

Of mice and men chapter analysis

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



In chapter four of the story “ Of Mice and Men” we are immediately introduced to Crooks. Through the great detailed description given by Steinbeck the reader can learn many things about Crooks’ character. Crooks’ name itself suggests that there is something physically wrong with him. His physical disability is one of the many ways that he suffers on the ranch. He is not shown much in the first three chapters and this indicates his position in society as very low because he is not noticed, and therefore is not important. However, unlike the other characters in the story, he is the only African American worker on the ranch.

Initially, Crooks was forced to live separately from the other workers in “ a little shed that leaned off the wall of the barn” implying to the fact that he was treated like an animal, as a barn is a place where animals live. This clearly shows that he was treated with inequality by the other men.

Due to the colour of his skin Crooks was enforced to live on his own alongside the animals. The fact that he had “ his bunk in the harness room” suggests that his living conditions were not of the best quality as Crooks was a victim of racism, reinforcing once again Crooks’ inferior status.

Furthermore, Crooks’ possessions reveal significant information about his character as the “ mauled copy of the California Civil Code for 1905” emphasises his loneliness and his awareness of his rights even though he doesn’t have many of them. The book is the only object that gives him dignity, pride and self-respect as 1905 was the year when African Americans were treated equally as whites. Crooks accepts the fact that whites and blacks could not mix as he lives in a racist society.

Additionally, his lower status is reinforced again as the “ range of medicine bottles, both for himself and for the horses” were placed together highlighting the point that he is treated equally as the animals. Crooks is aware of his low status and knows whether or not the medicines are placed together, this will not make any difference as he will always be a victim of racial discrimination. He decided that he was no different to the horses so he placed both his and the horses medicines together. Also, we as the reader learn that Crooks is a very lonely man as it is frequently repeated of him “ being alone”. However, it could be said that this isolation was generated by the racism in his society.

As we read further into chapter four we realise that Crooks is a skilled tradesman as he had “ a little bench for leather-working tools” showing his skills are sought after and makes him more permanent where he decides to work. This also indicates to us that he has no personal space due to the racial inequality during this time as he was required to use his room as a working area.

Moreover, Crooks possessed “ a tattered dictionary” and “ a pair of large gold-rimmed spectacles” revealing to the reader that he reads a lot and is literate. This suggests that he is a very intelligent and a well educated man as during this time not many people could read.

Through out this key chapter it is frequently reminded to us that Crooks was a victim of racism in America during the 1930's as “ he kept his distance and demanded that other people kept theirs.” From this we can determine that he is a very secluded man and he likes his privacy, however we also learn

later on that he is very lonely. It is also self evident that he has been hurt deeply by other people's rejections so therefore rejects others. Living in a harsh environment makes Crooks generate defensiveness and the desire to protect himself from the racial prejudice and inequality towards him by the other workers.

As the reader we learn that Crook is a proud aloof man as his " room was swept and fairly neat" reinforcing the fact that Crooks is proud of his colour despite living in a racist society. Despite being a poor worker Crooks still manages to keep his room clean and tidy. In addition, his " black wrinkles" and " pain-tightened lips" portray a sense of long and deep suffering that Crooks has experienced. The racist environment in which he lives in may have been the cause for such pain. This also reveals to us that not only does Crooks suffer pain on the outside but also he feels dejected and isolated inside causing him to suffer emotionally.

Overall, in the novel " Of Mice and Men" Crooks is a stable back segregated from the rest of the men on the ranch because of the fact that he is black and perhaps because he is a cripple. It becomes clearly obvious to the reader of life in America during the 1930's and the racial discrimination at this time. Also due to the detailed description given by the author we are able to put ourselves in this character's position and see how hard life was for him on the ranch and have empathy towards him.