

# Contemporary voice on classic ideals

Business



The theme of loneliness in John Steinbeck's novel, *Of Mice and Men*, and the loneliness felt by the people affected during World War II go hand in hand.

Because both the novel and the war were set during the great depression much of the same emotions were felt by the citizens in America. In addition with many family members or friends leaving for the war, it left many people in a state of desperation and uncertainty. Much like the novel, this great depression left people stranded and bouncing from job to job just to make ends meet. With the start of World War I in 1939 many people were being left at home while their family members or friends went off to serve in the war. The loneliness of the soldiers on duty and their family and friends at home could be felt by most Americans.

With the uncertainty of upcoming events due to the war many people felt hopeless and worried for their loved ones fighting for our country. In addition to worrying about their loved ones many people were also still worrying about their overall well being because of the great depression that struck in 1929. This time period for Americans was that of complete uncertainty. These events occurring between 1929 and into the 1940's correlate directly with the emotions felt by people in the novel, *Of Mice and Men*. Because this story was set during the great depression, the theme of loneliness can be related to the actual people experiencing life during this time period.

For example the two main characters in the book, George and Lennie, only have each other to rely on. In addition you find characters in the book such as Candy and Crook's who represent America's desire for companionship in a time period of loneliness for a lot of people. Another symbol of loneliness is

seen with Lennie's obsession with petting animals. For Lennie, these animals represent the companionship he is lacking with people because of his disability and his current living situation. For all of these characters in the novel, simple human communication is key for their own sanity. Because Steinbeck wrote during the modernist period, which also includes the great depression and WWI, these themes can be seen woven throughout *Of Mice and Men*.

It seems that Steinbeck was trying to convey the emotions felt by the Americans during this time period in his novel by creating a story that people could relate to at that time. By relating to his readers he was able to create a sense of unity so that the loneliness felt by the people could potentially subside knowing that many people are going through the same hardship. Ultimately the theme of loneliness seen in the novel and the events occurring in the modernist period can be directly related to each other because they carry the same emotions and events occurring at that time. The desperation for a greater America as a whole is shown by the people struggling to make money or the by people left behind to worry about their loved ones serving in the war. Overall this time period shows how human companionship is a major factor in our survival and the way that the world functions.