What connection can be forged between *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and *The Green Mile* by Stephen King?

In both John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Stephen King's *The Green Mile*, men are depicted in desperate situations. George, Lennie, and their fellow ranch hands live in the unrelenting financial desperation of the Depression era, which impacts their emotions in different ways. Paul Edgecombe and his fellow wardens of E Block bear witness to the emotional desperation of the prisoners awaiting their imminent deaths.

Some of the characters in Steinbeck's novella will remind readers of characters in *The Green Mile*. For example, George and Paul Edgecombe both feel what it is like to be responsible for another man's death. Lennie and John Coffey also share similarities: both men are exceptionally large and intimidating in terms of their physical stature, both men are childlike in their manners and outlooks, and both men have been found guilty of committing acts of violence against women.

Both works stress the humanity of the individual in conditions that might lessen one's humanity. The Great Depression is shown in Steinbeck's terms as a brutal time period where people struggled to carve out some semblance of life and where economic reality dictated how life was lived. The life of the institution is shown in King's work to be a realm where cruelty does exist, and where difficulties in living are evident. The scant humanity in both worlds is sought to be temporarily offset with the love of animals. Eduard, and later John's, love for mice and Lennie's love for animals are both ways in which a human element is brought out in both worlds where inhumanity seems to be the norm. Naturally, the massive sizes of Coffey and Lennie are connections between the work. The fact that both are very big and very strong belies how good of hearts they possess and how they are seen as intrinsically good people in a world that fails to understand them. I think that the other connection that can be forged is how both works view the taking of a life. King's work is passionately against the idea of capital punishment. Steinbeck's work speaks in a different way to this idea, suggesting that Lennie's humanity is preserved when George takes his life with dignity and compassion.

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