

Id, ego, and mice over men essay sample



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The story, "Of Mice and Men" is a greatly appreciated book throughout the perspective of many. But only some truly understand the meaning behind it. In the book *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, two characters, Lennie and George, go through a list of journeys to conquer their one and only dream. This dream is to have a farm all to themselves with no worries, no one to bother them, and to live a peaceful life. Like a dream should be, this is far from what their reality actually is. George and Lennie soon find on their journey that difficult decisions need to be made although there will be consequences. As some already may know, the famous psychologist Sigmund Freud created the most unique and brilliant theories known to man. One out of his many theories state that the human psyche has more than one aspect.

In fact, he believes that there are three main parts that a human generates over time. The first part is called the id, an unsophisticated, impulsive part of one's life. This certain part supposedly makes decisions without thinking, demands immediate satisfaction, and operates the pleasure principle, which seeks good or bad attention like a newborn child. Second, is known as the ego. The ego as Freud states, "Is that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world" (Freud 1923). So in other words, the ego is a more mature version of the id. This section of one's life seeks pleasure just as much as the id, yet the ego is precautious and aware of the consequences and "pain" it may cause. "Often the ego is weak relative to the head-strong id and the best the ego can do is stay on, pointing the id in the right direction and claiming some credit at the end as if the action were its own. It has no concept of right or wrong; so something is

good simply if it achieves its end of satisfying without causing harm to itself or to the id" (McLeod). Lastly, the super ego is superior to both the id and Ego. This is the part in one's life when he or she does not only go for the ideal and rational choices, but they will strive for perfection and extreme morality. The thought of one's "ideal self" is entered in this stage of a human. If a person in this stage does something out of their "ideal self", then they could potentially feel the expression of guilt, or could even arouse anxiety. The people, who are most in touch with their super ego, overall tend to make better decisions.

One may ask, how does any of this information relate to the story Of Mice and Men? Well first, Lennie can generally be characterized as the "id" in this book. For example, Lennie never is able to figure out why he is killing the mice or why he tends to hurt the other animals such as the puppy and rabbits. He "needs" the mice because he is intrigued with them, but his mind is not able to tell him that it is not his to touch or that he may be petting them too hard. This is showing the reader that he does not have self-control and he needs the satisfaction of the mouse immediately. The next killing is far more drastic. One day in the barn, Lennie is mesmerized by Curley's wife's silkiness of her dress. She allows him to feel it and she never realizes how much of a mistake that is. He ends up not letting go and chokes her with out even knowing. His impulse and aggression led to a far more consequential situation than he is aware of. In addition, Lennie does not think before he speaks or acts. It is almost as if he were a two year old boy who screams for food or his parents. The similarities between Lennie and a child fewer than two are almost identical. When George tells Lennie what

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to say, he forgets it in an instant and creates constant frustration. George would always look after Lennie like a child and that could be why he is always in this state of mind. Lennie has no perception of what will come after his mistakes and his decisions predict the future of the book's ending. George on the other hand identifies as the ego and super ego.

For example, George knows how to find work, he knows how to survive on journeys, and he knows how to live without Lennie. He rationalizes with Lennie, which relates to the quote from McLeod in the third paragraph. George looks at what the outcome would be if he acted upon something so quickly. If he predicts the outcome will be negative, then there is a more likely chance that he will not pursue that idea and will create a smarter, more precise plan. For example, when he explains to Lennie when they are on the walk to their new workspace. George succeeds to finally find a way to convince Lennie on where they are headed although it took patience and time. George did get frustrated the first multiple times of telling Lennie where they are going, but he found a better solution on how to persuade him on going on the trip.

This solution is better known as bribery, which is sly yet clever but this is a perfect example of George's character. At the end of the book, George has to make an extremely hard decision. When Lennie kills Curley's wife, he runs away and goes to the "hiding spot" that George said to run to if he ever gets in trouble. When all the people on the farm figure out who killed her, they create a rampage throughout the entire barn. George knows that if he does not kill Lennie himself, then all of the others will. His decisions were between shooting Lennie to put him out of his misery, and to admit defeat, or to let <https://assignbuster.com/id-ego-and-mice-over-men-essay-sample/>

the mad house of people take and murder him out of hate. The state of ego comes into play when he decides to kill Lennie to take him out of misery. He clearly did not want the worst for Lennie but he knew what had to be done in the end. He maturely made the decision although it was probably the most strenuous and punishing one he will ever make. In conclusion, Lennie's personality and actions leads the reader to believe that he plays the role of the id and as well as George's personality and actions play the role of the ego and superego.

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