

The exposition

Analysis:

“Soledad” and “Salinas”

→ a slight sibilance and softness to create the idealism

→ meaning of soledad/ solidad is loneliness and being solitary

“deep and green”

→ words create a romanticized and idyllic image

→ it romanticizes the American nature and the idea of the land of the plenty. This is an uplifting idea because the possibility of it led itinerant workers to hope for something.

“warm”

→ pleasant and peaceful image and no one is disturbing the scene.

“curve up”

→ sounds gentle

“debris of the winter’s flooding”

→ the flood is a bad thing which happened which brings an element of negativity to the idyllic scene

→ the debris could metaphorically represent itinerant workers, or more specifically George and Lennie, who and the “flood” was the bad thing Lennie did; they have now been washed up here in Soledad. The “winter’s flooding” hints that Lennie has done something bad even though the reader is not yet introduced to the characters.

→ implies it is spring and the aftermath of the winter is following. Spring represents new beginnings and possibility, showing that the American Dream is hoped for by the “debris” and George and Lennie.

“mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches”

→ listing creates a slowness and steady pace

“a lizard makes a great skittering”

→ onomatopoeic and even a little lizard is able to make a “great” noise in the peace of the river bank. It could also imply that small things can have a great impact and still make a difference, inferring that George and Lennie still might have this possibility; also shows their insignificance in the grand scheme of things even though the novella is based on them. Also the great effect: Lennie petting the woman’s dress in Weed and this caused them to have to escape because otherwise Lennie would have been killed.

“beaten hard by boys” and “beaten hard”

→ plosive “b” and “d” shows the harshness towards humans compared to the pleasantness of the description of nature. Man is harming nature as the plosives are very aggressive.

→ this alters the natural and picturesque image because of the violence and imperfection introduced.

→ repetition to emphasize the damage and harm that nature has caused to mankind

“tramps”

→ derogatory term for the itinerant workers. It implies the normal failure of achieving the American Dream as well as delineating the poverty caused by the Great Depression.

“jungle-up”

→ hang about is the meaning

→ the itinerant workers who have lost their dream no longer have a purpose and a reason to work hard so they are lazy. The “jungle” could also refer to the manner in which they conduct themselves when they are careless – going to the cathouse and not washing their hands before/after meals etc.

“giant sycamore”

→ shows the vastness and scale of nature compared to the men.

→ the largeness also links to how this is in present tense compared to when George and Lennie arrive (past tense) because it shows the continuity and overpowering quality of nature compared to the transience of itinerant workers.

“ash pile”

→ connotes that the “giant sycamore” was a symbol of Lennie

→ discarded and uncared for

→ Lennie is really large but then is destroyed by society and left dead – no ceremony or funeral is held for him, they all just walk away in the end and he is left there. This is thus a metaphor for Lennie’s future.

“fires;”

→ the semicolon shows a change of tense and tone show present to past. Represents a cyclical tale and how the itinerant workers will come and go even though the nature remains the same.

“worn smooth”

→ effect of man on nature however is positive juxtaposing the previous “beaten hard”. It brings more unity between man and nature than before.

“men who have sat”

→ men is ambiguous as it could be anyone who has sat there. This shows that all the itinerant workers have the same dream and same story and many of them have passed through the same place and situation as George and Lennie are. Their story is not special; it is the story of many.

→ “have sat” also uses the past perfect tense to show the temporariness of itinerant workers.

“a stilted heron labored up into the air and pounded down river”

→ the same symbolism as the end of the novella. The heron symbolizes society and thus when George and Lennie arrive and talk about their dream there isn’t the impact of society and the influence of society to stop them from talking about it and hoping for it.

