and he being black, ultimately making him realize he will never escape the racial prejudice. For Candy and Lennie, however, she is quite literally the reason they will never be able to get the farmhouse, after she provokes Lennie to the point of killing her, ruining every chance they have of getting the house since he and George now have to take care of the problem with Lennie.
- So many of the characters names start with a C. Significance? (Curly, Candy, Crooks, Carlson, Aunt Clara)

- George claiming that Lennie doesn't act out of "meanness" means that none of his actions are done out of self interest. He acts badly without wanting to act in the first place. Things happen to him and he never makes anything happen.
- Lennie literally loves things to death. He is so kind, though doesn't fully understand the fragility of things and people since he is so strong and unbreakable. Innocence and strength do not mix well.
- Lennie is fiercely loyal to George. He is unaware of the value of human life, after he kills the dog and Curley's wife he doesn't think of one death to be worse than the other; he is simply worried that his actions will upset George and he will no longer let him tend to the rabbits.
- Steinbeck leaves the blame of Curley's wife's death on the victim herself. Her opening up to Lennie about not actually loving Curley. She remains ignorant to Lennie's strength and danger, despite knowing where Curley's mutilated hand came from and even after referring to Lennie as a "machine". We discussed before that she was seen as a sexual object through the book, but she embraces this image because she wants attention so badly. She attempts to get this attention from Lennie, proving how desperate she is since she is well aware of how dangerous Lennie can be. Her allowing Lennie to feel her soft hair and wanting that attention from him is what leads her to her ultimate demise.
- Though the blame is overall placed on Curley's wife, we can see what led her to act out. She was always objectified, even after death and Curley never even mourned her; he immediately sought revenge on Lennie proving he is a violent character. She was only described in a pure light after she was found dead, and even after her death, Candy continued to call her a "tramp" and a "tart" this draws the image of her being only a trophy wife to Curley.
- Foreshadowing: Carlson's missing Luger. They speculate Lennie stole it for his own protection, though Lennie is incapable of thinking up of such a plan, considering readers can see that he only is worried about the trouble he is with George and that he won't be able to tend to the rabbits, not about his life.
- Sort of circle plot. The book ends in the same place it began, George and Lennie at the river with George telling Lennie "about the rabbits"
- Lennie has hallucinations about his Aunt Clara and a giant rabbit. Since it is the first time the book is mostly in Lennie's point of view, it is a plausible idea that these hallucinations are regular occurrences in Lennie's overactive imagination.
- The Luger used to kill Curley's dog is the same used to kill Lennie
- Through the whole work Lennie is characterized as a dog. His hands are described as a paw, he drinks water from the river like a dog, he is unaware of his strength like a dog, and most importantly he is loyal to George like a dog would be to his master. His fascination for rabbits is also dog-like as he remains focused on one extremely minor goal through the entire book, as a dog could also keep a fascination for rabbits as well.

Elayna's Pre-Notes-

- Point of view change to Crooks
- Lennie's child-like innocence also has positive effects on people, seeing as Crooks opens up to him
- Curley's Wife represents the racial hierarchy the time period faced, while women face oppression (she never gets a name), a white woman is still higher up than a black man.
- The 3 men sharing their dreams is a form of communion, and The American Dream brings people together. This is the first time Candy has ever been in Crooks' room in all the years they have worked together, and this time allows us to learn more about each of the characters in the way that they react to each person's dream.
- Everyone wants something better, it's a matter of how much you want to work for it.
- Curley's Wife is a bitter woman, after years of getting her personal American Dream squashed down she is left to squabble for attention in the dust left over.
- Lennie killing Curley's Wife symbolizes the struggle minority's face when working toward their dream. It shows that there is truly no way for certain groups of people to ever achieve what they want, similar to that of The Great Gatsby. This can be seen with Crooks, Lennie, and Curley's Wife. Black people, the mentally ill, and women.
- George realizes he ultimately never truly believed in his dream, only kept up the facade for Lennie, proving still that the American Dream is falsified.
- The circular plot of the story is an interesting literary technique
- Lennie's vision shows the stresses this world has caused on his brain
- The repetition of Lennie and George's pattern of berating and hopefulness completes the entire circle, both characters come together, but only one can leave.
- Lennie is killed as Candy's dog was, with the same gun, in the same manner.
- The entire novel shows the animalistic imagery Lennie is described with, every aspect of him is described as a dog, and in the end he is killed like a dog.
- George and Lennie as foil characters built up and destroyed each other. Without Lennie, George no longer has a meaning to his life, he has nothing to look forward to, even though he caused trouble George still needed him for hope.
- The theme of American Dream is very prominent throughout the entire novel, it is interesting to discover everyone's personal dream, and the group dreams they come up with together.

Payton Research:

- Characters with a letter C: Several of the characters from the ranch have names that start with the letter 'C'. If we look at the shape of the letter, it is an incomplete circle. This characterizes the lack of unity that takes place with the characters on the ranch, more of how George and Lennie do not fit in since they are an example of unity.
 - <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/how-did-steinbeck-use-characterization-mice-men-124587>
- Author John Steinbeck was born in Salinas California, which is where Of Mice and Men takes place. Steinbeck also had ranch work experience and even called himself a "bindlestiff". Lennie's character is real, and inspired by a man who killed a ranch foreman for firing his friend. It is argued that Of Mice and Men is a narrative story rather than fiction
 - <https://books.google.com/books?id=mY98r12LiuEC&pg=PA9&lpg=PA9&dq=%E2%80%9CLennie+was+a+real+person.+He%27s+in+an+insane+asylum+in+California+right+now.%22&source=bl&ots=FbVSEvS1Fi&sig=2gIHRcAloGaFEC-4sMo0rb24ZTE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=QetZVbSjErWLSQTfsYL4Ag&ved=0C#v=onepage&q=%E2%80%9CLennie%20was%20a%20real%20person.%20He's%20in%20an%20insane%20asylum%20in%20California%20right%20now.%22&f=false>

Elayna Research-

- American Dream Theme Analysis
 - <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/of-mice-and-men/themes/the-american-dream>
- Women and Femininity Theme
 - "In of mice and men the only good women is a dead women"
 - <https://www.shmoop.com/of-mice-and-men/women-femininity-theme.html>
- Steinbecks Portrayal of Women
 - Is steinbeck a misogynist or is he portraying the plight of women in a sexist society
 - <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-steinbecks-portrayal-women-mice-men-165695>
- Feminist Subtext
 - <https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/5587422>
- Why students read OMAM
 - <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-12829392>

Payton Seminar:

- Bindlestiff: a hobo. One carrying a bundle containing a bedroll
- In the front of the book there is a biography of Steinbeck.

Elayna Seminar:

- Is Steinbeck a misogynist or is he depicting the struggle of women in a sexist society
 - He critiques society's view of almost every oppressed group in the novel, so I believe he could be depicting woman's struggle. But the underlying notion that "The only good woman is a dead woman" makes it less believable.
- //////////////////////////////////////
////////////////////////////////