

John Steinbeck presents Loneliness

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



John Steinbeck presents loneliness as perilous and in my opinion like a disease in its contagiousness and the after effects of it. For example, Crooks complaining that he might even be developing a mental issue due to his loneliness and the desperation and vulnerability that has followed it; moreover, the general atmosphere it causes which is seen in the mood of the characters we are introduced to. Generally it's portrayed in a negative light, however, we notice a recurring theme in Steinbeck's writing which is, that he offers no help with the characters loneliness.

Firstly, the character Crooks is used by the author to symbolise the downgrading of black community that was occurring during the times mainly through racism and discrimination. Crooks is also significant as he provides an insight into the reality of the American Dream and the feelings of the workers on the farm; their loneliness and their desire for company. ' A guy goes nuts if he ain't got nobody. I tell ya a guy gets too lonely an' he gets sick' while he is confiding in Lennie his mood is quite sombre as he reveals this, I believe the author is using this conversation makes us believe that Crooks has become mentally ill due to the corrosive effects of loneliness.

Furthermore, as an African American he is not allowed in the bunk house or even to play cards with the white ranchers; he is isolated extremely because of his race. He explains to Lennie it is " Cause I'm black. They play cards in there, but I can't play because I'm black. They say I stink. Well, I tell you, you all of you stink to me." This portrays that he longs to join them even if it's just for one game, and that he feels bitter that he can't. Moreover, when Crooks finds about Lennie and George's dream he wants to pitch in even if for free, " If you... guys would want for nothing-just his keep" This shows just

how desperate Crooks is to overcome his loneliness and be a part of something. For a minute, we believe that Steinbeck has given the most lonely character a window to get at least a friend and fulfill his wish, however, Steinbeck as earlier mentioned kills this dream quite quickly in the form of Curley's wife when she threatens him with hanging. After that, he goes back to his usual grouchy self, as he firmly believes that he would never be able to receive the basic pleasures and the sense of belonging that others had.

Lastly, the attitudes that develop from the after-effects of loneliness are discussed by Slim and George while discussing Lennie and other workers. "They get so they don't want to talk to nobody." Slim says this as he notes the violence and meanness of the itinerant workers either through selfish actions or bitter words. This is pretty practical as in the times there was a lack of jobs so if you had a chance to get rid of your competition you would do so readily leading to mistrust and enmity being doubled hence the analogy to a disease. After seeing this conversation the audience comes to a conclusion that Steinbeck's wants us to realise that the isolation during the Great Depression was dangerous as society at the time would crumble as the pillars holding it up: kindness and friendship would not be present, on top of that, he shows us that by losing its humanity society was destroying itself due to the isolation caused by the state of the people and their economy. On another note, this gives us a true insight into the Great Depression as we find out that it was not only the superficial economic slump but the actual mood of the people at the time.

In conclusion, Steinbeck presents loneliness as a dangerous disease through the character of Crooks and society at large and gives an observation on how lonely life can be for some people and the bitterness it leaves behind.