

Dreams

Dreams are one of the ways in which the characters combat the loneliness and hopelessness of their existence.

The most obvious example is the dream farm, a dream shared at first only by George and Lennie, but which later spreads to include Candy and Crooks.

Crooks reveals that it is the favourite dream of the itinerant ranch hands:

'Seems like ever' guy got land in his head.'

It is a powerful dream, however, and even the cynical Crooks falls under its spell for a short time.

To Lennie, the dream is an antidote to disappointment and loneliness, and he often asks George to recite the description of the farm to him.

Curley's wife is another who has dreams, her fantasies of a part in the movies and a life of luxury. Part of her dissatisfaction with her life is that it can never measure up to her dreams.

Significantly, none of the characters ever achieve their dreams

Nature

Steinbeck shows the world of nature to be a beautiful and peaceful one, but threatened by the actions of men.

The beginning of the novel sets this pattern, as the creatures at the pool are disturbed by George and Lennie's approach.

The ranch and its buildings, being created by men, are in contrast with the natural world. Notice that the bunkhouse, for example, is quite bare and stark.

Even more unnatural is that Candy and Crooks are both deformed or unnatural in appearance.

Contrasted to these two characters is Lennie, who almost seems a part of the natural world as he is described in animal terms.

In fact, one of Lennie's dreams is to go and live by himself in a cave. Maybe this would be the only way in which the natural world of Lennie would not come into conflict with the world of men.