

Social Outcasts in John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men

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Social Outcasts in Of Mice and Men

In the novel *Of Mice and Men* written by John Steinbeck, a variety of characters are present, although, not all fit in. Two of the strongest examples are Crooks, and Curley's Wife. Throughout the novel, they are portrayed as social outcasts in whatever they did. Another good example is Lennie, mainly because of his mental condition. All three are treated in a cruel manner at one point or another in the novel.

Crooks is an older black man with a crooked back, who lives by himself in the barn. He was asked not to bother the whites, and to stay out of their

way, and so therefore he requests that no one bother him. Being the only African American on the ranch, the reader begins to question racism and prejudice. Were the others racist toward Crooks? Not necessarily, they just didn't allow him to [hang](#) out in the bunkhouse with them. At one point in the novel, Crooks talks of how lonely he gets, and how a man goes insane without anyone to talk with. He says this to Lennie:

"'S'pose you didn't have nobody. S'pose you couldn't go into the bunkhouse and play rummy 'cause you was black. How'd you like that? S'pose you had to sit out here an' read books. [Sure](#) you could play horseshoes till it got dark, but then you got to read books. Books ain't no good. A guy needs somebody-to be near him. A guy goes [nuts](#) if he ain't got nobody. Don't make no difference who the guy is, long's he's with you. I tell ya, I tell ya a guy gets too lonely an' he gets sick" (pg.'s 72-73)

Even if nobody treated him like an outcast, or in other words called him a nigger and pushed him around, he had to feel like one. The above quote explains what Crooks felt loneliness could do to a man.

The other men on the ranch also treat Curley's wife, who is never given a name, poorly. She is always looking for attention and flirting with them, and this turns them off immensely. The fact that she is the only woman in

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