

Notes on Steinbeck's Style

Of Mice & Men - Jolly - Spring 2014

Sensory Details

- add **richness** and **vivid imagery** (show rather than tell)

“It was Sunday afternoon. The resting horses nibbled the remaining wisps of hay, and they stamped their feet and they bit the wood of the mangers and rattled the halter chains. The afternoon sun sliced in through the cracks of the barn walls and lay in bright lines on the hay. There was the buzz of flies in the air, the lazy afternoon humming.” (84)

Pacing

- control flow of story & reader's attention

“From outside came the clang of horseshoes on the playing peg and the shouts of men, playing, encouraging, jeering. But in the barn it was quiet and humming and lazy and warm.” (84)

Soliloquy

- a character's **extended aside** - allows us to hear what a character is thinking privately (common in drama)

“And Lennie said softly to the puppy, ‘Why do you got to get killed? You ain’t so little as mice. I didn’t bounce you hard.’ He bent the pup’s head up and looked in its face, and he said to it, ‘Now maybe George ain’t gonna let me tend no rabbits, if he fin’s out you got killed... God damn you,’ he cried, ‘Why do you got to get killed?’”
(85)

Symbolism (nature)

- **significant details** - tell us more than simple description - foreshadowing/representing

“A water snake glided smoothly up the pool, twisting its periscope head from side to side; and it swam the length of the pool and came to the legs of a motionless heron that stood in the shallows. A silent head and beak lanced down and plucked it out by the head, and the beak swallowed the little snake while its tail waved frantically.” (99)