John Steinbeck: A Radical Humanist

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Abstract

American novelists between the two World Wars were in conflict between hope and despair. The message of hope was the need of the time. The mainstream novelists bore the message of hope. Steinbeck also bore the same message after critically reviewing the prevalent socio-economic structure, political order and moral values.

Steinbeck did not accept the social stratification, economic system, political order and moral standard of the time unquestionably; in this sense he was a radical. But his radicalism did not mean revolution, rather it sought for a humane consideration for the poverty and poverty-ridden people being spawned by the Wars. Steinbeck held a non-conventional philosophical attitude to vice and virtue. He believed that, apart from a few congenitally evil persons, most human beings are more inclined to virtue than vice. He believed that every individual must be integrally related with the group to improve the human condition.

After the Second World War, when the American social context changed, Steinbeck began to interpret man and his environment in a macrocosmic perspective. His love for humanity and his conviction that man as a biological animal is born free to achieve perfection remained unchanged.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

John Ernst Steinbeck's first novel *The Cup of Gold* was published in 1929. It did not concern the literary scholars much. With the publication of his novel *Tortilla Flat* in 1935 and *In Dubious Battle* in the same year, however, he came into consideration of the scholars. In the following years his famous novels were published one after another: *Of Mice and Men* in 1937, *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939. But scholars did not appreciate his novels. His novels became a victim of pejorative comments, unjust and unkind criticism for the radical elements and probable proletarian tone of his novels. This anticipated term proletarianism is actually a misnomer for the novels of Steinbeck. Steinbeck in his depiction of the socio economic condition of America between the two great wars was deeply concerned with the lower class people and advocated for humanitarian reformation of their life style. This approach was misunderstood by the scholars. Edmund Wilson, for example, commented "The chief subject of Mr. Steinbeck's fiction has been thus not those aspects of humanity in which it is most thoughtful, imaginative, constructive" (Quoted in *A Case Book of Grapes of Wrath* 153).

Novels are always the embodiment of the definite point of view and personal philosophy of the novelist. Thus Steinbeck's novels embodied his philosophy. Steinbeck's philosophy centered round his social and moral protest. He protested the existing social stratification, economic order and moral standard and aimed at rousing the humanist appeal and ascertaining man's role in society and relation with nature. Steinbeck's philosophy runs parallel to his protest. His philosophy is actually a philosophy of radical protest in

which he protests logically, showing the futility of the existing social and moral order without any sentimental clamor.

Steinbeck began his quest of human identity and man's relation to nature from the primitive stage. Steinbeck's philosophical quest was started with *To A God Unknown* through Joseph Wayne. Then he progressed to Jim Casy in *The Grapes of Wrath* in an agrarian background, then to Doc in *Cannery Row* in an urban background, and finally to Lee in *East of Eden* in a transitional social background. This transitional society then advanced to highly mechanical and materialistic society disintegrating man's self, his identity. Steinbeck's philosophical progress from transcendentalism to pragmatism is marked by his protest against disintegration and alienation in materialistic society.

Steinbeck's philosophical progress also marks and opposes natural determinism in the life process of the animals, man and the universe. For confirmation of his philosophical ideas he depended on natural sciences. His philosophy includes the truth discovered by science as he wanted to see the whole (philosophy) in the light of the part (science). So in *Sea of Cortez* Steinbeck sees animals and human beings as part of "the same one life". Moreover, Steinbeck considers living bodies and their environment as one organic whole. In interpreting the cosmic order in such a term, he denied predeterminism and supernaturalism altogether. This denial of supernaturalism and acceptance of the scientific and rational attitude stimulated Steinbeck's naturalism. Naturalism as a concept covers a wide range of similar and dissimilar ideas. William K. Frankenna says that a style of fiction writing in naturalism "the social environment, rather than individual character is the driving force

affecting plot development" (*Encyclopaedia Americana*, 770). Lawrence Sergent Hall clarifies the term and the concept naturalism saying that, "theory of naturalism is not single but several: it is moral, amoral, radical, conservative, optimistic, and pessimistic" (295). Fraakenna's definition however fails to be comprehensive. It is not the social environment alone that is the driving force. Rather, as A. Seth Pringle-Pattison suggests, "in naturalism it is biological, social, political, economic, and psychological environment in their totality which exercises their influence" (89).

Steinbeck's naturalism is bipolar: on the one pole there is social reality, on the other spiritual quest; on the one pole there is the individual, on the other there is the group; on the one pole there is integration as in *The Grapes of Wrath*, on the other there is quietness and isolation as in *Cannery Row*. Steinbeck's bipolar naturalism is not due to his indistinct understanding or lack of resolution, but due to the fact that Steinbeck wanted to form unity in diversity. Steinbeck thought this conflicting unity constituted the total texture of the universe. For example, in *Of Mice and Men*, Lennie appears to oppose George in physical strength and intellectual ability, but both together make a total human being; their qualities are complementary to each other. One cannot live without the other. To some extent, other characters like Charles and Adam in *East of Eden*, Jim Casy and Tom Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*, Doc and Mac in *Cannery Row*, Chicoy and Pritchard in *The Wayward Bus*, Kino and Juana in *The Pearl*, Thomas and Joseph, Benjy and Burton in *To a God Unknown* are similar. They are arranged in a dialectical pattern with opposites making the whole. The opposites, Steinbeck held, constitute the totality and merge in the totality so all things become a part of one great thing.

Steinbeck's characters meditate over this phenomenal unity and diversity. These characters who meditate over life and entity have something in them like the mystics for they choose definite places where they sit and think. This implicitly suggests that there is some sort of relation between the places and the psyche. This mystic manner of his characters is very much "consistent" and "profound" in the sense that they contemplate to discover themselves. These places vary: Aaron in *East of Eden* sits under a tree, Pillon in *Tortilla Flat* sits on the seashore to meditate over things of natural and social interest. The characters choose a quiet natural setting for meditation because they think, "[it] may be a great library where is recorded everything that has ever happened to living matter back to the first moment when it began to live" (*Winter of Our Discontent* 80).

Steinbeck's thinking characters always search in nature and in society from the first moment of their beginning. The process of their development continues up to the present day. Either mystically or pragmatically his characters are "thinking and figuring" even when they have nothing to do, no food to eat, no roof to live under. Even the primitive Indian Kino in *The Pearl* thinks and figures a new life, educating his son and bringing him to the priest.

Steinbeck as a socially conscious novelist had a definite concept of man's being, society and the universe. He had a clear belief in the spontaneous goodness of man and a radical distrust in commerce, industry and business outlook and conventional piety and morality. His despair at the inhumanities of mechanical cultivation, industrialism and mercantilism did not push him either to retreat or to revolution. Steinbeck's scientific observation led him to hold an optimistic outlook and to declare that man in any circumstance has to

live, he cannot escape from the harshness of reality. For a healthy survival of humanity, he proposed for some compassion and concession from the social elites for the lower class people. This humanistic approach in Steinbeck's social and philosophical view is embodied in his novels.

The plot in a novel is the development of the novelist's personal philosophy. The novelist forms a personal theory from his personal philosophy, the plot functions as the illustration of the philosophy. Most of the novels of Steinbeck do not have traditional plots but the contents of his novels invariably embody this personal philosophy. The personal theory in his novels is formed on some central issues like politics, society, economy, religion and morality. The socially conscious Steinbeck rebuilds reality according to his own theory in such a way that modern man's sense of alienation caused by material acquisitiveness, social conflicts and wars comes to an end. In his rebuilding effort Steinbeck wanted to induce in man the spirit of humanism so that the modern men can come out of the "anomie" and alienation. Steinbeck firmly believed that as soon as modern man shuns alienation as an evil and gets inspired with human responsibility the world becomes more inhabitable for man. He believed, the sooner man comes out of his "detachment" with man and society the better it is. Man's attitudinal attachment with man, society and the universe, Steinbeck believed, will lead man to "authentic being" to perfection (what existentialist philosophers meant by "authentic being" Steinbeck meant the same thing by perfection).

Steinbeck as a philosopher believed that man is a minute part of the cosmos but in the modern world different agents like man's

mechanical and material progress, social complicacy and war isolate man from the self, from the society, and from the world. The problem of identity in such a context leads man to the extremity of cosmic alienation. Steinbeck suggests cosmic unity as the direct alternative to cosmic alienation, on the basis of Emersonian transcendentalism.

Steinbeck's novels reveal his social commitment as he appeals for the upgradation of the disadvantaged and materially distressed people, and above all, a cosmic unity as emancipation from the alienation of the modern world.

John Steinbeck's social and philosophical protest makes him an exceptional American novelist. Until Steinbeck the American novel was mostly circumscribed within material success, material acquisition, psychic morbidity and individual courage, individual liberty. Steinbeck for the first time set the new trend in the American novel by connecting the individual inseparably with the group, stressing individual's responsibility to the group as something essential.

From its formative period American culture had been a conflicting whole of idealism and practicalism. Puritans from Europe migrated to America. From the beginning the American mind displayed a remarkable combination of the idealism and a concern with ideas and values —and shrewd practicality. In its concern with ideas and values the American mind had been sometimes vague and sometimes contradictory. Even the Puritans, who were idealist pious men intent on establishing God's kingdom, were very much concerned with the practical business of daily living. Since life in the new world was very challenging for the migrants who had to clear

and farm the land all the time fighting with the indigenous people, they had to be practical. The mightier became richer and thus the elite, while the weaker, became subordinate to them. Steinbeck criticized this social stratification and complex of idealism and practicality of American moral standard. Steinbeck stressed that a moral individual must serve the community irrespective of class, creed and race. Apart from protesting the double moral standard, Steinbeck insists that goodness in man is not celestial but terrestrial. Good and evil, Steinbeck treats as what is socially right and socially wrong.

As a result of his protesting stance Steinbeck is not considered together with Henry James, F. Scott Fitzerald, and Ernest Hemingway. Henry James is an uprooted American and Hemingway is an optimist showing individual optimism against defeat. Steinbeck alone could understand exactly his time, his place and the connection of a novelist with both time and place. Steinbeck felt that only glorifying heroic achievements and material advancement were not enough, and in fact it increases economic disparity and the subhuman detachment of a group of people. People are not born poor, they are not born with vice, believed Steinbeck. So it was the responsibility of a novelist to upgrade human perfection by alleviating material distress. A materially distressed man cannot remain morally perfect, even if he wants to be, believed Steinbeck. A materially distressed man can at best have a dual moral standard which does not lead him to perfection, believed Steinbeck. So Steinbeck felt it essential to protest against the material disparity and moral depravity as they are impediments to innate goodness, hindering perfection.

Steinbeck protested against the alienations caused by the modern materialistic society: self alienation, social alienation, value alienation and cosmic alienation. All these alienations are the direct effect of the over competitive, acquisitive tendency of modern man. Man's over-competitive tendency reaches a crux during wars between nations and enhances man's sense of alienation in all phases of life. Steinbeck decried war. Alienation is a socio-psychological condition of an individual which involves his estrangement from almost all the aspects of social existence. Eric Fromm explains alienation saying that, "Alienation as we find it in modern society is almost total: it pervades the relation of man to his work, to the thing he consumes, to the state, to his fellow men and to himself" (124). But the existentialist philosophers mention alienation as a paradox. They mention that modern man can neither avoid nor can bear it as a member of sane society; they say, "The modern individual is lost in the crowd and at a loss without the crowd" (Collins 5). Alienation is then a psychological problem, a problem of existence, a psychosis threatening man's survival.

Steinbeck protests against this insanity of modern society, stressing that man must overcome this malady rooted in the modern society, by realizing that he cannot live without society. Steinbeck never lost his faith in man and in the social institutions created by man. He believes that man must keep the life process untainted; unscathed, for the posterity, despite, the restlessness, severity of chaos, and disorders in human society.

As Steinbeck stresses in *The Cup of Gold*, material acquisitiveness in human nature alienates man and blinds him to his relation so in *Tortilla Flat* he shows social alienation caused by wars

which make men "individuals without an anchor, without a horizon colorless, stateless, rootless" (Fanon 175). In *Tortilla Flat* all the rootless men share their poverty and misery, none of them leave the group that they have formed voluntarily. In *Of Mice and Men* Steinbeck shows that man is invariably dependent upon man. Steinbeck goes to the extent of showing that no individual is a complete being, he needs another man to complete his existence as a complete being. Henry Morgan in *Cup of Gold* is a victim of social alienation. Danny and his friends try to counteract the sense of alienation by uniting themselves in *Tortilla Flat*. *The Grapes Of Wrath* significantly shows that human beings have the moral responsibility of saving their fellow human beings from distress from any catastrophe natural or social.

Steinbeck believes that human beings must come out of their alienation, of their self-confinement. Whatever might be the elemental severity of modern society in isolating man, man has to be more conscious of human responsibility. Only this sense of human responsibility will relieve man from isolation. Steinbeck's belief in man's inclination to perfection leads him to cosmic unity. So, Joseph Wayne in *To A God Unknown* sacrifices himself and becomes a part of the cosmic union.

Steinbeck was an optimist, but his optimism is quite different from Hemingway's. Hemingway's protagonists do something heroic, they show individual courage but their courage does not signify anything because their courage is individualistic, self-centered. Their courage is personal, it has nothing to do with the common people, the community. Steinbeck proposes that true courage signifies something for the service of the community, for the service of humanity.

Steinbeck was not concerned with individuals alone. He believed that human beings, irrespective of their racial, ethnic, economic and social identity constitute only one identity: that is humanity. Every individual, he believed, is inseparably related with the total humanity and every individual in his part has many responsibilities to perform for the humanity. As a man Steinbeck believed this and as a novelist also he wanted to perform the same duty and responsibility. Steinbeck's theory of fiction proves this.

In his theory of fiction, Steinbeck showed that, like an individual, a novelist is also a part of the group, the community. So the work of a novelist was to contribute to the betterment of the individual as a part of the larger organism. A novelist, Steinbeck believed, is a product of all the human contributions of the past and the present. So it is the moral incumbent of the novelist to "reassemble" the future for humanity; Steinbeck says:

> I, as a novelist am product not only of my own time but of all the flags and tatters, the myth and prejudice, the faith and filths that preceeded me. ... A novelist is a kind of fly paper to which everything adheres. His job is then to reassemble life into some kind of order. *(Steinbeck: A Life In Letters* 572)

So a novelist is committed to "reassemble" the life of a community according to the central ideas reared by the novelist. Steinbeck's concept of art is thus similar to Ernst Fischer's. Fischer says of art, "all art is conditioned by time and represents humanity in

so far it corresponds to the ideas and aspirations, the needs and hopes of a particular human situation" (12).

All art forms have something to convey to the community, because Fischer says, "art forms are not only the consciousness, optically or orally conditioned but als expressions of a socially conditioned world view" (149). The novel as form of art cannot be beyond time, place society, social conditions, movements and conflicts of the time. The artist must tell the truth of his time, because "his art, if it be art, will tell you the truth of his day. And that is all that matters". (D. H. Lawrence as quoted in *20th Century Literary Criticism*, 123).

A novelist must sense the conflicts of his time and be bold enough to take sides in them, if it becomes necessary. A cold and detached novelist, having no interest in the struggle of his own time, cannot create time conquering art. Every successful novelist needs to become conscious about his time and the conflicts of his time and people. Even Henry James, the expatriate and "denizen of ivory towers", manifests a novelist's interest in the uprooted Americans he met in Europe. So the novelists who ignore time and external reality, preferring subjective to objective reality, do not do justice to the novel as a form of art. Without external events, time flows and although it is separable from the outer events it separately does not mean anything without the events. Without external occurrences it is abstract and only subjectively conceivable. Time's onward motion to eternity virtually becomes meaningless without events that are imprinted on it, without man who imprints the events. Time, events, motion and human beings together constitute the whole reality. Time apart from man and events is simply a dynamic motion of the solar

world and the Universe. So a novelist must not ignore time and events. E. M. Foster rightly comments:

> But it is never possible for a novelist to deny time inside the fabric of his novel, he must cling, however lightly, to the thread of his story, he must touch the intermittable tapeworm, otherwise he comes unintelligible, which in his case is a blunder. (*Aspects of Novel* 37)

The literary presentation of objective reality implies a description of actual persons inhabiting a palpable, identifiable world. So isolation from actual persons is unreal, inartistic and illogical. Sartre justly comments, "most of the great contemporary authors; Proust, Joyce, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Virginia Woolf have tried each in his own way to distort time. Some of them have deprived it of its past and future in order to reduce it to the pure intuition of the instant" (*Literary and Philosophical Essays*, 84) While Steinbeck spoke of the influence of the past on creating the present and the present in creating the future, these novelists spoke only of the present, of the instant. But the "instant" is not static, it moves on from the past to the future. The "instant" is not complete within itself, the "instant" depends on the past as the background, on the present as the carrier and on the future as the goal. Max Westbrook, who is against the separation of time argues, "By separating time from the outer world of objective reality, the inner world of the subject is transformed into sinister inexplicable flux and acquires–paradoxically– as it may seem static character" (*The Modern American Novel: Essays In Criticism*, 215).

Max Westbrook, arguing this timelessness concept of the modern writers, stresses that a separate marking of the social values as distorted by the novelist indirectly accrues upon the novelist a responsibility to create something which has integrity. Westbrook says, "the artist who feels that society's values are distorted and that the modern hero is an exile in his own land must be able to create through language and story something that has integrity. If he cannot, then his stories are merely private or partisan and can make no claim upon the attention of serious men" (Westbrook 12).

If a novelist is by nature solitary, asocial, and unable to enter into any relationship with other human beings, if he thinks, like Heideggar, that man is thrown into being in the world, implying that man is constitutionally unable to establish a relationship with things or persons outside of himself, he will not create an art of permanent appeal. Virginia Woolf's estimation of life as "a luminous halo, a semi transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end" (as in *20th Century Literary Criticism*, 88), is in fact, a confused understanding of life and environment. If an artist can logically shape the thoughts of his existence and environment he will not see life as "semi transparent"; rather, he will see it transparently linked with other human beings and external nature.

Only with preference to subjective understanding of time, man and reality some novels have been classed as psychological novels. But psychological novels are not different from the social novels, both center round man and society. Because either in psychological novels or in social novels, in any form, society and consciousness of

the "contingent" with whom man lives must come in a novel: Lenard Davis convincingly argues.

> Novels attempt to contain through representation of the totality of a society at a given moment. Even if a novel is in a drawing room, that room will contain in its small and limited scope the social relation and thought system of a larger world. (Davis, 26).

In representing society and social consciousness, psychological novels and social novels do not contradict each other. Terry Eagleton resolves that, "a psychological reading of the novel then need not be an alternative to a social interpretation of it. We are speaking rather of two sides or aspects of a single human situation" (*Theory of Fiction*, 176). Thus, "the truly imaginative novelist" must have "an unshakable respect for the contingent, without it he sinks into fantasy, which is a way of deforming reality" (Kermode, 128).

Evidently literary theoreticians who suggest that literature must always have a purpose and purposive demonstration are greater in number and more to the point. Steinbeck also adhered to this principle. Steinbeck was essentially a social novelist. He viewed man as a being inseparably related with the community. He believed that without the community an individual cannot exist. In his article "Argument of Phalanx" Steinbeck says:

> Once a man has become a unit in a Phalanx in motion, he is capable of

> prodigies, of endurance, of thought or of emotion such as would be unthinkable, were he acting as individual man.

The word "Phalanx" refers to heavily armed infantry in close ranks and files. Steinbeck uses the term to mean compact or closely massed body of persons or animals—the group. Steinbeck stresses the importance of the group for the existence of the individual:

> As individual humans we are far superior in our functions to anything the world has borne, in our groups, we are not only superior but in fact, are remarkable like those most perfect groups: the ants and the bees. (*Steinbeck: Life in Letters* 75)

In Steinbeck's assessment every individual is the sum total of so many cells (group) to make a final complex unit (man), this unit (man) says Steinbeck "also arranges himself into larger units, which I have called the Phalanx" (79). Steinbeck says, the Phalanx has "emotions of which the unit man is incapable: emotions of destruction, of war, of migration, of hatred..." (80). Steinbeck goes to the extent as to declare that even religion and art are the creation of the Phalanx. In his own words, "art then is the property of the Phalanx, not of the individual. Art is the Phalanx knowledge of the nature of matter and life ... the artist is simply the spokesman of the phalanx" (81). Steinbeck reiterates that art "is invariably a feeling of oneness with one's Phalanx" (81). Because the unit (individual man)

constitutes the group (Phalanx) and the "unit man is lonely when he is cut off he dies. From the Phalanx he takes the fluid necessary to his life" (82). So an artist, Steinbeck believes, has some commitment to the group, the community, the Phalanx. Steinbeck says, "when your Phalanx needs you. It will use you, if you are the material to be used. You will know when it comes and when it does come, nothing you do will let you escape" (82).

So for attaining an integrity of the objective reality of the community through language and story, Steinbeck as a novelist was committed to the society he belonged to, and the reality he experienced. Steinbeck chose commitment as an attitude, as an alternative to alienation. Commitment does not impose any austerity upon the novelist, nor has this bound the novelist with any strict rules. It is simply a matter of attitude of the novelist, as Raymond Williams explains, "commitment if it means anything, is surely conscious, active and open: a choice of position" (*Marxism & Literature*, 200). Williams continues, "Commitment strictly is conscious adjustment or conscious change of alignment ... in the material, social practice of writing as in any other practice" (204). Commitment explicitly does not mean a strict binding, a regulating norm on the creativity of the novelist hindering his independence. It plainly means adjustment, attitude of the novelist so that he does not "create a feeling of meaninglessness, an oppressive, discouraging atmosphere of passivity" (*Fischer* 80). Steinbeck's Phalanx theory aptly shows that his theory of fiction was quite similar to Raymond Williams and Ernst Fischer, because Steinbeck's Phalanx theory shows that he had the root of all his thoughts in man, in the community.

But the confused representation of the world as one of multiple causes and effects in non-linear and complex ways, giving disjunctive human experience is wrong. Louis Althuser argues, "human individuals are the product of many social determinants and thus have no essential unity" (Quoted In Terry Eagleton's *Theory of Fiction*, 171). So the heterogeneous elements of the society may influence the commitment of the novelist as the inevitable product of the complex society. Whatever be the divergent factors determining the experience of an individual, an individual can never hold a fragmented personality. The centripetal force of sensibility converges diversities into his personality. So the novelist's creative ability has to overcome this conditioning influence of the society by "imposing the unity of mind on the diversity of things" (Sartre, 372), in such a way that it does not end in a "poetically felt nihilism and immersion in nothingness" (Alfred Kazin, 342).

Commitment is then an appeal as all "literary work is an appeal". Commitment does not impel a novelist to portray the social misery and conclude with political decisions. Political decisions and interventions are not the things that the novelist should be committed to, Zola rightly thought, "it is the legislator's duty to intervene, let him think about it and put things right, it has not anything to do with me..." (David N. Moorgalis, 114).

Commitment, as an attitudinal and social view for increasing man's interpersonal relation, can relieve man of the evil of alienation, of the negative identity to positive multiplicity, to universality of being. Steinbeck had a clear idea of his commitment and adhered to this commitment which is evident in his personal letters written to different people in different times. In his works he has illustrated

how commitment plays a positive role in a man's view, how a man can adjust and align himself with the multiplicity of lives around.

Commitment is then a flexible adjusting ability and attitude without any theoretical extremism and bias to any preset category to apply to literature. The thing that matters most is the intention and attitude of the novelist which is the shaping spirit of the commitment and content of the novel. Theoretical extremism more than this bruises the creativity of the novelist. As Foucault says, "theory is violent because it attempts to speak from without rather than within disallowing the realm of possibilities" (Quoted in Barry Smart, *Foucault, Marxism and Critique* 27).

To be true to his intention, attitude and faithful to his commitment, the novelist thus, "must know his people, be as familiar with them as though the men were his constant tavern companion, the woman his living doxies and the children his own brats..." (Raman Seldan, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* 46). An unshaded understanding of the reality enables the writer to align his "I" with "We" or famous "They" of Martin Heideggar. The novelist must uphold his alignment; Raymond Williams says, "writing like other practices is in an important sense always aligned: that is to say, that it variously expresses, explicitly or implicitly, specifically selected experiences from a specific point of view" (199). So Theodoro Adorno of Frankfurt school is wrong when he criticizes "the direct contact reality" by arguing, that "detachment gives literature its special significance and power. Modernist writings are particularly distanced from the reality to which they allude and this distance gives their work the power of criticizing the reality" (as quoted in *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* 34).

Adorno goes on arguing that "art cannot simply reflect the social system but also acts within the reality as an "irritant" which produces an indirect sort of knowledge, art is the negative knowledge of the actual world" (as quoted in *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* 34).

Evidently, for a successful novel, the novelist must know the reality, must know his people and his time. Steinbeck knew his people closely, far more intimately than any one of his contemporaries. Faulkner lived in a gloomy world without understanding man either as a biological or as a psychological being, and man's relation with the environment that predetermines man's psychological entity. Hemingway's inspiration of optimistic survival and gallantry against defeat is not the result of his total understanding of man and his macrocosmic relation. It is the result of Hemingway's superficial world view. Steinbeck with his mediocre philosopher's talent and profound society consciousness could see man on a wider canvas, on a macrocosmic broadness. He lived with the class of people that came in his works. He worked with them, starved with them, keenly observed their way of life. So Steinbeck's people are far nearer to reality than the people of Faulkner and Hemingway.

The American social reality between the two great wars—the best period of Steinbeck's writing career—acted upon the American novelists in two ways: one was retreat from reality to pessimistic determinism, another to naturalism. Pessimistic determinism is an escape, and naturalism is an endeavor to understand man and society in its real perspective. The naturalistic endeavor of Steinbeck was misunderstood by critics like Edmund Wilson who said, "Mr. Steinbeck always in his fiction is dealing either with lower animals or

with human beings so rudimentary that they are almost on animal level" (*Boys In The Back Room* 61). Most critics echoed Wilson. This was not the consensus of the critics, rather it was the outcome of the influence of Wilson.

Steinbeck began his writing career aiming to uplift man from despair to hope. He knew his society, people and the period. In the period between the two great wars it was essential for the American intellectuals to show the whole nation a ray of hope. Steinbeck was a socially conscious novelist. As he explains in his speech accepting the Nobel Prize, he wanted "to celebrate man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit for gallantry in defeat for courage, compassion and love in the endless war against weakness and despair" (*Portable Steinbeck* 692). Steinbeck firmly held that every writer has some social responsibility, some commitment. In the same speech he said, "a writer who does not passionately believe in the perfectibility of man has no dedication nor any membership in literature" (692).

Steinbeck made society partially responsible for destroying the "perfectibility" of man and felt it obligatory for conscious people to correct what had gone wrong. Human nature and conduct, Steinbeck believed, is shaped by the social institutions. Equally he felt, institutional change only does not assure the change of human conduct. With this belief and sense of obligation, he portrayed his simple characters and through them he has tried to fulfill his social responsibility. Like the novelist himself, they are simple, they can see life with clear eyes and express their worries straightly in simple words. As a novelist, Steinbeck felt that he "grew less complicated all the time and that's a joy to me" (*LH* 87). Steinbeck's simplicity

as a novelist in portraying very simple characters from the lower class of the society was not rightly understood by the literary scholars; they termed his people as "animals".

Steinbeck's social and political ideas sometime make him appear Marxist in approach. But he was not a strong party liner like Jack London, Upton Sinclair and James T. Farrell. Steinbeck hesitantly turned to Marxism for the solution of the prevailing social problems in his time. However, Steinbeck could not accept the solution of the problems through class struggle. He could not approve of a philosophy that encouraged class hatred. Steinbeck's hesitant Marxist approach did not last too long.

After the Second World War the social incertitude in America began to change due to the social legislations. Social legislation in both industrial and agricultural sectors changed the standard of life of the poor farm laborers and industrial laborers. Poor farm laborers and their miseries in daily life struggle got changed; these people concerned Steinbeck most. With the socio-economic change in America, Steinbeck's point of interest also changed. He turned to biological evolution and philosophical study of man, stressing that the individual is connected with the group, and both the individual and the group are connected to nature integrally. He turned to philosophy as a quest to rediscover man's macrocosmic entity. He did it with the intention to oppose man's subjective, moral, social and cosmic alienation created by the two great wars and too much material expansion. His philosophical view turned from social inequality to universal equality of man and nature. However, this was not a conformist's view; rather, this was a view in protest of his time and world view.

Evidently, Steinbeck's philosophy develops to a positive end, parallel to his social protest as the probable alternative to his protests. The temporary social inequality between the individual and the group ends in transcendental unity of both the individual and the group with nature. With the removal of social inequality, man's relation to nature, that is cosmic unity, becomes more important, believed Steinbeck. A novelist has the responsibility to mention this relation of man to nature, both from the point of view of science and philosophy. Steinbeck as a novelist reviews human relation to nature both scientifically and philosophically in his works.

This positive attitude to human life and nature is Steinbeck's greatest achievement. Steinbeck has been observed only when he protested social inequalities but he has not been evaluated when he proposed cosmic unity side by side with social inequality. He found cosmic unity as the ultimate goal of human beings. So far, only a part of Steinbeck's talent has been discovered, not his total achievement. Social inequality and cosmic unity are the two ends of Steinbeck's radical humanism. Steinbeck treated cosmic unity as an alternative to social inequality, so Steinbeck did not propose any violent view in protesting social inequalities. He could not approve of any enmity between man and man because he believed, man, irrespective of his social or economic position, is bound together integrally with nature. Every man proceeds to the same end. Steinbeck's radicalism is more inclined to humanism. He could not accept man at war with man for any cause whatsoever it might be. He felt it useless for man to involve himself in a skirmish for survival with man. So Doc Burton in *In Dubious Battle* does not take a whole-hearted part in the violence of the fruit pickers, although he sympathizes with them. Like Doc Burton, Steinbeck himself believed that the struggle for

survival is essential, but it is not the final thing; it is a part of a whole thing that is the cosmic unity. The whole thing, the life process on earth, is a far greater thing to concern the humanity as the total humanity has the same integrity, believed Steinbeck and illustrated them in his works.

In almost all of Steinbeck's novels this radical humanism and humanist appeal are embodied. His radicalism is interwoven with humanism so deeply that, sometimes, radical elements become dominant while the humanist element remains recessive. His novels are the works where protest and philosophy, radicalism and humanism frame the thematic unity. The following chapters attempt to find out these elements of Steinbeck's novels, aiming to discover the total talent of Steinbeck so far eclipsed in the works of scholars both at home and abroad.

CHAPTER II: THE BACKGROUND

John Ernst Steinbeck was born in a middle class landed family in Salinas Valley in California. His father came to settle in California shortly after the Civil War. His mother was a schoolteacher. In the Salinas Valley Steinbeck grew up as a very sensitive boy. He observed with keen eyes the nature and people in the Salinas Valley. Here he first met the poor Mexican laborers (Paisanos). He studied in Stratford irregularly from 1920-1925 and spent "many of his holiday as a hired hand on nearby ranches..." (Moore, 73). Steinbeck worked at a variety of jobs: haberdashery, road laborer, deck crew, fish hatchery in his irregular school days. He came in close contact with the laborers and himself found their misery, their struggle for survival and friendship in poverty; he felt their dreams, their illusions through which they wanted to forget their misery. Steinbeck saw that the laborers could not amass much money, so they relied on their friends and genuine friendship amidst themselves.

Coincidentally, the Great Depression began in the United States in 1929, when Steinbeck published his first novel. The Great Depression was more severe in the United States than in other western countries. It was the worst collapse in the history of Capitalism and in its effects. It was in many ways worse than the Civil War. It brought hunger for millions of ordinary people and planted despair and blind resentment in their hearts. It robbed rational men of their ability to be rational. It not only degraded American Capitalism but also Capitalism as a philosophy or a system. The intellectuals in America were so much perplexed by the severity of the Depression that they momentarily turned to the facile promises of fascism, socialism and Communism.

Weakness both in the industrial and agricultural sector of the American economy, rise of oligopoly in the American market control, over-production, over-debt caused the Great Depression. But American people had no time to think for any check of the depression. They wanted to become rich quickly and they were congenitally optimistic. So businessmen and investors continued to expand their activities. They incurred huge debts, produced more hoping that money and goods would remain in circulation. But over saving and fall of general people's buying capacity made the situation more complicated. As a result many people went hungry and people had a constant lurking fear that worse things were to come. Many people became unemployed. Still worse was the condition of poor laborers; their wages fell down, with the fear of losing their job, they had to work hard for a low wage, in an arbitrary wage system; in the agricultural sector the wage went too low.

Steinbeck's life with the ranch workers enabled him to narrate their state vividly. In a letter to Lawrence Huggy, Steinbeck wrote,

> I slept in the bunk house with all other hands, got up at four thirty, cleaned my stall or saddled or harnessed my houses depending on the job, ate my beef steak for breakfast and went to work, and the work day was over when you could no longer see. (*Steinbeck: A Life in Letters* 654).

Steinbeck lived with the poor laborers, he was ill paid, he even spent unfed days. In a letter to George Albee he wrote, "I have

starved... four days and a half was my longest stretch... personally I think terror is the painful part of starvation" (*LH.* 647).

Steinbeck's experience with the laborers, their misery could have turned Steinbeck, like the middle-class intellectuals of the period, into an activist, a communist. Starting from the United States the Great Depression covered the whole world except the Soviet Union. So middle class intellectuals in America started to think that capitalism was changing and socialistic philosophy was gaining strength; many were inclined to socialist philosophy. Steinbeck was different from the intellectuals of the time. In his total writer's career he was never involved with the Communist activists, mention his biographers, Harry Thornton Moore and Nelson Valjen. Moore mentions that, "working on various ranches he frequently argued Socialism with the ranch workers. He had some love for Socialism in those days, but feared that man's innate stupidity and greed would keep it [socialist government] from being fully successful" (Moore, 77).

From the statement of Moore it is evident that, although Steinbeck had no direct contact with the communist intellectuals, he had a wavering idea about the feasibility or permanence of the Socialist government formed in the Soviet Union. He thought that it might do some good to man, but equally he believed that it was most improbable a government to last long. Seventy years before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Steinbeck could accurately foresee the future of the Soviet. Steinbeck tried to see man "without looking through the narrow glass of political or economic preconception." He was not concerned with his protagonists as Communists or capitalists but rather as humans, "subject to the weakness of the humans and

greatness of the humans." Steinbeck aimed at a social justice without depending on either Capitalism or Communism. He aimed at the lively survival of man without any suffering anywhere. He wanted a society where one's profit motif would not cause misery for the other, so, "the man of aggressive, unapologetically acquisitive enterprise continued to be the target of Steinbeck's ironic temper throughout his career" (Gray, 31).

Steinbeck sometimes humorously, sometimes ironically, attacked the acquisitive entrepreneurs who made the social disequilibrium. Steinbeck wanted to show, "that a society that permits, even encourages high crimes against humanity and then makes a show of riggling priggishness in the face of venial sin is a fatuous society" (Gray 35).

In so doing he did not lose faith in man. He had firm faith in man's inherent goodness. He believed that man should be the beneficiary of his institutions not their victim. He had a clear and positive idea about man on earth; he believed that man is not the creature of an unknowable pattern of existence. He had seen man as a biologically advancing animal where man has made himself unique among animals by accepting responsibility for the good of others. Only he has this "drive outside of himself," that is altruism. This altruistic appeal as the only point of view is the essence of Steinbeck's writing that aimed at altruism in any social system, whatsoever it might be. He knew the limitation of both Capitalism and Communism. So without attacking them or eulogizing them, he wanted man's congenial survival, that is altruism.

Steinbeck's social protest is neither against Capitalism nor are his works Communist propaganda literature. Rather, with a rebellious spirit, he stood against any social system that denied human beings their basic rights. Steinbeck was a rebel but not a nihilist. Albert Camus says, a rebel "in no case, if he is consistent does he demand the right to destroy the existence and the freedom of others. He humiliates no one... he is not the slave against the master, but a man against the world of master and slave" (284). Steinbeck's social protest (or rebellion) was to make the position of "man" against the "world of master and slave". Steinbeck did not protest for a class war of the slaves against the masters in an armageddon to make the slaves victorious to rule over the masters.

Steinbeck began his writing career in the early thirties when social values and interpersonal relations were all shaken, when "poets [seemed] to have withdrawn from the world into private arcana of their own, where they [squatted] in circles polishing their symbols and puzzling out one another's cryptograms..." (Orville Prescott, ix). With such a backgrou[] d, Steinbeck could have thought about human beings as a "morally diseased creation." But Steinbeck began his writing career aiming to uplift human being from "despair to hope..." to declare, to celebrate man's proven capacity for a greatness of spirit and for gallantry in defeat, for courage and compassion and love in the endless war against weakness and despair (*The Portable Steinbeck* 692).

Undoubtedly, this was an invigorating belief of a writer in a decaying age. Edward J. Gordon says, "the greatest American writers have seen man as capable of noble action only through agonizing trouble, struggle" (ii). Steinbeck wanted to show man victorious

"after agonizing trouble", so Steinbeck belongs to the greatest of American writers.

Steinbeck began his writing with an empirical observation of man, nature, society and interpersonal relation of man within the society. Culturally Californian life was less mechanical and more agrarian. Steinbeck as a Californian naturally favoured this agrarian simplicity but was not indifferent to the socio-economic changes and their effects upon the life of the common people, especially the land workers, ranch workers, fruit-pickers and cotton pickers. While trying to find out the origin of the suffering of these people, Steinbeck stretched back his thought to the days of "westward movement" of the early settlers in America.

People moved to the west because land was arable, fertile and easily available there. So in the early nineteenth century, capital and labor began to be diverted from commerce and shipping and invested in the western lands. This conflict between mercantilism and physiocratism in American economic history victimized many people in all walks of life in the south and southwest.

In the early years, the settlers had gone towards the west, occupied some land, cleared the forest and started farming without formality of a legal purchase. When that land was legally sold to big farmers, the federal troops had to remove the illegal occupants from those places. These people and their suffering continuing through their descendents is Steinbeck's concern. Henry Morgan in *Cup of Gold*, Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown* and Adam Trask in *East of Eden* represent the early settlers and their descendents. They are the representatives of the people who helped to clear settle the

continent, who fought in the Civil War. Steinbeck found striking differences between what they ought to have and what they had in return for their devotion and sacrifice for the new land. This difference of unfulfillment, along with the economic crises and natural disasters, which caused miseries to the people and their descendents, was the basis of Steinbeck's social protest. His social protest was not so much a class-conscious attitude in a political sense as it was a preference for cultural and moral values of lower class people.

Steinbeck's social protest was actually a protest for social sympathy for the poor. He did not turn to a radical suggesting any institutional change, his protest is for compassion for the lower class people who are the real founders of the socio-economic structure: the laborers, the peasants. His philosophy developed parallel to his protest; in his philosophy there is a protest, a tendency to disregard the established one. Steinbeck protested against impositions on the liberty of individual thought. Steinbeck's philosophical protest, which is ancillary to his social protest, brought man at the center determining his philosophical advancement not being encircled by any predetermination.

In his world view Steinbeck was essentially non-conventional, liberal. He did not estimate the prevalent social values highly; rather he had a free will to think contrary to the prevalent values. So Steinbeck discarded the concept of success in riches, in so called adventures and heroism. His thought process was remarkable for its clarity. He held that success in the life of an individual comes out of mediocrity, not anything extraordinary or spectacular and sensational. Steinbeck thought that the American social stratification had some

fault in its formation, that it made outcasts, and did not do justice to the poor laboring class nor did it assure the healthy life process of the poor. He, however, did not indicate any set principle or reformation of social institutions as the solution of the problem. He was concerned more with the problem and less with the solution. He had not thought of any probable solution, he thought of only sympathy and humanity.

Although Steinbeck's sense of sympathy and humanity appear to be vague, but in close observation it is not so. His humanity significantly ended with a broad and fundamental human appeal that kept the human life process ever moving onward. For example in *The Grapes of Wrath*, Roshasharon is that fundamental humanity which Steinbeck indicated. Steinbeck thought that, with such sympathy, humanity could be saved from the division, stratification and classification that suffocate humanity. Only noble sacrifices like Joseph Wayne's in *To a God Unknown* can save humanity from the "waste land." In the "waste land" Joseph does not think of anything black; rather he finds everything bright in his personal sacrifice for the sustenance of humanity. Steinbeck's social protest during the thirties tended to be Marxist in approach. But throughout his writing career, he was hesitant to accept Marxism as a solution of social problems. His hesitation might have been due to his fear of losing his popularity, hampering the sale of his books, and the coercive, measures taken by the establishment against Marxism. Nevertheless, it is an undeniable fact that Steinbeck could not accept the prevailing social order as it placed a burdenous yoke on the shoulder of humanity.

In protest against this social order, his characters become indignant as in *Tortilla Flat* or violent in *In Dubious Battle*, active dreamers in *Of Mice and Men* and passive dreamers in *Pastures of Heaven*. His characters react in different ways, but they do not drift apart from the human life process, they do not deny the demand of life. His characters also protest their states philosophically, never denying the existence of life and life motion, dynamism of life and nature.

Steinbeck's protest in *The Grapes of Wrath* may be seen as radical. But Steinbeck never belonged to any literary radicalism. In 1930 Michael Gold was the left wing literary hit man. The *New Republic* and the *New Masses* were the mouthpieces of the literary class war declared in 1932. Steinbeck had no contact with the radical intellectual milieu in New York in the 1930s. Rather, as Sylvia Jenkins Cook says,

> When the literary class war was declared there [New York] in 1932 Steinbeck was in California working on *To a God Unknown*...his favorite reading was neither the *New Republic* nor the *New Masses* but Xenophon, Herodotus, Plutarch and Malory and at this time he was beginning to find the greater stimulus to his intellectual life... in the tide pool of the pacific. (As in Bloom, 347).

Steinbeck himself said in a letter to Louis Paul in 1936

> I don't like communists either, I mean, I dislike them as people. I rather imagine that the apostles had the same waspish qualities and the New Testament is proof that they equally had bad manners. But this dislike is personal. (*Steinbeck A Life in Letters*, 120).

Although Steinbeck claimed that he was not a communist, in the 30s a group of young novelists like Jack London, Upton Sinclair, John Dos Passos and James T. Farrell were very much inspired by Marxism. Robert Bennett in his article sums up these young novelists as "a handful of young prometheans but most of them spill their coal by the wayside becoming easy going non-combustible in the end." Dos Passos turned from communist to democrat then to Republican, James T. Farrell belonged to the Communist Party only for three years (1932-35). James T. Farrell later deviated from Marxist aesthetics having a different critical view to proletarian literature and prolet cult. However, all of the writers of the period did not "find the Marxist analysis convincing, although the left-ward drift was powerful, it also quickly developed its own schisms" (Bradbury, 98).

So the shift from the mystic's protest in *To a God Unknown* to the protest in *The Grapes of Wrath* is not the impact of ideological movement in New York but it is partly due to "the weakening of ideological commitment" that brought to the American novels of the period "a qualification of naturalism, a growing preoccupation with moral and metaphysical complexity" (Bradbury 130), and partly due to Steinbeck's empirical observation and transcendental conviction.

So the final apotheosis of group man in *The Grapes of Wrath* is not to socialist Unity but to an Emersonian oversoul.

Steinbeck's protest then ran parallel to his philosophical quest. The protest did not move too far beyond the immediate emotional reaction, it soon came down to a meditative calmness. Steinbeck's protest was not sentimental, "hair clutching hysteric" (Bloom 348). He did not make his emotions a political propaganda. Rather his disturbed emotions lead him to a plain where he forgot the agitation and appeals for sympathetic consideration. Steinbeck's social protest was complementary to his philosophy. Like his social protest, in his philosophy also was there a certain element of protest. His philosophy is eclectic as he did not find absolute truth in any of the philosophical schools. He began with transcendentalism and ended with pragmatism, with a baffling stop-over at Marxism. Thus, Steinbeck's social protest is humanitarian and his philosophy is pragmatic. Humanism and pragmatism were his concerns. He did not rest on an idyllic past or a utopian future.

Steinbeck did not begin his philosophical search with any preconceived theory. He began his search with open eyes, clear vision and firm observation. This empirical beginning then in phases moved on to transcendentalism, scientific observation and finally to pragmatic conviction. This simple philosophical advancement of Steinbeck's career has not been justly assessed by scholars due to their disapproval to Steinbeck and his talent. F. W. Watt calls Steinbeck an "over paid village philosopher with the habit of posing Socratic questions" and he terms Steinbeck's philosophy as "neither consistent, nor profound enough to concern a philosopher" (Watt, 20). Arthur Mizener, while commenting on Steinbeck's philosophy,

termed him an "incurable amateur philosopher," noting that "the destructive effects of his philosophizing leads him into impossible paradoxes and contradictions so that his very talents are obscured of overshadowed" ("Does A Moral Vision" 45).

Both Watt and Mizener are, however, repugnant in their comment. It should be noted here that, among his contemporaries, Steinbeck was the only novelist whose social protest and philosophical search were overt and clear. He analyzed social complexities philosophically with a clarity of perception and justified the social complexities morally and ethically, indicating a clearer horizon of hope, not of despair. The hopeful horizons he indicated are not of individual attempts, such as Hemingway portrays in *The Old Man and the Sea*, but of a collective stand as in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Steinbeck had a clear concept of the development of human society and social problems. Biologically correlating men and animals, he looked into human society and animal groups, the behavioral similarity of man and animals in individual form and group form. Steinbeck honestly tried to posit his thoughts along the line of the great American philosophers to reach a clear philosophical destination.

As far as the philosophical development of Steinbeck is concerned, he started his study, as Sylvia Cook says, with "Xenophon, Plutarch and Malory" and continued it through Emerson to end with Dewey. He studied these philosophers for the probable consolidation of his concepts on both social and moral issues. Woodbin O' Ross justly comments on the intellectual heritage of Steinbeck: "Steinbeck's attitude represents in part of course, his assimilation and modification of the attitude of the thinkers who have

preceeded him" (*Steinbeck and His Critics* 178). Richard Astro says, "Steinbeck turned to philosophy to verify his emerging ideas about the unifying principles of existence and he began reading the works of the philosophers who seemed to portray a scheme of being congruent.., with organismal conception" (*John Steinbeck and Ed. Ricketts: The Shaping of a Novelist*. 48). Steinbeck could not logically arrange Darwin's organismal concepts, especially the missing links. So for a better understanding Steinbeck studied other American philosophers: John Fiske, A.N. Whitehead and John Eloff Boodin. But Steinbeck's intellectual foreground is essentially Emersonian, finally harvesting a nature of transcendentalism and pragmatism.

In Emerson's philosophy nature is the center of all of his thoughts. Nature, Emerson thought, was the teacher as "the face of external nature teaches... with calm superiority better than our Sunday schools and Churches and pauper societies are yokes on the neck... there are natural ways of arriving at the same ends at which these aim." (*Complete Essays*, 96). Emerson was of the opinion that nature as an object does not come to the subject, that is the observer. Since the individual's consciousness is the formation of the connection between the object and the subject, the subject needs to go to nature for learning with keenness of observation because Emerson said, "no man can learn what he has preparation for learning, however near to him is the object" (*Complete Essays*, 96). Emerson's nature is not, however, pantheistic, but it integrally makes all the creation a part of nature. Life of everything connects with the oversoul, the thinking self of every individual. Emerson thought, "is one mind common to all individual then... who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for his is the

only sovereign end" (*Works of Emerson* Vol. II 3). About the oversoul Emerson said, "There is a soul at the center and over the will of every man so, that none of us can wrong the universe" (*CE* 99).

According to Emerson, there prevailed "a perfect parallelism between the laws of nature and the laws of philosophical thought" (*Works of Emerson* Vol. VIII. 8). This parallelism is the corner-stone of the whole philosophical edifice of Emerson for it led him to the discovery of "universal soul of a creator behind the manifestation of nature" (Werkmeister, 46). Emerson believed that the individual who is "part and parcel of God is really no individual at all and he felt that persons and things disappear in all absorbing totality" (Werkmeister, 46).

Emerson's philosophy has often been called transcendental. Emerson explained the term transcendentalism: "transcendentalism adopts the whole connection of spiritual doctrine. The transcendentalist believes in the miracle, in the perpetual openness of mind, human mind to new influx and power, he believes in inspiration and ecstasy..." (Emerson, *Nature and other Essays*, 254). Transcendentalism is then the mixture of different ideological concepts. Werkmeister sums up transcendentalism saying, "Transcendentalism drew also from French Utopianism, German Mysticism and the romanticism of English poets fusing the most heterogeneous elements into one compact faith... and aspiration which was yet native to the American idealism and faith" (Werkmeister 41). Steinbeck justly began his search with transcendentalism because, "no history of American intellectual progress could be written without some accounts of

transcendentalism movement. Too intimately is it intertwined with the cultural pattern that forms the background of modern American philosophy" (Werkmeister 43).

About mind and reality, Emerson thought, "mind is the only reality, of which man and all other natures are better or worse reflectors. Nature, literature and history are only subjective phenomena..." (*Nature and other Essays* 253). Thus Emerson argued that a man may be self dependent ethically without depending on any external form to make him disciplined. In Emerson's words "From this transfer of the world into the consciousness this beholding of all things in the mind, follow easily his whole ethics. It is simpler to be self-dependent. The height, the deity of man is to be self sustained, to need no gift, no foreign force" (*Nature and other Essays* 253).

Emerson thought that individual consciousness is more important in interpreting the phenomena. God's entity he felt is also to be discovered in every individual's consciousness; he says, "ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. The simplest person who in his integrity worships God becomes God" (*Emerson's Complete Essays* 207). So, for attaining moral and intellectual perfection Emerson suggested, "let man then learn the revelation of all nature and all thought to his heart; this namely that the Highest dwells with him that the sources of nature in his own mind" (*Emerson's Complete Essays* 209).

Emerson's soul is not absolutely segregated from society; without society the soul-seeking process of a thinking mind is incomplete. About an individual's relation with the society Emerson said, "A man must be clothed with society or we shall feel a certain

barrenness and poverty, as of a displaced and unfinished member" (*The Works of Emerson* Vol. VII 15). A man displaced from the society will be an "unfinished member." So Emerson suggested that a more balanced relation between society and solitude is better and safer. Emerson said, "nature delights to put us between extreme antagonisms and our safety is in skill with which we keep the diagonal line. Solitude is impracticable and society fatal. We must keep our head in the one and our hands on the other" (*The Works of Emerson, Vol.* VII. 20).

Steinbeck's characters embody the ideas of Emerson: Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown* is the first one among the embodiments. Wayne is a man of nature; he finds in nature the real teacher teaching him ontological lessons. To him nature is the only inspiring agent; he has the keenness to observe nature, thereby correlating the objective feelings. Emerson's "all absorbing totality" is the logical basis of Wayne's thoughts. To keep the "perpetual openness" of his mind, Wayne does not accept his brother Burton's proposal to leave paganism for dogmatism. Wayne's mystic mind wants to have the "inspiration" and "Ecstasy" all for himself. Wayne's death is also the embodiment of Emersonian transcendentalism as "the transcendentalist was a regenerator of the human spirit and he was never a destroyer except as destruction accompanied the process of regeneration" (Werkmeister 42).

Steinbeck as a narrator preferred natural objects, especially animals for comparison to human life. This he did for comparison not for identification. So in Steinbeck's novels man is often compared to ants, turtles, gophers, tunas and group man to group animals. The immediate relationship of man with nature is Steinbeck's main

philosophical concern by which he aims to inculcate "reverence for life" near nature. Jim Casy in *The Grapes of Wrath* views nature with an Emersonian outlook; he goes to the wilderness and stays there for a long time gazing and thinking and comes out with the idea that every little piece of life is the constituent element of a big life. Like Jim Casy, Lee in *East of Eden*, Doc in *Cannery Row* are very much true to their personal experience in the nature and often they parallel laws of nature with laws of thought. They are the embodiments of Emersonian ideas.

Steinbeck's naturalism has its roots in Emerson's transcendentalism. Defining naturalism as the offspring of transcendentalism, Walcut shows that Steinbeck belongs to a divided stream of American naturalism. Walcut traces out the main traits of naturalism, naturalism has its roots in the Renaissance, birth of science and secularism. The enlightenment contributes to its emphasis on reason and on the essential goodness of human nature (Walcut 291). According to Walcut, naturalism assorts the unity of spirit and nature and affirms that intuition and scientific investigation are equally rewarding and valid approaches to reality.

Walcut thinks, since by intuition the mind discovers its affiliation with spirit and by scientific investigation the mind masters the symbol of spirit, so they are equally valid approaches to reality. Walcut stresses that the inspiration of naturalism, "is the conviction that scientific knowledge can release man from superstition, from fear, from the tyranny of tradition, from physical ailments and from poverty releases him into an era of personal enrichment and fulfillment beyond anything the world has seen" (Walcut 290).

Fidelity to experience is the substratum of all the philosophical concepts of Steinbeck. Steinbeck's concept of experience is marked with continued change. Experiences drawn from real life happenings of every day life had a changed meaning for Steinbeck. Experience is "something foreign supposed to impress, whether spontaneously or in consequence of exertion and acts" (James, *Principles of Psychology*, 619). So things that impressed Steinbeck in his living together with the ranch workers and laborers were "exertions" and "acts". These exertions and acts "spontaneously" led him to form a world view which was never absolute, never ordained by fixed principles. He believed that principles can never frame a life pattern; rather life patterns justify principles.

His characters--Henry Morgan in *Cup of Gold*, Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown*, Jim Casy in *The Grapes of Wrath*--do not accept any absolute abstraction. They have astonishing adjustable capacity to accept what they feel justified in their own consideration and to reject what they feel unjustified. This flexibility of thought of his characters regarding human habit, customs, and morality does not bind them to any preconception. So they are pragmatic as William James defined pragmatism: "pragmatism represents a perfectly familiar attitude in philosophy, the empiricist attitude turning away from abstractions and insufficiency from fixed principles, closed systems and pretended absolutes" (*Pragmatism* 51). Pragmatism brings for words, "God," "matter," "the absolute" and "energy" a test of practical cash value to see it work within the storm of experience. "It is against any dogma and doctrine and inductive in interpretation under which sciences have evolved" (*Pragmatism* 54). So Steinbeck's characters do not accept anything which has no practical

value, no utility in real life situation. His characters accept what the situations demand: Jim Casy in *The Grapes of Wrath* does not abide by the morals that he learnt in his Church life, Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown* does not accept what the Church fathers dictate; rather he sacrifices himself for the situational demand of the "waste land". Joseph Wayne does what he considers best in his own consideration for the salvation of the land and the life of animals and man in the "waste land."

CHAPTER III: THE RISE—EARLY NOVELS (1929-35)

In his early novels, Steinbeck observed people of both classes; he observed both the rich and the poor. He found both groups of people equally unhappy over their social condition. One group wanted more acquisition and the other group aspired for the minimum necessity. In the long run, the aspiration of both groups' ends in dissatisfaction.

The Depression—torn society was in a restless state: ambitious entrepreneurs, mercantilists, uncontrolled by the government, were eager for more material advancement. The common people became the direct victims of their advancement. Wages fell, the buying capacity was lowered, the standard of living worsened. Although he was sympathetic to the disadvantaged, Steinbeck observed that both the rich and the poor were equally insatiate; he pitied the affluent and sympathized with the poor. Steinbeck's people in these early novels put great value on material success, but material success only leads them to a state of fear. They inspire awe not love. They remain in their separate selves and never can relate with ordinary people. They are valiant heroes, conquerors; they are successful men. But material success brings for them mental failure as it does to Henry Morgan in *Cup of Gold*.

As a novelist, Steinbeck believed that real success lay in simplicity of the common men. The self-made affluent man Henry Morgan virtually becomes a failure; the pretended affluent man Edward Wicks in *Pastures Of Heaven* suffers for his self deception. Junius Maltaby chooses the life of a recluse and temporarily denies the life of affluence. Maltaby teaches his son to live without many

things, but Maltaby finally feels that without basic necessities, a man's life is a subhuman life and subhumanity is a sore upon humanity. Man needs some basic things; willful denial of those things cannot make life meaningful, believed Steinbeck. Equally he believed that too much of material amassment does not make a successful life. So a common man's life without too much of wealth but basic necessities fulfilled was the best life model for Steinbeck.

Common men with their inborn goodness aim at this simple common life but man-made society and social system hinders common men's tendency to simple life, believed Steinbeck. In mentioning the social system as the obstacle to goodness of common men, Steinbeck did not indicate institutional changes only in a society. He felt that institutions and human nature are complementary to each other and influences each other. Steinbeck's common life is successful when it adjusts with institutions.

People who fail to adjust with the social institutions and deny material life are not hated by Steinbeck as in *Tortilla Flat*. Steinbeck felt that society is more responsible than the nature of these men, which threw them down to degradation and maladjustment. In fact, Steinbeck believed in man, loved man: the material retards, the mental retards like Tuleracito and Hilda in *Pastures of Heaven*. Every man's duty, Steinbeck believed, is to sustain man from moral or material degradation, from despair. Human life on earth is to do some good, render some service to other men; the successful man for Steinbeck is he who can render this service, the best among mankind is he who can do it even at the cost of his own life as Joseph Wayne does in *To a God Unknown*

While Henry Morgan in *Cup of Gold* does everything for his personal aggrandizement, Joseph does nothing for himself; instead, he sacrifices himself for fertility in nature. Symbolically he sacrifices himself for the healthy survival of man. Although he has no material success Joseph Wayne is more successful than Morgan. Joseph Wayne unifies himself with the life of things around him.

Steinbeck's early novels are essentially the embodiment of Emersonian transcendentalism which is shown superior to man's material advancement and scramble for material success. The Emersonian ideal—exemplified by Thoreau in *Walden*—is best expressed in Emerson's "Ode to Channing". The poem shows that man cannot ride things; rather, things ride mankind. Therefore, human beings should not be lured by material goods. Influenced by the Emersonian idealism, Steinbeck glorified materially unsuccessful men such as Danny in *Tortilla Flat* and Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown*. Danny and Joseph become great because they are selfless. They dedicate themselves to the service of their fellow men, so it is not divinity rather commonality that makes man great. Common men may become great by deeds of greatness, that is service to humanity. Danny and Joseph could have been successful men if they had sought riches for themselves. But their apparent failure is real success. The paradox of success and failure Steinbeck reinterpreted on Emersonian principles. Joseph Wayne's denial of established religion, making a private religion for a communion of the soul with the oversoul, is mystic. Mysticism does not depend on established rites for communion with God.

Both social protest and philosophical quest in the early writings of Steinbeck were framed by Emersonian transcendentalism.

The social disequilibrium caused by the Great Depression, Steinbeck thought, could be solved by Emerson's humanistic appeal. The mystic love for soul and the over soul could serve for healing up the moral disjuncture of the period. So Steinbeck's philosophical stand at a very critical juncture of the socio-economic history of America was different from the majority of the middle class intellectuals. While middle class intellectuals were Marxist, Steinbeck was Emersonian.

The preparatory phase of Steinbeck as a novelist covers the six early years of his career. Five novels *Cup of Gold* (1929), *Pastures Of Heaven* (1932), *The Long Valley* (1933), *To a God Unknown* (1933), *Tortilla Flat* (1935) can be included in this phase. Steinbeck's social protest and philosophical quest run parallel in these novels. This is the formative period of Steinbeck's career as a novelist. Human aspirations are essentially dreams; man lives with dreams, illusions. Reality often brings him down to a plane quite dissimilar to his dreams: After a long journey of trials and tribulations, man discovers that he has either attained none of the glories he had dreamt of or has reached a state where he is all alone. This is the essence of the preparatory phase novels except *To a God Unknown*.

To a God Unknown, stands unique among the lot for it contains Steinbeck's search for God through the protagonist Joseph Wayne. In this novel Steinbeck said almost everything that he had to say about religion and God. Steinbeck thought that a personal religion is better than traditional religions and a man can do something far more effective for the life of things and man with his personal religion if he intends to. The intention is more important to Steinbeck than the routine rituals.

Cup of Gold, *Pastures of Heaven*, *Long Valley*, *Tortilla Flat* are the narration of individuals who seek to achieve their dreams; sometimes they achieve it, sometimes they fail. This success or failure depends on the individual's understanding of life and his ability to adjust with the reality. Reality is constituted of heterogeneous elements and the individual is a homogenous constitution; they are contradictory in nature; Steinbeck believed that in this contradictory perspective of life success is often unscrupulous. So success does not glorify man always as it cannot glorify Henry Morgan in *Cup of Gold*. Rather, apparent failure is real greatness, as it attributes Christ like glory to Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown*. Similarly self-willed poverty glorifies Danny in *Tortilla Flat*. These early novels of Steinbeck glorify those who want power, pelf, prestige and position become alone in the long run in these novels. They become wretched, they are pitied in these novels.

Cup of Gold (1929)

Henry Morgan the protagonist of *Cup of Gold* wants to be great by buccaneering. The historical setting of the novel-- the late seventeenth century—shows that buccaneering was then the only way to become a hero and a rich man. To acquire both fame and riches Henry Morgan in his early youth decides to be a buccaneer. His father Robert Morgan asks him to seek advice from Merlin—a wise man and a bard—before going to sea. Merlin advises Henry to come out of his illusion, to be realistic. Merlin knows that buccaneering will not bring for Henry the desired heroism, it will not emblazon him. Henry ignores Merlin's advice and goes to sea. He is sold as slave to James Flower by Tim. Tim is actually a slave broker who allures the people who want to make fortunes through piracy. Tim allures Henry and

sells him as a slave to James Flower. Henry is not prepared to be sold as a slave. He cries "but I don't want to be sold, I did not come to be sold. I want to make my fortune and be a sailor... Tim they are selling me..." (*COG* 72). Henry works in James Flower's estate and saves money cherishing his desire to be a buccaneer. Flower does not treat him as slave. In fact, he treats him as his son but Henry does not discard his idea to go to seas and become a buccaneer which "was the silver throne of all his desire" (*COG* 87).

Henry leaves James Flower's estate to become a buccaneer although sometimes he is inclined to confess his gratitude to James Flower saying "no I have more payment in your teaching and in the father you have been to me than money could ever equal" (*COG* 97). But Henry had learned from James Flower who had "been reading Alexander and Xenophon and Caesar in their wars. And the thought is on me that battle and tactics—that is successful tactics—are nothing more than a glorified trickery" (*COG* 82). With the knowledge from James Flower, Henry forms a stronger resolution "I have studied the ancient wars and I must be making a name for myself and a fortune" (*COG* 97). He becomes a buccaneer without caring James Flower's fatherly love.

Buccaneering in the late 17th century was a popular means of becoming rich and famous. "Historians assure us that between 1655 and 1671 the buccaneers sacked eighteen cities four towns and more than thirty five villages" (Jones 147). Many historians do not have a respectable estimation of buccaneering; however, many fortunes were made through piracy. Jones mentions for example, "Karrekar in one of the few scholarly treatment on piracy (Cyprus H. Karrekar, *Piracy was a Business* 1953) basing his study upon archives in Great Britain

and here finds good reason to cast moral doubt upon the origin of certain mercantile fortunes in the colonial period" (Jones 149). Jones then comments that there even seems to be a sneaking admiration for buccaneers.

> Historians and social reformers... characterize the big business particularly after the civil war, by such phrases as piracy, buccaneering, robber barons, the big barbecue and associated terms. Not all these words go back to high sense, but enough of them thus originated to show a sneaking regard among the Americans for the unchecked individualism of piracy the gross satisfaction of power lust... (Jones 152).

Henry knows full well the challenges of sea life and the risks in the plunders and fights especially with the Spanish ships that then ruled the seas but, is determined to become a sea pirate. He wants to get the "moon" and drink in the *Cup of Gold*. The indomitable force that led Henry to the seas is not a very noble aspiration. Henry's father Robert Morgan also does not treat buccaneering as something great. Like Merlin Robert Morgan also wants his son to be a common man, to shun his aspiration. Robert Morgan wants his son to be an ordinary man and make something noble out of the ordinary traits of life. Robert Morgan knows that traditional greatness does not need much of intelligence and wisdom; only arrogant will for reaching the goal is enough, only arrogance without intelligence is not considered

great by Robert Morgan. Robert Morgan condescendingly says to Merlin:

> But I do know; and I say to you without pleasure that this son of ours will be a great man, because—well—because he is not very intelligent. He can see only one desire at a time. I said he tested his dreams, he will murder every dream with the implacable arrows of his will. (*COG* 17)

Robert Morgan does not treat his son's probable "greatness" with much esteem; his comment on his son's probable achievement is sarcastic. Robert Morgan does not consider buccaneering and the consequent greatness really great. Merlin also considers Hery's dream as something childish. But it is his dream that keeps Henry alive; he has no time to give a deep thought to Robert Morgan's sarcastic views or Merlin's foresighted views. Merlin says,

> All the world's greats have been little boys who wanted the moon; running and climbing, they sometimes caught a firefly. But if one grows to man's mind that mind sees that it cannot have the moon and would not want if it could — and so it catches no fire flies. (*COG* 27)

By the "moon" and "fire fly" Merlin means illusion and reality. Great illusions end in small realities that Morgan cannot understand. Merlin is a typical Steinbeck character who speaks

philosophically. Almost all of Steinbeck's novels have such a character who seems to be the spokesman of the author himself. Merlin here is against piracy, he does not show much respect for established orders and values so he does not encourage Henry to go for the seas for buccaneering. Steinbeck disliked buccaneering which was a common way of being great at a certain period of history.

Merlin also once in his youth dreamt of being great by buccaneering; he had illusions. When Henry asks Merlin, "But did you ever want the moon?" Merlin confides, "I wanted it above all desires I wanted it. I reached for it then—then I grew to be a man. And a failure." Henry remains undisturbed and unwavering before all the good advice of Merlin and Robert Morgan. He is not indecisive like his father Robert Morgan; "But though there was complete indecision in Robert's face, there was a great quantity of decision in Henry's if only he could find something about which to decide" (*COG* 6).

Henry Morgan acquires a lot of wealth and he becomes isolated from his people. Wealth makes him a man far removed from the others. Henry thinks wealth will bring him everything. So with a resolute mind he goes to the sea. He says, "In all mad congruity, the turgid soliloquy of life, I felt at least, securely anchored to myself, whatever the vacillations of other people. I thought myself terrifically constant" (*COG* 229).

In order to reach his ultimate goal, Henry has to learn many things in dealing with the slaves. He acquires a sternness in his personality, "he knew that he must never let them see what he was thinking for them in some ineffable way, they have a hold on him

which would be difficult to shake off. He must be cold and distant and insulting to those below him" (*COG* 89). So in dealing with the slaves "he was not cruel he was merciless" (*COG* 85). This acquired brutality in his character is for acquiring wealth, but, at the end, Henry sees all of his resolutions gone, all grimness evading him:

> But now here I am dragging a frayed line, and my anchor gone. I do not know whether the rope was cut or merely worn away, but my anchor is gone. And I am sailing around and around an island in which there is no iron. (*COG* 229).

Henry uses a boat image and realizes the ultimate state of his life and adventures but like a typical Steinbeck hero he accepts the change. He says, "civilization will split up a character and he who refuses to split goes under" (*COG* 255). Henry does not want to go "under." Although suffering, he remains as determined and unwavering as he was.

Merlin explains the "failure" of a mediocre man who aspires to reach the moon but gets instead only a firefly. Merlin eulogizes the failure:

> But there is this gift for the failure; folk [knew] he has failed, and they are sorry and kindly and gentle. He has the whole world with him; a bridge of contact with his own people; the cloth of mediocrity. But he who shields a fire fly in his hands,

> caught in reaching the moon is doubly alone, he only can realise his true failure, can realise his meanness and fears and evasions. (*COG* 28).

Merlin foresees the failure and wretchedness of the aspiration for the moon. He says,

> You will come to your greatness, and it may be in time you will be alone in your greatness and no friend anywhere; only those who held you in respect and awe. I am sorry for you, boy with the straight, clear eyes which look upward longingly. I am sorry for you. (*COG* 28).

Moreover, Henry has "the lust all men have in varying degrees—some for the flash of cards, and some for wine, and some for the bodies of women was in Henry Morgan" (*COG* 88). So Henry's contumacy does not take Merlin's foresightedness much into consideration. Henry is obsessed with traditional greatness because Henry has known the power of money. For example, in the inn, the inn keeper at first received him coldly thinking that he had no money but when "Henry let the light fall on a gold piece in his hand, and as he had made the sign of power, the apron was bowing and gently pulling him by the arm" (*COG* 51). So it is Henry's personality which leads him to the failure and futility of his adventure to aloneness.

Steinbeck was critical of prevalent concepts of adventure. In *Pastures Of Heaven* Molly Morgan proudly thinks of her father's

adventures and heroism; she discovers herself in the midst of an adventure saying "I am having an adventure." Bill comes there to make her free of her trance. Bill says,

> Everybody thinks Vasquez was a kind of a hero, when he was just a thief. He started in stealing sheep and horses and ended up robbing stages. He had to kill a few people to do it. It seems to me Molly, we ought to teach people to hate robbers and worship them. (*Pastures Of Heaven* 81)

Bill is a protesting character like Merlin about traditional values and concepts of greatness. Bill in *Pastures Of Heaven* and Merlin in *Cup of Gold* with their piquant comments show their indignation against "greatness" and heroism.

In the conflict between mediocrity and greatness, Steinbeck favoured mediocrity. Steinbeck thought medjocrity was the real ability of common man and showed that any attempt at fake greatness would lead the individual to a barren plane where the individual would discover himself isolated among mediocre people as an object of pity. Thus in *Cup Of Gold* Henry's acquisition is shown as totally fake. When Henry gets the knighthood, paying two thousand pounds, only the fake-show becomes clear. It is Henry's aristocratic family background that he could buy a knighthood which Evelyn envies, "well two thousand pounds" murmured John Evelyn, "certain tradesman will perhaps bless his knighthood" (*COG* 248). Steinbeck satirizes Henry's knighthood in his death scene, "from the walls

about the room the shining eyes of his ancestors regarded him. On their faces were smirks which said, "Ah yes! A knight to be sure- but we know how you bought your knighthood" (*COG* 260).

Henry Morgan is an example of a mediocre man who aspires to catch the moon but finally catches only a fire fly: a man to be pitied. The egocentric aspiration of Henry deprives him of real greatness and real goodness. Steinbeck thought that real greatness and goodness lay in the mediocre man who works in the fields and mines: "while good men sweat out their lives in the fields and mines" the so-called great men" do nothing but drive about and about in carriages up one street and down another bowing to each other... there at London" (*COG* 32). Steinbeck truly believed in Jefferson's philosophy. Jefferson praised the farmers calling them the chosen people of God:

> Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which he keeps alive the sacred fire, which otherwise escapes from the face of the earth. Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no nation has furnished an example. (Quoted in Vernon Louis Parrington, 347)

Similarly, Steinbeck in his best novels sympathized with the people near the soil: the farmers. Jefferson later said, "We must now place the manufacturer by the side of the agriculturist" (Quoted in Parrington 348). Steinbeck also accepted the economic changes and their mutual adjustment for development; Steinbeck was not a biased Jeffersonian. Steinbeck thought those were the great men who looked to production rather than to export for economic development; mercantilism was a sort of plunder.

Henry is neither an agriculturist nor a manufacturer: "it is plunder that called him, the beautiful things of silk and gold and the admiration of man, and on those his heart set more zealously than ever" (*COG* 89). Merlin and Robert Morgan stress that greatness lies with the common men. On the contrary, Henry thinks greatness lies in buccaneering. The contrast in the novel demonstrates that Henry's aspired "greatness" rewards him with loneliness; he is without any friend to communicate his feelings: he "had grown lonely in his glory" and "he was alone in his success with no friend anywhere. The craving of his heart must lie crouched within himself" (*COG* 123). Through the loneliness of Henry Steinbeck showed his negative attitude to mercantilism and stressed that property forfeits friendship. So all the riches that Henry earns through pillage become useless to Henry when he finds himself confined within himself; he becomes a burden to himself.

At the height of his zeal to plunder, Henry does not care for any body. Paulette, a slave woman, comes to love him and wants to live a simple life with him. But Henry scowls at her love:

> You? Love you? Why you are just a little animal a pretty little golden animal, for sure but a form of flesh—no more. May one worship a God because he is big, or cherish a land which has no virtue save its breadth, or love a woman whose whole realm is her flesh. (*COG* 98)

Paulette's imagined life is not fulfilled. She only nourishes her dream. With all her love she wants to win Henry, she wants to make Henry love her "more than the ships, more than the sea or anything on earth, so that he would marry her" (*COG* 91). Paulette fails. Henry does not care for anybody's love at the call of his illusion. Henry treats women as a mass of flesh, as an object to own, as a property to win and be proud of. There are three Elizabeths in his life, all of whom loved Henry. Henry, however, is egocentric and cannot take any of the Elizabeths as his own, he cannot truly love any one of them. Henry claims that he had loved the first Elizabeth because "she had a soul". Paulette does not believe it. She asks, "What is this soul? And how may I get one if I have not one already? And where is this soul of your that I have never seen or heard or touched, how do you know she had this soul? (*COG* 94)

Henry's love is for Santa Roja—an imagined lady quite different from the real lady. Winning her hand is a symbol of heroism to Henry. Henry thinks of Roja "This woman is harbor of all my questing. I do not think of her as a female thing with arms and breasts, but as a moment of peace after turmoil, a perfume after ransid filth" (*COG* 175). So Henry is in love with his dream not with

any woman. When Santa Roja gives her actual identity and her husband pays the ransom to free Elizabeth alias Santa Roja, Henry begins to feel his wretchedness. Henry feels that it is love that made Roja's husband pay the huge ransom whereas nobody would pay any ransom if he were taken a captive at some time. Although Henry says that he loved the first Elizabeth, the Elizabeth of his adolescence, this is false. If he had loved Elizabeth he would not have left her for the seas. Actually Henry never loved any woman. Henry is in love with his career, riches and his illusion. He marries his cousin Elizabeth to share the status of an aristocrat family only. So in love scenes with his cousin Elizabeth, he becomes simply a puppet with no human urge and tenacity to love.

Henry winks off Merlin's prophecy and the love of all the three Elizabeths to be a hero, but soon his wings drop like "great bladed ants which are born with wings they fly an hour or two then drops their wings" (*COG* 148). Henry sees that he is alone despite his riches, power and position. Henry sees that he is not actually the man ruling the land that he conquered to be a knight. Having conquered Panama he sees,

> The merchant class soon dominated all the isthmus. Some of the soldiers had died, others grew restless in security and marched away to new dangerous lands, leaving the battle of food stuffs and extravagances in the hands of traders who doled out flour and wine and gathered in return jewels and bars for their coffers. (*COG* 154).

So the tradesmen, the mercantilists became the real owners of the land conquered, leaving the conqueror as simply the titular head. Real economic power goes to the tradesmen making the conqueror lonelier. The emerging merchant class becomes confined within themselves "so that all might charge the same price for food and with their profits they built their cedar houses roofed with tiles" (*COG* 154). The merchant class get their women dressed "in foreign silks" and they are "followed about in the streets by bands of retaining slaves" (*COG* 154). So both power and pelf in the real sense go to the merchant class. The conqueror goes to an isolated seclusion, to a fake honored headship.

Henry, the conqueror, the possessor of wealth, goes to an isolation where he becomes "alone in his success" (*COG* 125). Henry had touched all the things and watched them pale and shrivel at his touch. And he is lonely. "His men regard him with respect and sullen awe. They are afraid of him and this state does not feed his vanity as once it had" (*COG* 126). The servants come and take orders "but never pass a quiet time of day" (*COG* 127). Henry feels, "I know I made them so. It was necessary once for I had to build up respect before I could command obedience" (*COG* 128). All the wealth that he has earned, all the people that he has subjugated and commanded obedience, turn of no value to him. He feels deserted, "for ten years I have ravaged the seas like a silent wolf, I have no friend anywhere" (*COG* 128). Henry says in reminiscence,

> When I consider the years that are gone away, I am bewildered at my activity. I went to mighty trouble for silly, golden things... my little wars seem scrambling

> of a person strange to me, a person who did not know the ways of making the world change color. I mourned in the old time, when each satisfaction, died in my arms. Is it any wonder they all died (*COG* 175).

Henry consoles himself sarcastically,

> I may have some value to historians because I have destroyed a few things. The builder of your cathedral is forgotten even now, but I who burned it, may be remembered for a hundred years or so (*COG* 226).

Henry feels that all the wealth that he had amassed so far is dull. He feels that "the streaming rays of the sun made the treasure on the floor glow like a mass of hot metal" (*COG* 210). Ysobel ironically mentions this change in Henry saying,

> I think I am sorry because of your lost light; because the brave brutal child in you is dead—the boastful child who mocked and thought his mockery shook the throne of God, the confident child who graciously permitted the world to accompany him through space. This child is dead, and I am sorry (*COG* 221).

Santa Roja, alias Ysobel, winning whose hand was a symbol of heroism to Henry, comes with a rebuff to Henry now. Ysobel says,

> You will no more take no more Cups of Gold. You will turn no more vain dreams into unsatisfactory conquests... but I suppose your sins are great. All men who break the bars of mediocrity commit frightful sins (*COG* 222).

Symbolically Santa Roja is Henry's illusion. Henry is now totally disillusioned by Santa Roja herself who shakes all his dreams and Henry comes down from his towering illusions to the plane of reality and says;

> I do not want anything anymore. I have no lusts, and my desires are dry and rattling. I have only a vague wish for peace and the time to ponder imponderable matters (*COG* 222).

By pondering "imponderable matters" Henry wants to look into himself and think on the things of life and nature. So in the novel Henry is an activist and a thinker, while Robert Morgan, Merlin and James Flower are thinking characters. Steinbeck's novels always have some thinking characters. Among the thinking characters James Flower emerges as a philosopher. He has a definite philosophical view.

Steinbeck's philosophy was a probable alternative to his protest. Steinbeck while protesting social orders, established values, placed philosophy not as a direct substitute of the prevailing values but as a resort to think as probable liberal alternatives. So often philosophy and protest run parallel in his works. In *Cup of Gold* James Flower is a slave master but treats Henry with all the affection of a father. He has no avarice for wealth, he truly loves Henry as his son; he says, "There is none to take your place, for you have truly been my son. It will be lonely here without you, boy" (*COG* 98). Being disillusioned by wealth James forms a different idea a wavering idea on philosophy and morality. In fact Steinbeck's philosophical quest begins with Flower; he is Steinbeck's first philosophical character.

James Flower is Steinbeck's first philosophical character. James Flower's parents were "people with ideas" who "shook their heads over their dull son" (*COG*75). James was also ashamed of his dullness and treated his parents with awe. James in his boyhood determined to have ideas, he studied a lot. He studied Descartes and was stirred like all learned men and was "determined to reduce all philosophy to a basic postulate" (*COG* 75).

James Flower then goes on to test existentialism that again throws James into a riddle. James cannot understand the logical arrangement of "I think therefore I am" he said, "at least I think I am."

> But this led in a circle and got him no where. Then he joined the new founded school of Bacon. With persistent

> experiments; he burned his fingers and tried to cross clover with barley and pulled the legs from numberless insects striving to discover something almost "anything", but he never did. (*COG* 76).

James biological searches bear him no result because his experiments are too hurried. Moreover, "he learns without absorbing, remembers without assimilating. His mind is a sad mass of unrelated facts and theories" (*COG* 77). So his attempt at cross-breeding clover and barley fails. With his scanty knowledge, he wants to invent something that is clearly beyond his knowledge and ability. So "James Flower who had tried to be a creator, became a quiet kindly little gentle man somewhat ineffectual and very inefficient."

> In his later years he had begun to mistake convictions for ideas. If a man stated a belief loudly enough he frightened James Flower, for he said to himself "Here is one of those divinely endowed creature who control the fire I lack altogether. (*COG* 77).

James Flower's frustrated quest in both biology and philosophy is due to his caprices and limited talent but his veering quests are very much like those of Steinbeck himself. James is almost an autobiographical character. Like James Flower, Steinbeck being tired of teleological interpretation of the cosmic life wanted to postulate all ideas by "is thinking". But Steinbeck was not ineffectual and ineffective like James Flower. Steinbeck's searches had

considerable effect, although like James Flower "in the midst of his investigation the spirit of induction left him ... clearly he did not fit in orthodoxy" (*COG* 76). Steinbeck's investigation with deduction and induction to arrange the phenomenological and biological objects led him to postulate "is-thinking".

On moral and ethical issues, James Flower "clearly did not fit into orthodoxy." Nevertheless, he had a stern attitude on ethical issues. James Flower consistently speaks to Henry about hanging as a punishment. James thinks that hanging is ethically correct, he says, "The chief value of violent punishment lies with those the some might fall. Yes, I think it is well to have someone hanged every now and then. It is expensive to good behaviour among the rest." (*COG* 79).

James Flower has some contradictions in his personality. As a philosopher he wants to postulate all thought into one, as a moralist he favors capital punishment for a healthy society free of vices and sins. Again as a slave master he has love for white slaves as he has for Henry but he is not very sympathetic and affectionate to Negro slaves because he makes gallows to hang Negro slaves. In this gallow Henry once sees a hanging.

> Henry saw a naked black figure squirm and writhe at the end of a rope while the Negroes reeked themselves back and forth on the ground and moaned; while the white slaves gritted their teeth and cursed harshly to keep from shrieking (*COG* 80).

James Flower is vague in his concept of morality and ethical standard. The man who tries existentialism and other broader views of philosophy is strikingly cruel in implementing his ethical standard by hanging the Negro slave for assuring moral and ethical sanctity of the community. When James Flower sees Henry crying, having seen "the black victim hung limply by the crook neck," James Flower says,

> I know it is bad the first time, when I first saw it, I did not sleep for a good while. But after a little when you have seen five, ten- a d[illegible]zen- go out in this way, you will come to have no feeling about it, and no more thought of it than of a chicken flopping about with a wrung neck. (*COG* 80).

The way James Flower makes Henry bear the hanging scene does not establish him as a real thinker. He lacks the amiable, humanitarian views of man and the world characteristic to a philosopher. James justifies hanging by quoting from Holamaron:

> The first time one sees human suffering ... it is unnatural thing, because within one's experience placid comfortable people are the rule. But after a number of such experiences, the sight of torture comes a normal thing, and normal humans come to relish it to various extents. (*COG* 80).

James Flower says that, he himself has "never come to relish the matter." The feeling which James Flower personally does not relish how can he generalize it quoting form Holamaron that "normal humans come to relish it." His personal belief is not like those humans that he quoted. There is a gap between what he has read and what he feels. James Flower is a man with some inconsistencies. Henry Morgan justifies this inconsistency in human nature saying; "the most human of all human traits is inconsistency." (*COG* 229).

James Flower is a strict moralist but Coer de Gris is opposite to James Flower. Coer de Gris has no strict sense of morality as he speaks of his mother who is a prostitute, "my mother is one of the free women of Groves". When Henry Morgan says "surely she has given up this practice, now you are successful on the sea," Coer de Gris says, "I know I am but she continues. I do not mention it, for why should I interfere with what she considers a serious work... why should I change the gentle course of her ways, even I could" (*COG* 129). Coer de Gris also says to Henry "No, Sir, her life is immaculate—prays thrice a day". Coer de Gris thinks that his mother's vile profession is not an obstacle for praying thrice a day. Coer de Gris distinguishes between physical and psychic sanctity and thinks that one is not an obstacle to the other.

James Flower and Coer de Gris bring the moral dilemma: what does physical sanctity have to do with psychic sanctity when morality is totally an affair of the soul? This question would have been solved if Coer de Gris' mother herself had not contradicted it. She contradicted it when she refused to receive a gift- a scarf, a "glorious thing of gossamer gold" which Coer de Gris got as booty. She argues that "it belonged about the neck of some woman who put her faith in

the Romish Church and it would not be decent for a good Hugenot to wear it" (*COG* 130). At the end, the moral issue therefore remains unsolved and undetermined. This shows that Steinbeck treated moral issues not as "drug house catalogues" to be dictated and prescribed in moral cri[illegible]es. Steinbeck shows things as they happen in life and accepts morality as a concept interacting with the environment.

On religion and sin he had the same view as he had on morality. Steinbeck satirizes the religious sense of the people of Panama, when it was invaded by Henry Morgan; the people instead of resisting Morgan "rushed to the Churches, confessed, kissed relics and rushed home again... the broken walls unmended; the rusty cannons were not replaced" (*COG* 157). Tim the slave-broker reviews his faith saying, "If only I had a religion to me like the master, I might say 'tis God's will — and then be forgetting about it. And I had a business or position I might be talking how a man must live. But I have no religion in me at all..." (*COG* 72).

Steinbeck's characters do not take religion as the essential institution for human life. They show that religion has a fearful and segregated entity from their life style. They do not allow religion to dictate affairs of every day life. So Henry Morgan on his death bed refuses to repent. The Vicar believes "after years of patient waiting the Church had at last got Henry Morgan within its power." The Vicar is, however, mistaken

> "Have you repented your sins, Sir Henry?"
>
> "My sins? No, I had not thought of them. Shall I repeat Panama?"

> The Vicar was embarrassed. "well Panama was a patriotic conquest.
>
> The king approved. Besides the people were Papists" (*COG* 264).

Henry Morgan also thinks of Panama as a "patriotic conquest." Henry thinks he has no sins. He asks "what are my sins then?" Henry says.

> How may I repent, Sir? I might go over my whole life, naming and repenting every act from the shattering of my first teething ring to my last visit to brothel. I might repent everything. I could remember but if I forget one single sin the whole process would be wasted. (*COG* 264).

Morgan declines confession as a process because he thinks none can remember all the sins committed in one's whole life-time and if one fails to remember any one sin then the total process becomes meaningless. Henry Morgan thus refuses to get even heaven through confession. Morgan says, "I won't want to get heaven once I am dead. I won't want them to disturb me" (*COG* 264). This view of Tim, Coer de Gris and Henry Morgan on religion and morality remains unchanged in almost all of Steinbeck's later novels. The satiric treatment of buccaneering and heroism as a social system is the revelation of Steinbeck's indignation against them, as well as, the satiric treatment of conventional morality and rituals amply testifies, Steinbeck's disapproval of them. The episodes of *Pastures of Heaven* continue the same convictions of Steinbeck. *Pastures of Heaven* also

contains Steinbeck's sympathetic treatment of the mental retards as a mark of his sympathy for humanity as a whole.

The Pastures of Heaven (1932)

The Pastures of Heaven consists of twelve episodes containing varied characters in the same venue: Salinas Valley, the birthplace of Steinbeck. Salinas Valley, which was named "Pastures of Heaven" by early Spanish settlers, is the microcosm where fortune seekers of varied nature later came to settle and farm the land like other early settlers in America. Spanish settlers came first to Salinas Valley "when the Carmelo Mission of Atlanta California was being built sometime around 1776" (*PH* 6).

The first episode describes one of the settlers who comes to California. He compares the fine land to the Pastures of Heaven. He had beaten many red Indians and forcibly converted them to Christianity:

> He who had whipped brown backs to tatters, whose rapacious manhood was building a new race of California, this bearded savage bearer of civilization slipped from his saddle and took off his steel hat, "Holy Mother" he whispered "here are the green Pastures of Heaven to which our lord

> leadeth us." His descendents are almost white now. (*PH* 6).

These "almost white" people are the Mustrovics, Edward Wicks, Franklin Gomez, Richard Whiteside and the Lopez sisters. Their stories constitute the whole book. They come to the "Pastures of Heaven" to lead an affluent life. Some of them achieve it, some of them do not, but to all of them happiness remains a far cry; affluence cannot bring for them peace of life. Like Steinbeck's other works, *The Pastures Of Heaven* also comically treats human desire to earn riches because, in the long run riches do not bring peace and happiness. Instead, riches separate human beings to an alcoval aloneness where they groan under their gnawing riches. Some of them live a life of illusion and self-deception for riches; Edward Wicks for example, pretends throughout his life to be a rich man. The first settler; the Spanish corporal who came to be affluent, died in the "Pastures of Heaven" when "an Indian woman presented him with the pox." Long after the death of the Spanish Corporal,

> few families of squatters moved into the Pastures of Heaven and built fences and planted trees. Since no one owned the land, they squabbled great deal over its possession. After a hundred years there were twenty families on twenty little farms in the Pastures of Heaven. (*PH* 6)

As an observer of animals and society, Steinbeck believed that both animals and man are ordered with limitations of needs, any failure to understand this limitation is sure to lead one to a mirage

and spoil ones total entity. Steinbeck believed that a man has nothing to do with riches more than his necessity; he believed that organically human beings and animals are so constituted that they cannot consume more or less than their necessity. Junius Maltaby is a character in *The Pastures of Heaven* who understands this constitution of man so he is not crazy for riches like Edward Wicks. These opposing characters make up the microcosm with the final verdict that riches can never make a life of peace and happiness.

Freedom of will is the second remarkable thing in the microcosm. Steinbeck believed that freedom of will of the characters placed in a natural setting like the Pastures of Heaven possessed showing that society suppressed an individual's freedom of will, curtailing natural development. Steinbeck believed that society should have a restricted role in the development of an individual mind: the socialization process of every individual should not be the same. Sympathy for the physically and mentally handicapped people is the third remarkable thing in the book. Steinbeck shows that the same socialization process for the mentally handicapped will not bring the same result. The mentally handicapped individuals need more understanding and sympathy for their natural growth. Tularecito is such a character in the book.

In the second episode the Mustroviecs are one of the "twenty families" who came to the Pastures of Heaven hundred years after the first settler; the Spanish corporal, to settle in one of the "twenty little farms." Young Mustrovic works hard on the farm,

> All by himself he cleared and planted
> it, pruned the trees and sprayed them.

> At any hour he could be seen working feverishly, half running ahead his tasks, with a look on his face as though he expected time to stop before a crop was in. (*PH* 9)

But the Mustrovics cannot make their fortune in the Pastures of Heaven. So one morning the neighbors do not see the Mustrovics family anywhere around, they have left the Pastures of Heaven. Then Bert Munroe takes possession of the Battle Farm. The Munroe family brought everything in the house for "mathematical comfort":

> the new furniture arrived, overstuffed chairs and a davenport, an enamelled stove, steel beds painted to look like woods and guaranteed to provide mathematical comfort. (*PH* 11)

Young Mustrovic and Bert Munroe illustrate how the early settlers labored to make the area worth living. Bert Monroe tries his luck in garage business and grocery shop. He fails, and last of all like any typical Steinbeck hero he starts farming. In farming, Bert Monroe thought "lay the only endeavor that did not cross with his fate. He thought perhaps he could find rest and security on a little farm" (*PH* 14). Soon Bert Munroe found himself successful in farming. He loved the land like a living being, "every seed sprouting out of the ground seemed to renew a promise of immunity to him" (*PH* 14). Bert Munroe worked hard on the Battle farm and relieved it of the curse. People in the Pastures of Heaven "watched the advent of the Munroe family with a little animosity" because they thought,

> The Battle farm was haunted. They had always considered it so, even those who laughed at the idea. Now a man came and proved them wrong. More than that, he changed the face of the countryside by removing the accused farm and substituting a harmless and fertile farm. (*PH* 14)

Bert Munroe changes a superstitiously treated farm to a fertile and productive one. He does it all by his labor and love for the land. When T.B Allen asks his old question,

> We always had a kind of thought that the place was cursed. Lots of funny things have happened there. Seen any ghosts yet? Bert laughed, "If you take away all the food from a place, the rats will leave" he said "I took all the oldness and darkness from the place. That's what ghosts live on" (*PH* 15).

The second episode of *The Pastures Of Heaven* shows how people like the young Mustrovic and Bert Munroe made the area worthy for human habitation. They are the early settlers on whose love and labor for the land their descendents lived a life of ease and comfort. So Bert's daughter Mae Munroe decorates her room with,

> photographs of her friends in Montery, and laid out her photograph album and her locked diary on the little bedside

> table. In the diary she concealed from preying eyes a completely uninteresting record of dances, of parties, of recipes for candy and mild preference for certain boys. (*PH* 12)

In her boudoir there was

> a French doll with clipped blonde hair with a cloth cigarette dangling from languid lips. Mac considered that this doll proved her openness of mind, her tolerance of things she did not quite approve. Mac had very little conception of ideas except that in some manner they governed the kind of kisses one received while driving home from dances. (*PH* 12)

Bert Munroe's son Jimmie Monroe, just out of high school is "enormously cynical"

> In the presence of his parents, Jimmie's manner was sullen and secretive. He knew he could not trust them with his knowledge of the world, for they would not understand. They belonged to a generation which had no knowledge of sin or heroism. (*PH* 12)

Jimmie Munroe is highly imaginative. He imagines discovering scientific machines; "he dreamed of shutting himself up

in a cell like work shop, and after years of agony and ridicule, of emerging with an airplane near in design and devastating in speed" (*PH* 12).

The children make their own world of imagination, discovery and mementoes, they do it at the cost of their father's labor in the land. The descendants of Bert Munroe live on their father's achievement. With all their achievements and affluence the Munroe family remains confined within themselves: the father confined in the farm, the children in their imaginative flamboyance. They are alienated, they have no personal contacts. They can hardly make any connection with the society they are in. Warren French estimates this social detachment of the Munroes:

> Steinbeck's attitude however is that the curse is no manifestation of supernatural malice, but the Munroe's own lack of feeling for the process of life. They are a baneful influence because they are so entirely attuned to achieving financial success and establishing status quo that they have any sensitivity to the rhythms of life and to the feelings of other people. (Ed. Warren French, *American Winners of Nobel Prize*, 203)

In the third episode Edward Wicks dreams of being a very rich man with a thick bank balance. He makes his own world of dream and keeps everyone of his family in dark about his dreams, even his wife Katherine. Ostensibly Edward Wicks makes an impermeable

barrier around his personality built on his imagined bank balance. His fictitious self-concept makes him harsh and cold to his wife Katherine. Nothing more than money is of any importance to Edward Wicks. So he is indifferent to his wife, he does not treat her with any human softness and warmth of heart. He treats her with a cold reluctance that is "neither tender nor cruel":

> He governed with the same gentle inflexibility he used on horses. Cruelty would have seemed to him as foolish as indulgence. He never talked to her as to human, never spoke of his hopes and thoughts or failures of his paper wealth nor of the peach crop. (*PH* 15)

Edward Wicks maintains a fictitious ledger, always calculating and adding interests to his imaginary account. This is due to his belief that money brings social dignity and respectful estimation in the public eye. Edward Wicks thinks no other human quality is of so much importance for public esteem as possessing money is:

> His greatest pleasure came of being considered a wealthy man. Indeed, he enjoyed it so much that the wealth itself became real to him. Setting his imaginary fortune at fifty thousand dollars, he kept a ledger in which he calculated his interest and entered records of his various investments. These manipulations were the first joy of his life. (*PH* 16)

Edward Wicks dream is shaken when he attempts to murder Jimmy Munroe on the fake suspicion that Jimmie Munroe is in love with Alice. The Deputy Sheriff asks him for a ten thousand dollar bond. Wicks' dream is shaken, his fake social status is lost because the "truth was that he had never had more than five hundred dollars at one time in his life" (*PH* 15). Wicks gets comfort from his wife whom he had disregarded so long on the vanity of his riches and social position. He confides to Katherine:

"I haven't any money" his monstrous voice said, "They took me and asked for a ten thousand dollar bond. I had to tell the Judge all heard. They all knew—I haven't any money. I never had any. Do you understand that ledger was nothing but a lie. Every bit of it was lies. I made it up all. Now every body knows. I had to tell the Judge" (*PH* 28).

Katherine's attitude to Wicks changes:

> As Katherine stood in the doorway, a feeling she had never experienced crept into her. She did a thing she had never contemplated in her life. A warm genius moved in her. Katherine sat down on the edge of the bed and with a sure hand, took Wicks' head on her lap. This was instinct, and the same sure instinct set her hands to stroking Wicks' forehead. His

> body seemed boneless with defeat. (*PH* 27)

Katherine hears Wicks' frustrated tone and comforts him. "Katherine stroked his head gently and the great genius continued to grow in her. She felt larger than the world. The whole world lay in her lap and she comforted it, pity seemed to make her huge in stature. Her soothing breasts yearned to the woe of the world" (*PH* 28). Katherine is tolerant, sympathetic and full of noble qualities; she has a heart full of tenderness and human values. Edward Wicks, having lost his fake wealth and dignity, understands that basic human qualities are above all worldly wealth and status. So Katherine becomes the last inspiring and consoling resort to Wicks, who had ignored her and treated her coldly so long.

> Suddenly the genius in Katherine became power and the power gushed in her body and followed her. In a moment she knew what she was and what she could do. She was exultantly happy and very beautiful "you've had no chance" she said softly "all of your life you've been in this farm, this old farm and there's no chance for you. How do you know you can't make money? I think you can, I know you can." (*PH* 28)

In the sixth episode Junius Maltaby is a philosopher. His philosophical quest leads him to look carelessly at worldly life. He thinks of life of wealth and affluence quite useless. Steinbeck does

not glorify affluence and wealth. Rather he shows people unhappy and lonely with their wealth and power; as Henry Morgan in *Cup of Gold*. Junius Maltaby also having married Mrs. Quaker became the owner of a ranch house and many acres of land. Like other worldly-wise people he could make the ranch and land be wealthier but Junius Maltaby bothered less about the ranch and the land. With his German servant he discusses "Things which interested and puzzled them: how color comes to hinges, whether there is symbology in nature, how the Incas interred their dead" (*PH* 51).

Apparently Junius Maltaby's "life was unreal as romantic and as unimportant as his thinking" (*PH* 50). But Maltaby actually tries to taste poverty maintaining a conscious indifference to wealth. Junius Maltaby lives a life:

> Here in the fertile valley he lived in fearful poverty. While other families built their small fortunes, bought Fords and radios and put in electricity.... he was not a bit ashamed of his poverty nor of his rags. (*PH* 51)

Junius Maltaby's son Robbie learns from his father, "it was unmanly to wear good cloths" (*PH* 57). Maltaby cares more about distant things and big things, "It is strange thing this "knowledge", it is nothing but an awareness of details. There are long visioned minds and short visioned. I've never been able to see things that are close to me" (*PH* 51). Maltaby theorizes that big things are good:

> It seems to me that a good thing or a kind thing must be very large to

> survive. Little good things are always destroyed by evil little things. Rarely is thing poisonous or treacherous. For this reason in human thinking bigness is an attribute of good and littleness of evil (*PH* 52).

From his thought on life and earth Junius Maltaby forms the conviction that "water is the seed of life. Of the three elements water is the sperm, earth is the womb and sunshine the mould of growth" (*PH* 53). Maltaby is a natural philosopher; he likes to see and feel things in nature in their actual form so "he had stopped wearing shoes because he liked the feeling of the warm earth on his feet, and because he had no shoes" (*PH* 51).

Maltaby's social philosophy considers the atrocities to the red Indians by the white settlers as unjust, inhuman and brutal, so he arranges a mock trial with his servant Sultz and his son Robbie. In the mock trial he punishes the President of the United States:

> In the center of the yard a stout post was set up, and to it an old and ragged man was bound with many lengths of rope. Another man younger and smaller but even more ragged piled brush about the feet of the captive. (*PH* 55)

Maltaby narrates the mock trial to Molly Morgan, the school teacher who comes to visit him, "I am Junius Maltaby and this gentle man on ordinary days is Jakob Sultz. Today though he is President of

the United States being burned by the Indians" (*PH* 58). Maltaby says to Molly Morgan, "I'm not Mr. Maltaby, I am three hundred Indians." Junius then sets fire to the brush. Finally in the mock trial the President is rescued, "As the boys stood at salute, the President marched down the line and to each overall bib pinned a leaden slug on which the word HERO was deeply scratched. The game was over" (*PH* 59). This mock trial in the form of a game shows Maltaby's social belief and his sympathy to the Indians and indignation to so called heroism. Steinbeck's social protest is embodied by Maltaby, Sultz and Robbie.

Maltaby, however does not continue long his self-willed acceptance of poverty. He finds poverty as something shameful when the whole society of Pastures of Heaven begin to scorn Maltaby for his callousness and indifference. Finally, Maltaby goes to SanFransisco to find a job, saying, "at least I was an accountant twenty years ago. I'm going to try to get a job." Maltaby cannot bear poverty. He finds the severity of poverty unjust to an individual. He had once taught his son "it was unmanly to wear good cloths" (*PH* 57). Now Maltaby understands he was wrong: "I was doing an injury to the boy here. I hadn't thought about it. I suppose, I should have thought about it. You can see that he should not be brought up in poverty" (*PH* 63).

The fourth episode is about a deformed boy, Tuleracito whom Franklin Gomez finds on the wayside. Franklin Gomez takes him home and brings him up like his own son. Tuleracito is a deformed creature with "short chubby arms, and long loose jointed legs, large head set without interval of neck between deformedly broad shoulders" (*PH* 29). Franklin Gomez tries to bring him up with

sympathy and love. Tuleracito has a wonderful gifted hand of drawing; he can draw animals to the minute details and can carve on sandstone.

> His strange and obscure gifts set him apart from other children and made men and women uneasy. Only one thing could provoke anger in Tuleracito. If any person man, women or child handled carelessly or broke one of the products of his hands, he became furious. (*PH* 30)

Tuleracito is sent to school at the age of eleven. On his first day at the school he draws pictures of animals on the blackboard nicely. Miss Martin, the school teacher, encourages him for his talent but when she wipes the drawing on the black board Tuleracito becomes furious:

> Miss Martin aided by the whole school could not hold him down, for the enraged Tuleracito had the strength of a man and a mad man. The ensuing battle wrecked the schoolroom, tipped over the desks, spilled rivers of ink, hurled bouquets of teacher's flowers about the room. Miss Martin's clothes were torn to streamers, and the big boys, on whom the burden of battle fell, were bruised and battered. Tuleracito fought with hands and head.

> He admitted no honourable rules and in the end he won. (*PH* 31)

For this offence at school, Miss Martin asks Franklin Gomez to beat Tuleracito. Franklin Gomez beats him severely but is sympathetic to Tuleracito. He says:

> "Miss Martin you say he is an animal, but surely he is a good animal. You told him to make pictures and then you destroyed his pictures. Tuleracito does not like this"... "No Miss Martin he should be allowed to go free. He is not dangerous. No one can make a garden as he can. No one milk so swiftly nor so gently. He is a good boy. He can break a mad horse without riding it; he can train a dog without whipping it, but the law says he must sit in the first grade repeating "C-A-T, cat" for seven years, if he had been dangerous he could have easily killed me." (*PH* 32)

Miss Martin resigns her job feeling that she cannot treat the boy psychologically and sympathetically. Another teacher Miss Morgan tries some remedial and psychological treatments on Tuleracito. She succeeds partially, but finally Tuleracito is sent to the asylum. Miss Morgan teaches Tuleracito that he was a descendent of the ghosts and gnomes who live in the deep ground. Tuleracito digs a deep hole to talk to his relatives. Bert Munroe in his morning walk

finds the hole and pushes some dirt to close it. Tuleracito becomes furious and beats Bert Munroe with his shovel severely; the Sheriff sends Tuleracito to the asylum.

Tuleracito might have shown some of the excellence of his talent in painting if he had been treated sympathetically. Steinbeck becomes very sympathetic for the boy's talent, as he is sympathetic to Johny Bear and blind Tom in *The Long Valley* for their qualities of imitating voices and playing piano.

Hilda in the fifth episode is a schizophrenic patient. Hilda's mother Helen with all her devotion and sympathy cannot prevent Hilda from committing suicide. Tuleracito and Hilda draw Steinbeck's attention and curiosity. Both as an observer of abnormal psychology and sympathizer, Steinbeck felt for them. Tuleracito and Hilda in *The Pastures Of Heaven* and blind Tom, Johny Bear in *The Long Valley* are the handicapped people for whom Steinbeck had deep love and sympathy. He felt that they could be remedied with more of sympathy. Equally he was curious about their talent, about their brain formation. Drawing pictures, playing piano, imitating voices accurately, Steinbeck thought, were works of great talent. He wondered how half witted, deformed creatures could perform excellently and he profoundly felt for them.

In the seventh episode the Lopez sisters dream of living a simple, honest life but they cannot bring their dream to reality. The Lopez sisters open a restaurant of Spanish dishes especially enchiladas but their business does not flourish. Rosa starts sleeping with the customers. She says: "Today I gave myself to a customer... That day marked the turning point of affairs of the Lopez sisters. It is

true that business did not flourish but from then on they sold enough of their Spanish cooking, to keep food in the kitchen and bright dress on their broad bock" (*PH* 65).

The Lopez sisters are usually pious and so they pray and ask Mary why they have suffered.

> Maria said to the porcelain Mary "I have placed candles," she cried. "I have put flowers every day, holy mother, what is the matter with us? Why do you let this happen?" (*PH* 65).

The Lopez sisters desire to live like devoted Christians. They do penance for their sins.

> They remained persistently religious. When either of them had sinned she went directly to the little virgin now, conveniently placed in the hall..... sins were allowed to pile up. They confessed each one as they were committed. Under the virgin there was a polished place in the floor where they had knelt in their nightdress. (*PH* 65).

They do not like the life they are bound to live. Their physical immorality could not touch their psychic clarity as they differentiated them like Coer de Gris' mother in *The Cup of Gold*. It is the system in a society, Steinbeck showed, that does not assure a healthy

survival of its members even as an institution and rituals as habits, do not assure morality while one's physical entity is at stake.

The Lopez sisters are honest and religious, but social justice does not treat them sympathetically. The sheriff declares them outcasts on the charge of immorality. The sheriff does not inquire into the reason that made the Lopez sisters immoral. He simply declares them social outcasts. Now the Lopez sisters become openly immoral. Rosa tells Maria that she will go to San Francisco and be a bad woman for money.

> "Maria, I will go to San Francisco and be a bad woman," Her head dropped low over her fat hands. "For money?" She whispered in horror. "Yes" cried Rosa bitterly "For money for a great deal of money"... "Rosa, I will go to San Francisco with you, I too will be a bad woman—" Then the reserve of Rosa broke. She stood up and opened her huge embrace. And for a long time the Lopez sisters cried hysterically in each other's arms. (*PH* 71)

The social system fails to keep morality intact before poverty. Steinbeck's social protest is embodied sympathetically in the Lopez sisters.

Molly Morgan in the eighth episode hears many stories about adventures and heroism from her father. Molly forms romantic ideas of adventure and heroism. She wants to reach her dreams through

adventure. In the pastures of heaven Bill shows her that adventure and heroism are nothing to be eulogized or to be proud of. When in the Pastures of Heaven in the Vasquez cabin Molly feels, "no I'm right in the midst of an adventure in Vasquez cabin" Molly out of her dream thought Vasquez a great adventurer but Bill brings her out of her trance.

> Every body thinks Vasquez was a kind of a hero, When really he was just a thief. He started in stealing sheep and horses and ended in robbing stages. He had to kill a few people to do it. It seems to me Molly, We ought to teach people to hate robbers, not worship them (*PH* 81).

Molly soon becomes disillusioned and feels that she has failed in becoming an adventurer like her father or a hero like Vasquez. "She buried her head in the pillow. "It's crazy" She said to herself. "There isn't a change in the world. I'm forgetting all about it right now". But she found to her dismay that she was crying" (*PH* 82).

John Whiteside in the eleventh episode is drawn on almost the same life as that of Steinbeck himself. John Whiteside's father Richard Whiteside is one of the early settlers, in Salinas Valley. Like the other early settlers, Richard Whiteside also earnestly desires the fertility, productivity of the land and generation building. Richard Whiteside says to Alicia, "Make John realise that he must keep us going. I want to survive in the generation..... I've seen the future. There will be so many children. I am content Alicia" (*PH* 115).

Like Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown*, Richard Whiteside also represent the early settlers in Salinas Valley as well as in the United Sates. Steinbeck's social consciousness construed the social

development in the light of the formative periods of American society and culture. John Whiteside's reading resembles that of Steinbeck himself.

> John Whiteside always remembered how his father read to him the three great authors, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon... "All history is here," Richard said "Everything mankind is capable of, is recorded in these three books. The love and chicanery, the stupid dishonesty the short sightedness and bravery, nobility and sadness of the race. You may judge the future by these books, John, for nothing can happen which has not happened and been recorded in these books. Compared to this the bible is a very incomplete record of an obscure people." (*PH* 115)

Like Steinbeck himself, John Whiteside has a middle position concerning politics:

> The social and political structure of the whole valley was built on this porch... John looked at life about him with a kind of amused irony and due to his outlook, there ceased to exist in the valley any of the ferocious politics and violent

> religious opinions which usually poison rural districts. (*PH* 117)

John Whiteside sums up life: "Most lives extend in a curve. There is a rise of ambition, a round peak of maturity, a gentle dowered slope of disillusion and last a flattened grade of waiting for death." (*PH* 118). Ironically this becomes the narration of Steinbeck's own life. Through John Whiteside Steinbeck could foresee the end of his own life; John Whiteside represents Steinbeck in the microcosm.

The Pastures of Heaven is the microcosm where different people assemble: the suspicious father Edward Wicks, the loving mother, the cynic son Jimmie Munroe, the dream haunted daughter Molly Morgan, the moron Tuleracito, the abnormal child Hilda, the philosopher father Junius Maltaby "who had read while his children died." They are apparently different, but are united in their struggle to exist. Human beings on earth have the same unity, the same life process of struggle, indifference, suppression, love, hatred and survival. *The Pastures Of Heaven* is a microcosm of the whole world.

The different episodes of *The Pastures of Heaven* reveal Steinbeck's social protest and non-conventional philosophical ideas. Social position through money and possession is shown as fake through Edward Wicks in the third episode. Junius Maltaby in the sixth episode is totally indifferent to possession. Of course, both Wicks and Maltaby in the long run change their views, signifying that this sort of change is common in human nature, no preset norm can dictate the on going process of human life. The Lopez sisters' dream of living a normal life is not assured by the social system. Social

elites do not try to understand them sympathetically, they do not think of the system that makes the Lopez sisters "bad girls". The Lopez sisters try to make private moral laws to live a normal life but they fail before the social system. As part of Steinbeck's non-conventional philosophy, the Lopez sisters have a dual moral code, a private moral code.

In *The Pastures of Heaven* the twelve episodes are planned to show the twelve facets of the same life process; varying in degrees, the episodes significantly portray Steinbeck's social and philosophical attitude. Despite the variation in social position and philosophical view of the characters, the episodes invariably show the unity of life in diversity. They show Steinbeck's convictions: the futility of man's extreme acquisitive tendency, the futility of extreme indifference to basic needs of life indicating mediocrity of common man's life as the best state of life.

To A God Unknown (1934)

To A God Unknown is a philosophical novel containing Steinbeck's search for a God who is unknown, through the protagonist, Joseph Wayne. Joseph Wayne is the central character, in an almost primitive setting. *To A God Unknown* is a modern man's anthropological search for the origin of religion and the concept of God. In his search Joseph tries both mystic and pragmatic ways, finally unifying them in Emersonian transcendentalism. However, Joseph ignores the qualitative differences of mysticism, transcendentalism and pragmatism; some identical elements may be traced between mysticism and transcendentalism but pragmatism is quite different. Joseph willfully ignores the differences and unites

them in a complete personal philosophy and glorifies his philosophy by self-sacrifice as the savior of nature and man. The whole novel is dialectically structured, showing heretic views (Joseph, Rama and the old man) as antithesis to conventional religion (Burton, father Angelo). Between the thesis and the antithesis come the hedonist Benjy and the skeptic Elizabeth. Finally the novel establishes the self-sacrifice of Joseph and his heretic views.

To A God Unknown is the epitome of Steinbeck's anthropological study and philosophical quest. Steinbeck's belief about man's relation to nature and his concept of God have been concretized in the novel. Joseph Wayne, the protagonist, is foremost amongst Steinbeck's thinking characters. Joseph's father tells his son, "there's something more strong in you than your brothers, ... more sure and inward" (TGU 8). Indeed Joseph is the most inward of Steinbeck's thinking characters. He also happens to be the embodiment of Steinbeck's anthropological study. Steinbeck was influenced by Sir James Frazer's anthropological searches says Peter Lisca: "Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* ... absorbed Steinbeck as a college student for fertility rites and myths, sacrifices, totems and symbols" (Peter Lisca, *John Steinbeck: Nature and Myth* 41). For instance, Joseph Wayne worships trees. Frazer describes ancient tree worship:

> At Upashala the old religious capital of Sweden, there was a sacred grove in which every tree was regarded as divine. The heathen Slavs worshipped trees and groves. (Frazer 110)

Frazer describes the association of human fertility with that of nature "Ruder races in the other parts of the world have consciously employed the intercourse of the sexes as a means to ensure the fruitfulness of the earth" (Frazer 136). Similarly, Steinbeck associated human sexuality with the fertility of man and nature. Thus when Joseph Wayne imitates sexual intercourse by beating his thighs on the ground, he sees in the silhouetted pine tree piercing and withdrawing in the rising moon, a symbolic copulation. Joseph Wayne's druidic practice makes him think "my father is that tree! It is silly, but I want to believe it" (*TGU* 27).

Joseph has a 'hunger for land' for fertility and fruitfulness. Margaret Murray points out that "the concept of fatherhood and fatherliness is comparatively modern... the belief in a female deity long preceded that of a male deity" (Murray 4).

> There was a curious femaleness about the interlacing boughs and twigs, about the long green cavern cut by the river through the trees and aisles and alcoves seemed to have meaning as obscure and promising as the symbols of an ancient religion (*TGU* 11).

To Joseph land and fertility was the truest thing in nature, the production in land and human breeding seemed similar to Joseph so he felt that "trees were his children and the land his child... for a moment the land had been his wife" (*TGU* 15). The land is like a woman to Joseph and the crops like his children. Joseph felt a union, a filial union with the land. Joseph willfully suspends the modern

concept to correlate man and nature that constitute the life cycle. Joseph recapitulates his knowledge from his mother "my mother said how the earth is our mother, and now everything that lives has life from the mother and goes back to mother" (*TGU* 28).

Steinbeck shows through the soul and oversoul relation anthropologically that it is the earliest state of human concept later leading to the formation of religion and God. Joseph understands this for himself. Richard Astro rightly analyses Joseph's understanding of nature saying that,

> Joseph is the only figure in the novel whose understanding is limited neither by internal deficiencies (Benjy & Burton) nor by external restraints (Burton & father Angelo). He alone is able to see the relation to a large picture, a more deeply significant whole. (Astro 91)

Joseph is not guided by any preconceived idea on nature and its relation to man. He is a free agent to interpret all for himself: Astro says, "unlike his brothers who are unable to understand transcendence, Joseph breaks through the knowledge, acts to save the natural order" (Astro 91). Joseph's other three brothers interpret nature in three different ways: Thomas is a primitivist, Burton, a Christian and Benjy, a hedonist. Nature as an object therefore has different appearance to different subjects depending on the analytical ability of the subjects. For instance Thomas

> had a strong kinship with all kinds of animals... Thomas liked animals and understood them with no more feeling than they had about killing each other. He was too much of an animal to be sentimental... Thomas understood animals but humans he neither understood nor trusted very much. He had little to say to men; he was puzzled and frightened by such things as trade, and parties, religion and politics. (*TGU* 28-29)

Thomas represents the primitive man with no rational feelings. Burton accepts the traditional institutionalization of life and nature. "Burton was whom nature had constituted a religious life. He kept himself from evil in nearly all human contact (*TGU* 30). Benjy cares only for love and merry making. Only Joseph has the ability to ask the traditional concepts of life and nature and their intertwined functioning. Joseph clarifies his state, "Thomas and Burton are allowed their likes and dislikes, only I am cut off and I can have no knowledge of good or bad. Even a pure true feeling is denied me" (*TGU* 80). Joseph's intellectual adventure leads him to form a personal philosophy. He thinks that man's only worship should be to keep fertility unhindered,

> All things about him, the soil, the cattle and people were fertile and Joseph was the source, the root of their fertility... He willed all things about him must grow, grow

> quickly, conceive and multiply. The hopeless sin was barrenness, a sin intolerable and unforgivable. (*TGU* 33)

Joseph can think of barrenness as the only sin; the wasteland is a symbol of sin to Joseph. Joseph takes upon himself the responsibility to keep the fertility ever flowing, so he says, "I want increase. I want the land to swarm with life. Everywhere I want things growing up" (*TGU* 34). In Joseph's personal religion only barrenness is a sin which is different from the Christian concept of sin. Joseph feels "the sullenness of the sentence" in the Christian concept: "You must endure" said the Church: and its music was a sunless prophecy" (*TGU* 34). So the sermons, congregations, prayers everything in a church seem "sunless" to Joseph. Joseph does not consider the importance of the Church as an institution. On the day of his marriage with Elizabeth in the Church Joseph wonders why he should get married in this way:

> "There's foulness here," he thought. "Why must we go through this to find marriage here in the Church? I've thought there lay a beauty if a man could find it, but this is only a doddering kind of devil worship. (*TGU* 63)

Joseph is alone in his belief and challenge to the Church. He can impress Elizabeth (the skeptic) temporarily with his belief:

> Elizabeth had been tensed to repel his attack upon her boundaried and fortified

> self, but now a strange and sudden thing had happened. Perhaps the tone, the rhythm, perhaps some personal implication in his words had done, it had swept her walls cleanly away. (*TGU* 57)

Elizabeth continues her belief like Joseph up to a certain time when she feels,

> I don't think I have noticed anything very closely in my life... just now it seemed to me that the lenses of my eyes have wiped clean... I suddenly felt myself spreading and dissipating like a cloud mixing around with everything around me. (*TGU* 75)

But soon Elizabeth swerves from Joseph's beliefs; thinking them sacrilegious. She starts thinking that Joseph's ideas are pagan in nature. She says,

> Lord Jesus, protect me from these forbidden things and keep me in the way light and tenderness to. Do not let this thing pass through me into my child, Lord Jesus, guard me against the ancient things in my blood. When the prayer was done she felt better. A clear light entered

> her mind again, and drove out the fear...
> (*TGU* 126)

Elizabeth's temporary alignment with Joseph's belief is to contrast the primitive and Christian rituals and to show that only independent spirited persons like Joseph can stand firm in their conviction caring little for the established orders of religion. Once Elizabeth thought her husband a Christ, "When she drew a picture of the Christ in her mind, he had the face, the youthful beard, the piercing puzzled eyes of Joseph who stood beside her" (*TGU* 63). Elizabeth no more thinks of Christhood imposed on Joseph. Joseph's elder brother's widow Rama comes closer to Joseph. She understands him more than Elizabeth. Rama can imagine the broadness of Joseph's thought

The whole novel has therefore, Joseph, Rama and the old man on one side and Thomas, Burton, Benjy and Father Angelo on the other side, while Elizabeth is placed in the middle with her tottering skepticism and Benjy placed a bit distantly with his hedonistic beliefs. The first group is against traditional institutions of religion while the opposite group is to defend the traditionalism, conventional worship.

Joseph rejects the anthropomorphic concept of God. He thinks Christ is simply a figure with human qualities attributed to him. He finds nothing divine in Christ:

> Christ nailed up might be more than a symbol of all pain. He might in very truth contain all pain. And a man standing on a

> hilltop with his arms outstretched a symbol of the symbols, he might be a reservoir of all pains that ever was. (*TGU* 68)

So after the fiesta when Joseph walks to the oak tree to pour a little wine on its bark, he argues with the priest. The priest says,

> "This is not good thing to do, my son" ... "Be careful of the groves, my son. Jesus is a better saviour than the hamadryad" ... "Do you understand everything, Father?" "No my son," the priest said, "I understand very little, but the Church understands everything. Perplexing thing become simple in the Church and I understand this thing you do." (*TGU* 109)

Joseph does not think that the Church has the capacity to make perplexing things clear and 'simple.' Joseph's question is 'who is he to whom we shall offer our sacrifice.' To this perplexing question he does not find an answer nor does he think the Church able to answer the question. Joseph thinks that the Church simply supposes Christ as the answer. Farther Angelo shows him Christ as the answer, which cannot satisfy Joseph. Burton asks Joseph to swear in the name of Christ to have an answer to his question. Joseph refuses do so:

> "No I won't swear. I won't give up my thing to your thing. Why should I?" "Because you're letting evil in," Burton

> cried passionately, "Because you're opening the door to evil." (*TGU* 139)

Joseph insists that he is not denying Christ. Joseph says, "I am denying no Christ, I am doing a simple thing that pleases me" (*TGU* 140). Joseph thinks that "It's a good practice" and there is no sin in his practice. By sin he means something which one commits contrary to his belief. He argues that sin means a deviation from a set of moral codes. He is not deviating; he is making his own finding, his own God who is so far unknown to him. Joseph claims that he does not follow the established moral codes, that would have been a sin, Joseph says, "If Burton were doing, what I am doing, it would be sin" (*TGU* 142)

Joseph finds a support of his belief in the old man. The old man out of his experience "has picked out the thing that makes him happy" and he says, "he gave up reasons in support of his personal rites like offering hawk to the sun, saying, "I do this because it makes me glad. I do it because I like to" (*TGU* 142). This freedom and spontaneity of offer and pleasure of Joseph and the old man is very much anthropological in approach, as Jung analyses the origin of religion,

> Man has everywhere and always, spontaneously developed forms, expressions and... the human psyche form time immemorial has been shot through with religious feelings and ideas. (Car J, Jung, *Modern man in search of a soul*. 140)

Lester Jay Marks thinks that through the characters of the old man and Joseph "Steinbeck supposes that man is so constituted as to seek out a religion that suits his particular needs and that if he finds none those already existing, he creates his own" (Marks 13).

Like Joseph who creates his own religion, the old man, who lives the life of a recluse, makes a private religion and gets religious pleasure by offering hawks to the sun. The old man thinks that the sun is the only source of power, giving life to plants, animals and man keeping the cycle of life moving. He offers hawks to the sun as an act of worship. Both Joseph and the old man think and make a private religion of keeping the life-giving process alive. This privatization of religion of both Joseph and the old man is a fundamental thought to religion, a basic thought, because modern philosophy in analyzing the origin of religion and theism marks that

> It is the life giving power, which is the basis of every religion, no matter how high or low. In the development of various forms religion this fact is so overgrown with myth and legend, with sophistication and ribaldry, with theology and reutilization with philosophy and psychology as to be almost obscured. (Murray 4)

To find an answer to this 'obscurity' and quest of the life giving power Joseph thinks that only preserving the continuum of life process and fertility is the greatest virtue and barrenness is the greatest vice. Whether this sense of virtue and vice constitute a

private religion, modern philosophy answers to this question declaring that "an individual's religion may not be theological and theistic in character" (Miller 8).

So without having a theological chain and theistic concept, Joseph's idea of vice and virtue has a religious fervor making it a private religion. Joseph in this sense is pious because he never deviates from his piety and belief. He brings all the responsibility to keep the life process and the fertility of the earth, ever flowing upon himself. He unifies himself with the land, rock and thinks himself a part of nature. Nature, he feels, binds human life with herself; after death the human body becomes dust, thus a part of nature and from that dust comes up the plants and plankton. Modern science terms this as environmental cycle. So in the garb of primitivity Joseph is a modern iconoclast. He narrates the origin of the earth, which has some similarity with the Big-Bang theory of the origin of earth given by modern science. He says, "this is the storm. This is the beginning of the thing I know. There is some cycle here steady and quick and unchangeable as a fly wheel" (*TGU* 162).

About the origin of earth, Joseph thinks that the storm is the most important factor, he has different ontological concept then. While thinking about the origin of earth and life, Joseph plunges into a mystic sadness and feels, "And there are times when the people and the hills and the earth all everything except the stars are one and the love of them all is strong like sadness" (*TGU* 73).

Joseph can feel the "warmth of the land" He knows the thing that "whips the tortured air with lightening" (*TGU* 89), "and at night he slept lightly listening to the rain" (*TGU* 102). This alertness of his

senses forces him to a mystic sadness, he thought, he could save all of them from barrenness. When the drought begins Joseph feels that "a faint whining came from the earth as though it protested against the intolerable sun." He says, "it makes me sad. I wish, I could be less sad about it" (*TGU* 175). He wants to shake off that sadness out of himself, he wants to run away but he cannot.

The whole family leaves the drought-ridden area, but Joseph does not, he cannot, because he feels, "this is my land, I don't know why it is mine, but can't leave it" (*TGU* 185). In the drought he feels that the land is dying; he feels that it is his responsibility only to keep the land alive and so he sacrifices his life relieving the land of the curse of barrenness. This symbolic sacrifice Steinbeck shows is indispensable for relieving the barrenness of the wasteland. This mystic view of Joseph is misunderstood by Father Angelo. Father Angelo thinks that Joseph's is a cursed soul. But Joseph challenges Father Angelo, claiming that his soul is nothing different from the soul of the soil (fertility).

> Joseph leaped up and stood furiously before him, "My soul? To hell with my soul, I tell you the land is dying. Pray for the land." "The land does not die," the priest said sharply. (*TGU* 212)

Father Angelo feels that Joseph has a firm feeling and dedicating spirit to establish his belief. Father Angelo cannot counter Joseph's argument. He cannot logically discard Joseph's heretic convictions. "Thank God, this man has no message. Thank God, he

has no will to be remembered, to be believed in... else might be a new Christ here in the west" (*TGU* 212).

Joseph Wayne has no clear concept of God, but he has some 'private facts' to unite the creatures. Joseph willfully rears this mystic concept of unity in protest against the existing religion. Mysticism itself is protest against ordinary religion.

> Mysticism is allied with a temperament of speculative boldness... Whereas ordinary religion realises such communion in the life of ethical endeavor and aspiration.... Its ideal becomes that of passive contemplation, in which the distinctions of individuality disappear... (Baldwin, 124)

Steinbeck's characters like Joseph in *To A God Unknown*, Pillion in *Tortilla Flat* always prefers mysticism and active mystic intuition to "passive contemplation" and traditional rites. They feel the entity of God within themselves. The omnipresence of God, they think, does not ask for a church or some routine rituals. Personally Steinbeck did not deny the church and the Christ but he objected to the mechanical practices of the church and the priests. For this philosophical protest Steinbeck's characters prefer mysticism because,

> Historically both in philosophy and religion, mysticism frequently appears as protest against mechanical, external or anthropomorphic fashions of representing

> the divine and its relation to man and the world. (Baldwin 125)

Mysticism protests against anthropomorphic concepts of God. Joseph is against anthropomorphism, against any attribution of human traits to divinity and incarnations. He protests it and prefers an immediate union so that the distinction of the subject and the object disappears, negating the consciousness of the subject intuitively absorbed by the object thus both becoming a unity. So Joseph feels the rain, rock, tree and himself all becoming one with him. Joseph represents all men; Rama observes Joseph closely and comments on Joseph's being:

> I tell this man is not a man, unless he is all men; the strength, the resistance the long and stumbling thinking of all men and all the suffering and joy, too canceling each other out, yet remaining in the contents. He is all these, a repository or a little of each man's soul and more than that a symbol of earth's soul. (*TGU* 212)

To A God Unknown is the compact whole of Steinbeck's mystic protest, pragmatic philosophy and Emersonian transcendentalism. Steinbeck's mystic intuition through Joseph is a quest to see life and nature with a newer vision, leaving behind the conventional ones. Joseph's declared unity with the rock, rain, tree, land and Joseph's Christlike sacrifice, as the reservoir of all pain is the reaffirmation of Emersonian transcendentalism. At the same time,

it is pragmatic too because Joseph, at the height of his mystic sadness, relies most on his personal experiences and senses cropping up of the situation he is placed in. Joseph cuts his wrist and lets his blood ooze out until his death, thinking that his blood would fertilize the land and remove its barrenness. He does not rely on anything divine for the regeneration. Nor does he think of any reward in the life here after. He believes in the earthly life. He is very much earth-bound pragmatically. In this sense Steinbeck's Joseph is a character embodying pragmatism, because William James says,

> Pragmatism is ready to take anything to follow either logic or the senses and to count the humblest and most personal experiences. She will count mystical experiences if they have practical consequences. She takes a God who lives in the very dirt of private facts. (*Pragmatism* 80)

With much clarity and simplicity Steinbeck in *To A God Unknown* reviews mysticism, pragmatism and transcendentalism, finally combining them in a complete philosophy essentially tending to participation and activation and never relapsing into passive contemplation. Steinbeck's philosophy is then optimistic, designed to upgrade nature and humanity as both nature and humanity are integrally related. He thinks, serving nature and creatures means serving humanity. So the traditional religions and conventional concepts of God are of less importance to Steinbeck although he does not totally deny their existence. He simply feels that these are heartless but artful in practice and are routined exercise. Only the

honesty, keenness and devotion like Joseph Wayne can significantly stand as an antithesis to routine rituals.

Tortilla Flat (1935)

Tortilla Flat is Steinbeck's first popular novel, consisting of only one hundred and thirty three pages, divided into seventeen chapters. Some common themes recur in Steinbeck's novels. Thus *Tortilla Flat* deals with the glorification of poverty and shows that an individual is inseparably related with the group. *Tortilla Flat* stresses that an individual is incomplete without the group, that property forfeits friendship, grace and bounty and that man is born with a clean slate mind; it is society that incriminates him. Danny is the central character who once was economically solvent. He fights in World War I. Returning from the war Danny finds himself poor. He comes to live in his paternal house. Soon he finds four other young men, who were also in the war: Pillon, Pablo, Maria Corcoran and Pirate. They have no shelter to live in, no job to earn their bread. They live a subhuman life; Pirate, for example lives in a chicken house with his dogs. Danny brings all of them to his paternal house to live together. Though the five friends are poor they share their food and wine. They do not worry about their poverty. They do not care for property.

Steinbeck was a socially conscious novelist. His works during the thirties particularly reveal the consciousness. In addition Steinbeck held that art as a whole is a creation of the group consciousness of the artist. The group that man makes for survival is important to an artist: "the artist is one in whom the phalanx comes closet to the conscious. Art then is property of the phalanx, not of an

individual. Art is the phalanx knowledge of the nature of matter and life" (Letter to George Albee, 1933, *LH.* 97).

Tortilla Flat is the first popular novel of Steinbeck written on the phalanx concept with humanistic sympathy for the Paisanos, poor Mexicans. The central idea of the novel concerns the poor Paisanos who glorify poverty: "The Paisanos have refused to accept the gross forms of ambition, of materialism, of pride and guild imported by gross forms of ambition, of materialism, of pride and guilt imported by their new and onslaught neighbours" (as in *Steinbeck the Man and His Works* 145). In a society where the majority of the people are poor, Steinbeck thinks that the elite should feel for them.

Property, Steinbeck thought, segregates an individual from the group. Thus amassing property alienates the individual who is left all alone. Henry Morgan in *Cup of Gold* amassed wealth, became a knight and discovered that he was without any friends. Danny in *Tortilla Flat*, fearing that property leads one to seclusion, does not like to leave his friends in poverty: he shares their poverty.

The acute poverty of the Paisanos described in *Tortilla Flat* was not believed by many people, specially the rich as Steinbeck pointed out in a letter

> When I wrote *Tortilla Flat*, for instance, the Monterey Chamber of Commerce issued a statement that it was a damned lie and that no such people or place existed. Later they began running buses to the place where they thought it might be. When

> I did *Cannery Row* I had not only a charge from the Monterey Chamber of Commerce but from the fish canners association which came to the defence of *Cannery Row* people with knightly intensity. They later reversed themselves too. (Letter to Nelson Valjen, March 13, 1953 *LH.* 467)

Webster Street endorses Steinbeck's claim, saying that:

> But the truth is that his characters in *Tortilla Flat* were real people, and proof of this can be found in police records of Monterey. These people that he was discussing were before the police courts about once a week particularly on Monday mornings. (38)

Despite the hostile attitude of the affluent people, *Tortilla Flat* was widely read and brought Steinbeck into the limelight. The affluent people, the elites, tried to downgrade Steinbeck's honest narration of the poor Mexicans who had fought in World War I. They became poor because of the system.

> The truth is, we are all caught in a great economic system which is heartless. The modern corporation is not engaged in business as an individual. When we deal with it, we

> deal with an impersonal element, an immaterial piece of society. (476)

This is the socio-economic system which made Danny homeless. Danny says, "Here we sit homeless, we gave our lives for our country, and now we have no roof over our head" (*TF* 10). But Danny does not become a radical or a dreamer, seeking affluence. Instead, he develops a personal philosophy of living in poverty. He can make out a way of healthy life amid the restlessness of the system. He can adjust with it and make a way intelligently to make money with the two houses that he has inherited but he does not do that. Danny swears to protect his helpless friends. He does not exult over the news of his inheritance of two houses at the death of his grand father.

> When Danny heard about it he was a little weighed down with the responsibility of ownership. Before he ever went to look at his property he bought a gallon of red wine and drank most of it himself. The weight of responsibility left him ... (*TF* 1).

Danny had Pillon, a vagabond, as his friend. Pillon thinks that now that Danny is rich he will no longer be his friend. Pillon says,

> When one is poor, one thinks, if I had money I would share it with my good friends. But let that money come and charity flies away. So it is with thee my once friend. Thou art lifted above thy

> friends. Thou art a man of property. Thou will forget thy friends who shared everything with thee, even their brandy. (*TF* 11)

Pillon thinks that the sense of inheritance must be worrying Danny. He notices the worry of property settling on Danny's face. "No more in life would that face be free of care" (*TF* 12). Danny is not also very happy with the inheritance. He says, "for years I had no house, now I have two. I cannot sleep in two houses" (*TF* 14). In a society where social prestige and position are determined by possessions Danny should have been proud to own two houses, but the "poison of possession" cannot touch Danny. He allows his friend Pillon to stay in one of the houses he inherited, without rent: "Danny never asked for it and Pillon never offered it." Pillon brings another of his friends, Pablo, who slept in "ditches wet and homeless," to live with him in Danny's house. Pablo and Pillon bring another homeless man Jesus Maria Corcoran who has a bad cold and "malady of the lungs" caused by sleeping under the open sky. Then comes Pirate who had slept for a long time with his dogs in a chicken house.

So all these war veterans, who have no house to live in, no source of income, who drank wine to forget their miseries, flock together in Danny's house. Neither Danny nor his friends care much about personal belongings, possessions or positions. When a fire damages Danny's house, Danny says,

> "Is the fire department there?"
>
> "Yes," cried Jesus Maria.
>
> "If the fire department can't do anything about it,

what does Pillon expect me to do." (*TF* 34)

No worry or anxiety seizes Danny at this loss of his property. He is not deeply perturbed at the loss, though he does regret it briefly:

> He had indulged in a little conventional anger against his careless friends, had mourned for a moment over the transitory quality of earthly property which made spiritual property so much valuable... he had finally slipped into his true emotions, one of relief that at least one of his burdens was removed. (*TF* 35).

Danny feels very much relieved of the burdens of property that was about to destroy the friendship. Danny says, "if it were still there, I would be caring covetously of the rent." He thinks, "My friends have been cool toward me because they owed me money. Now we can be free and happy again" (*TF* 35). Danny has no fascination for possessions. He seems to be relieved that the houses that he inherited had been gutted by the fire;

> He yearned to get over and to be once more that Danny whom every one loved, that Danny whom people sought out when they had a gallon of wine or a piece of meat. As the owner of two houses he had been considered rich, and had missed a great many tidbits. (*TF* 35)

Danny values friendship most: to him a life of poverty and friendship is superior to a life of wealth and loneliness. He feels, "how lonely it is in the world, if there are no friends to sit with one and to share ones grappa" (*TF* 38). The five friends make so compact a company of warm love and affinity, they are so emotionally attached that they forget their poverty and untidy life. "In the evening they sat about the stove with tears in their eyes, and their love for one another was almost unbearable" (*TF* 38).

The friends do not try to adjust with the new socio-economic setting which they experience on their return from the war in protest against war and war-ravaged economy and society. So they do not try to adjust with the changed circumstances to overcome their poverty. They turn against property because they have seen too many men scrambling for too few possession to attain social position. This repugnance towards material life is illustrated ironically when after the fire Pirate brings his hidden treasures of one thousand silver quarters to guard. Having made his friends guard his treasure, "there were tears of happiness in his eyes" (*TF* 73). He can relieve himself and his friends of the anxiety of possession.

Danny and his friends live on larcenies: they become morally degraded which they neither desire nor deserve. In the chaotic state of the war–torn society they cannot reinstate themselves to their normal life nor can any one assure them of a normal life. But incertitude of life and livelihood cannot deprive them of human qualities. In the group of friends, "Jesus Maria Corcoran was a pathway for the humanities. Suffering he tried to relieve, sorrow he tried to assuage, happiness he shared ... Jesus Maria had gift for coming in contact with the situations where good wanted doing" (*TF* 72).

Steinbeck believed that man is born with a clean soul, society incriminates and the social system spoils man's inborn clarity. Danny and his friends were not born evil. Society makes them bad. Danny and his friends are the mixture of ascribed goodness and achieved badness. In Steinbeck's works the concept of the existence of both good and evil in human nature is recurrent: in *The Cup of Gold* Core de' Gris' mother is a whore but prays thrice a day, in *Pastures Of Heaven* the Lopez sisters sleep with their customers, but they pray before the porcelain statue of Virgin Mary thrice a day. This dualism between physical impurity and psychic purity, Steinbeck solved in *Tortilla Flat* by summing up that human nature is an admixture of opposites, good and bad. This conviction is also dealt with in *East of Eden* and *Sweet Thursday*. In *Tortilla Flat* the Paisanos are shown as single personalities of dual values. In *Tortilla Flat*, the narrator explains:

> It is a fact verified and recorded in many histories that the soul capable of greatest good is also capable of greatest evil. Who is more impious than a backsliding priest? Who is more carnal than a recent virgin? (*TF* 16)

As shelterless and hungry men, Steinbeck's characters in *Tortilla Flat* become angry, they become sentimentally indifferent to life and the existing social order, they make a society by themselves in protest against the existing society. The society they form is a contrast to the disparity and injustice in the existing society. They are the victims of a war-torn society, having unfulfilled dreams; as war returned soldiers they dream "when we die we will go to the grave on

a gun carriage, and a firing squad will shoot over us" (*TF* 128). But in reality Danny after his death gets a funeral—although not too honorable—but his friends do not attend Danny's funeral because the narrator explains, "death is a personal matter arousing sorrow, despair, or dry hearted philosophy. Funerals on the other hand are social functions" (*TF* 128). Danny's old comrades cannot participate in such a social function because they have no good clothes befitting the funeral procession, "ordinarily their clothes were unspeakable. The party had aged their jeans and blue shirts by years" (*TF* 128). The social system in such a "personal matter" like death is against poor men. Tragically Danny's friends cannot mourn publicly for Danny though they had been closest to him.

> [They] had received the most from his hands, the Paisanos were the only ones who could not attend Danny's funeral... ordinarily their clothes were unspeakable... would not the disrespect to Danny be more if they went in rags than if they did not go at all? The despair that lay on their hearts is incalculable. They cursed their fate. (*TF* 129)

So, Danny's friends hide themselves in the grass around the cemetery fence. They lie in the grass and observe the funeral from a distance with all their love for Danny. They stealthily come at night to show their last love and respect for Danny and "in the morning the hole in the cemetery that was to receive Danny's body was almost hidden by a mound of the finest flowers from the best gardens in Monterey" (*TF* 130). Steinbeck satirizes the social system by

showing that Danny's friends cannot attend Danny's funeral for they can neither steal nor buy suitable clothes to attend the funeral.

In *Tortilla Flat* Steinbeck's characters show that human beings are complete beings with opposite values; with single values they are incomplete, opposite values constantly work within individuals. They are then a unit of dialectical unity, they are terrestrial, pragmatic and has freedom of will to make private ways of worship thus making private religions. The subtlety of world view and private philosophy of the Paisanos is substantively heightened,

> It is not really possible to say as does Edmund Wilson, that these Paisanos are "human beings so rudimentary that they are almost on animal level" or that they are "cunning little living dolls that amuse us like pet guineapigs or rabbits." Neither is it possible to agree with Freeman Champney that *Tortilla Flat* shows "man as animals ... without any other pretensions." (Peter Lisca, *Wide World of Steinbeck* 89).

The Paisanos form a group unity; a society by themselves in protest against the existing social system but the society disintegrates with the death of Danny. Danny fails to adjust even with the society that they form; he becomes tired of the group life that they form. Inclined to individual freedom, he becomes tired of the group life

> When he got out of his bed in the night and stepped over the sleeping Paisanos,

> he was angry with them for being there. Gradually sitting on the front porch, in the sun, Danny began to dream of the days of his freedom. He had slept in the woods in summer, and in the warm hay of barns when the winter cold was in. The weight of property was not upon him. (*TF* 109)

Danny did not want property and possession. The group also ignored the society of possession, prestige and position, they ignored the society that evaluates man on his possessions only. But Danny failed to connect the two states–the individual and the group. He did not find pleasure either in the group life or in property. So Danny once leaves his friends, he runs away from home. Returning home drunk, he falls from a forty feet high cliff and dies. Danny is the center of unity of the group, with his death the group also disintegrates.

The integration and disintegration of the group life works as a phenomenon of Steinbeck's belief that: every individual is related inseparably with the group but the group cannot take off from the individual its independence, its peculiarity, its idiosyncrasies. The group and individual are then dialectically united as the individual also is a complete entity dialectically united. For survival, individuals form a group and for independence they disintegrate. Irrespective of social or economic systems, individuals go on forming and breaking groups as Steinbeck said, in a letter "All the notions I have made begin to put to an end–That the group is an individual as boundaries, as diagnosable, as dependent on its units and is independent of its

units individual natures. As the human unit or man is dependent on his cells yet is independent of them". (Letter to Carlton A. Sheffield, June 21, 1933 as in *LH.* 74).

Tortilla Flat amply bears the typical traits of Steinbeck's social protest and philosophical protest: social values, social order, moral standard and the relation between the group and the individual. It contains satirical criticism of the social and religious institutions. Social and religious institutions, Steinbeck believed, were arbitrarily formed by the elites. The Paisanos do not accept the conventions, as they see these conventions are arbitrary forms rather than absolute truths. The Church and the rituals are arbitrary to them, the funeral is arbitrary to the Paisano friends. Through the Paisanos this arbitrariness of the society has been satirically criticized by Steinbeck, demonstrating that, what the society claims to be absolute truth is actually some arbitrariness imposed by the elites to be observed by the members of the society. While commenting on Steinbeck's protest and satirical criticism Peter Lisca rightly comments:

> Steinbeck uses comic spirit of *Tortilla Flat* to criticise certain aspects of society ... a humour, which while making us fully conscious of the shortcomings of the Paisanos as moral human beings at the same time allows us to respect what is good and noble in them (Lisca 91).

CHAPTER IV: THE FULL MOON—MAJOR NOVELS (1935-39)

In Dubious Battle, *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Grapes of Wrath* are Steinbeck's major novels. His talent is best exposed in these novels. Steinbeck's twin concerns in his early novels—social protest and humanism, framed on Emersonian transcendentalism—continue to inspire his major novels.

Although Roosevelt's New Deal aimed at developing the economic condition of America, especially in the agricultural sector, by subsidizing the farmers and raising the price level, the New Deal could not totally solve economic problems. It failed to revive full employment and production. The subsidizing process was slow and scanty, so the farmers and farm laborers did not get immediate relief. The New Deal could not bring stability in the agricultural sector in America; farmers' lives did not develop remarkably. Moreover, the drought of 1934 and the dust storm of 1935 brought a disaster to the life of the marginal and submarginal farmers. Steinbeck's major novels were written in this economic context. A keen and sympathetic observation of the life of marginal farmers and farm laborers constitutes the main theme of Steinbeck's major novels.

As in the preparatory novels so in the major novels, Steinbeck's sympathy for the poor farmers did not aim at organizing them in a battle against the big farm owners and the establishment of communist principles. *In Dubious Battle* shows clearly Steinbeck's disapproval of the fruit pickers, strike organized by the communist activists. Steinbeck believed that man's survival essentially depended on his integrated relation with other men, not on man's struggle against man. He attempted to show that man's struggle against man

does not assure a bright future for humanity. *Of Mice and Men* is a study of man's eternal dependence on man, and *The Grapes of Wrath* stresses that fundamental humanism is essential for the continuity of man's life process on earth. Steinbeck's major novels are devoid of sentimentality or proletarian propaganda. His major novels propagate integrated human relation in any social situation, whatever might be the social form. Steinbeck believed that an integrated human relationship could change the form of the society without creating enmity, feud and hatred among human beings. Steinbeck did not encourage the war instinct in man for material success. Since material affluence does not provide mental contentment, Steinbeck believed that only integrated human relationships could ensure a worthy future. Human life is a total entity of short enmity, skirmish, hope and despair but the last words are hope for life and love for life.

In Dubious Battle (1936)

In Dubious Battle is a novel based on a strike by fruit-picking laborers in an orchard organized by the Communists on the model of the Irish and Italian Communists who were very much active in the thirties. About the novel Steinbeck says, " I had planned to write a journalistic account of a strike. But as I thought of it as a fiction the thing got bigger and bigger..." (Letter to George Albee, Jan, 15, 1935 as in *LIL* 98). Steinbeck mentions that, "the account of the strike came from the activists of Ireland and Italian Communists whose training was in the field not in the drawing room" (Letter to Elizabeth Otis, May 13, 1935 as in *LIL* 110).

Steinbeck was sympathetic to the poor laborers and their low wages, but he was dubious about the ways the Communists organized

violent strikes. *In Dubious Battle* is an illustration of his dubious views. The battle does not suggest any acceptable solution to the problem of the laborers because they do not win in the battle. Steinbeck, as an uninvolved observer, thought that there should be a different way of love and wisdom to eliminate the poverty of the fruit-picking laborers, to save humanity from suffering. Only humanitarian approaches are the best, he thought, violence could not provide a solution.

In Dubious Battle is the summed up statement of Steinbeck's observation of the individual and the group and their interrelation as well as of man's "eternal warfare with himself" (*IDB* 184). He shows the continual integration and disintegration of the group. In the process of disintegration man fights against man, Steinbeck says, "man, during his hunting period had to give up the group... and now... is going back to the group which takes its food by concerted actions" (Letter to Carlton A. Sheffield, June 21, 1933 as in *LIL* 75).

In developing the dubious war which was "man's eternal bitter warfare with himself" (*IDB* 184). Steinbeck correlated the individual and the group with the opinion:

> That the group is an individual as boundaried, as diagnosable as dependent on its units and is independent of its units' individual natures, as the human unit, man is dependent on his cells and is independent of them. (Letter to Carlton Sheffield, June 21, 1933 as in *LIL* 74).

Comparing the human group to that of the animals, Steinbeck thinks that it is the group formation of man that makes him superior to animals. The animal group never disintegrates into individuals but man is simultaneously an individual and a group. This dialectical patterning of the individual and the group makes man different. Steinbeck says, "as individual humans, we are far superior in our function to anything the world has borne-- in our groups we are not only superior but in fact are like those perfect group the ants and bees" (Letter to Sheffield as in *LIL* 76).

The quantitative accumulation of individuals form the group which qualitatively changes the group nature. In the same letter to Sheffield, Steinbeck says, "the fascinating thing to me is the way the group has a soul, a drive, an intent, an end, a method, a reaction and a set of tropism which in no way resembles the same things possessed by the man who makes up the group" (*LIL* 76). The group thus formed is not the plain multiplication of individuals only, as Steinbeck points out.

> These groups have always been considered as individuals multiplied. And they are not so. They are beings in themselves, entities; just as a bar of iron has none of the properties of the revolving, circling, active atoms which make it up. So these huge creatures; the groups, don't resemble the human atoms which compose them. (*LIL* 77)

The dialectical unity of the individual and the group thus explained is termed as the "phalanx theory" by Steinbeck. Steinbeck explains the formation of an individual into a "phalanx":

> Certain other arrangements of atoms plus a mysterious principle make a living cell. Now the living cell is very sensitive to outside or tropism. A further arrangement of cells and a very complex one may make a unit which we call man. that has been our final unit. But there [are] mysterious things which could not be explained if man is the final unit. He also arranges himself into larger units, which I have called the phalanx. (Letter to George Albee, 1933, *LIL* 79)

Human institutions are the creation of this group or phalanx. Steinbeck elaborates: "religion is the phalanx emotion and this is so clearly understood by the church fathers that they said the holy ghost would come when two or three gathered together" (*LIL* 80).

Like religion, art is also the creation of the phalanx, Steinbeck believed,

> The artist is simply the spokesman of the phalanx. When a man hears a great music, sees great pictures, reads great poetry, he loses his identity in that of the phalanx... it is invariably a feeling of oneness with ones phalanx. For man is

> lonely when he is cut off. He dies. From the phalanx he takes the fluid necessary to his life. (*LIL* 82)

Steinbeck's group concept and phalanx theory are thus essentially social. Peter Lisca rightly comments on Steinbeck's social philosophy and phalanx theory, "Steinbeck is always conscious that a man's necessary individuality is meaningless apart from his social context" (129). Steinbeck himself also believed that "man is a double thing—a group animal and an individual at the same time. And it occurs to me that he cannot be successfully the second until he has fulfilled the first" ("Some Thoughts on Juvenile Delinquency" *The Saturday Review*, May 28, 1955).

This concept of the group and the individual is used in *In Dubious Battle* to explain mob psychology. London says, "take one guy that you know eve'thing about him and take ten more the same, an you can't tell what will do" (*IDB* 103). Jim describes the mob strikers as "just one big animal, going down the road. Just all one animal" (*IDB* 103). Mac elaborates this idea: "that's right what you said. It is a big animal. It's different from the man in it. And it's stronger than all man put together. It does not want the same things men want—it's like Doc said—and we don't know what it'll do" (*IDB* 103). Doc, the philosopher character who is not involved in any of the affairs, dispassionately observes everything and speculates about the possible explanation of this phenomenon. Comparing a mob to a human body and the strike to a local infection, Doc explains:

> "I want to watch these group-men, for they seem to be a new individual, not at all like single [men]. A man in a group isn't himself at all, he's a cell in an organism that isn't like him any more than the cells in your body are like you"... "It might be like this, Mac: when group-man wants to move, he makes a standard, 'God wills that we recapture the Holy Land'; or he says 'we fight to make the world safe of democracy'; or he says, 'we will wipe out social injustice with communism.' But the group does not care about the Holy Land or Democracy or Communism... May be the group simply wants to move, to fight, and uses these worlds simply to reassure the brain of individual man. (*IDB* 104)

Doc Burton is the spokesman of Steinbeck himself. His ideas are repeated by Steinbeck twice in *Sea of Cortez* (1941).

> We have looked in to the tide pools and seen the little animals feeling and reproducing and killing for food. We name them and describe them and out of long watching arrive at some conclusion on their habits so that we say, "This species typically does thus and so" but

we do not objectively observe our own species as a species although we know the individuals fairly well.

When it seems that man may be kinder to man, that wars may not come again, we completely ignore the record of our species. If we used the same smug observation on ourselves that we do on hermit crabs, we would be forced to say, with the information at hand "It is one diagnostic trait of *Homo Sapiens* that groups of individuals are periodically infected with a feverish nervousness which causes the individual to turn on and destroy, not only his own kind, but the works of his own kind. (*Sea of Cortez* 16-17)

In their millions they followed a pattern minute as to direction, depth and speed. There must be some fallacy in our thinking of these fish as individuals. Their functions in the school are in some as yet unknown way as controlled as though the school were one unit. We can not conceive of this intricacy until we are able to think of the school as an animal itself, reacting with all its cells to stimuli which perhaps might not influence one

> fish at all. And this larger animal, the school seems to have a nature and drive and ends of its own. It is more than and different from the sum of its units. (*Sea of Cortez* 240)

The second thing that *In Dubious Battle* deals with clearly is man's war against man. Human beings form groups for survival, but for survival itself man is pitched against man; individual against individual. This war of man against man is caused by the system. Steinbeck is not very vocal against the system, nor does he support the strike as a means to raise wages. He says,

> I'm not interested in strike as means of raising man's wages, and I'm not interested in ranting about justice and oppression; mere outcropping which indicate the condition. But man hates something in himself... (Letter to George Albee Jan 15, 1935, *LIL* 98)

Steinbeck does not suggest any alternative to the "system". The characters in *In Dubious Battle* stand against the system, so they join the striking party. When asked "Why do you want to join the party?" Jim answers, "Mainly it's this: My whole family has been ruined by this system" (*IDB* 4). In their war against the system, the strikers are not unilaterally organized as they should be in a group. Rather, Nelson says, "Even the people you're trying to help will hate you most of the time" (*IDB* 6). Nevertheless, the strikers dreamt and worked with the "conviction that sooner or later they would win their

way out of the system they hated" (*IDB* 16). The later development of the strike shows that this was not so simple as the whole group, that is society, does not work with the same aim.

To the organizers the strike is an experimental case of unifying the whole suffering community who want a "living wage", who hate the whole system of "bosses or a butcher." The organizers do not only want immediate "pay raises." They want all the striking people to behave like a single unit in a long war. Mac says,

> We don't want only temporary pay raises, even though we're glad to see a few poor bastards better off. We got to take the long view. A strike that's settled too quickly won't teach the man how to organize, how to work together. A tough strike is good. We want the man to find out how strong they are when they work together... Ther's nothing like a fight to cement the man together. (*IDB* 22)

The organizers stress more on the ultimate goal of the strike. For this purpose they ignore the immediate suffering of the strikers. They want to consolidate the group, to "cement man together". With this strategic aim, they do everything possible to make them a part of the group. Mac advises Jim to be a smoker, calling smoking "a nice social habit". Mac says, "I don't know any way to soften a stranger down than to offer him a smoke, or even to ask him for one. And lots

of guys feel insulted if they offer you a cigarette and you don't take it. You better start" (*IDB* 29).

Mac stops to pet a dog, thinking that this may influence its master to help the party. However, he shows no sympathy for the dog when it is burnt alive, thinking that his sorrow will not benefit the group. The strikers speak in the common man's dialect with the belief that "men are suspicious of a man who does not talk their way" (*IDB* 102). The leaders of the strike withdraw all individuality and individual vanity to make them a part of the group, to make them aligned with the party and the group. Mac's advice enables Jim to emerge as a leader, a stronger leader of the group with no individual liking and deviation. In response to a charge from Mac, Jim rightly says,

> I'm stronger than you Mac, ... because I'm going in straight line, you and all the rest have to think of woman and tobacco and liquor and keeping warm and fed. His eyes were as cold as wet river stones. (*IDB* 141)

Jim could have been a better leader compared to Mac if he had not been killed while trying to blow up a slaughterhouse. With the emergence of Jim as a leader, Mac proves successful the party tactics of making leaders as the tactics was "Leadership has to come from the men. We can teach them the method but they've got to do the job themselves" (*IDB* 43).

Despite all the sincerity and honesty of the organizers, the strike does not succeed.

> They got guns. We can't have no guns. They got money. They can buy boys. Five bucks looks like a hell of lot of jack to these poor half-starved bastards. (*IDB* 86)

The strikers fail because the "system" with all its men and material was against them. The "system" has vigilantes and the newspapers for false propaganda. The vigilantes are to safeguard the system without caring for the suffering strikers. Vigilantes are also ill-paid poor people, but they suppress rebellion in the name of patriotism. Mac says,

> They're the same ones that burned the houses of old German people during the war. They're the same ones that lynch the Negroes. They like to be cruel. They like to hurt people and they always give it a nice name patriotism or protecting the constitution. (*IDB* 120)

Steinbeck shows that the strikers form a close knit group. Thus, he describes them as moving and acting as one.

> They moved slowly together and converged on the platform. And as their group become more and more compact, the sound of their many voices blended into one voice, and the sound of their foot steps became a great restlessness. (*IDB* 163)

However, despite this unity, the strikers are not as compact as Mac and Jim want them. They are, for instance, suspicious about the red element in them. Whiteforehead says,

> Well, I think that doctor is a red. What's a doctor wants out here he does not get any pay. Well, who's paying them... May be he's getting it from Moscow. (*IDB* 161)

They are suspicious about their leaders. They think that "there seems to be a bounty on labor leaders. They don't last long" (*IDB* 160). The strikers could not believe the tactical stepping of the strike leaders; Dans, crying on his broken hips says,

> Up that apple tree all you could talk was strike, strike and who starts the strike? You? Hell, no. I start it. Think I don't know. I start it when I bust my hip. And then you leave me here alone. (*IDB* 157)

Doc Burton, a pragmatist leader, observes the whole strike objectively. He does not support the strike and the warfare of man against man. Doc Burton is close to the striking people; he treats them, nurses them but himself never becomes a striker. Doc Burton is against violence, he is a radical humanist.

> "Jim, you can only build a violent thing with violence." "I don't believe that" Jim said, "All great things have violent beginnings." "There aren't any

> beginnings nor any ends." Burton said "It seems to me that man has engaged in a blind and fearful struggle out of a past he can't remember, into a future he can't foresee nor understand. And man has met and defeated every obstacle, every enemy except one. He can't win over himself. How mankind hates itself." Jim said, "We don't hate ourselves, we hate invested capital that keeps us down." Burton said, "The other side is made of men, Jim, man like you. Man hates himself." (*IDB* 184)

Doc thinks that men would preserve themselves if they could eliminate the terrible plagues of violence. But his speculations do not lead him to moral zeal or commitment to action. Thus he lacks the power without which his thought is ineffective. This constant separation of power and wisdom seems to be the great puzzle to Steinbeck. So Doc Burton wants to help man selflessly, as do Mac and Jim the two strike leaders. Doc Button says, "I have some skill in helping man and when I see some who need help, I just do it. I don't think about it much. If a painter saw a piece of canvas, and he had colors well, he'd paint on it. He wouldn't figure why he wanted to." (*IDB* 141)

Doc means that the two strike leaders were not humanists in the sense Doc himself is, because their humanism is guided by the party interest and inspired by the party tactics. When Jim tries to exploit the mob sentiment for strengthening the movement using the

dead body of the boy, Joy. Doc reacts, "Fun with the dead bodies? Huh?" Jim insists earnestly "We've got to use every means, Doc we've got to use every weapon" (*IDB* 148). Doc cannot consider Jim's stand as sympathetic to humanity. The practical consequence of these tactics of Jim, Burton thinks, will cause the strikers to agitate further causing more deaths. Burton in this sense is pragmatic because, "the pragmatic method... is to try, to interpret each notion by tracing its practical consequences" (William James, Pragmatism: *A New Name For Some Old Ways of Thinking* 45).

Mac and Jim see a part not the whole. The strike they think is the whole thing, but Doc does not think it to be the whole. Doc sees the individual and group relation in a macrocosmic expanse. He wants to see the whole thing. Doc says,

> My senses are not above reproach but they are all I have, I want to see the whole picture as nearly as I can. I don't want to put them on the blinders of good of a thing, I'd lose my license to inspect it, because there might be bad in it. Don't you see? I want to be able to look at the whole thing. (*IDB* 103)

Mac cannot understand Doc's approach to look into things and events; Doc keeps his critical senses alert, he wants to see both the sides of an occurrence. Mac, on the contrary, is so much "blinded" by his idealism that he says heatedly, "How about the social injustice? The profit system? You have to say they are bad. Revolution and Communism will cure the social injustice" (*IDB* 103).

Considering the immediacy of Mac's argument and the considerable substantiality in Mac's convictions, Doc thinks that they are not the only ones harmful to humanity; violence as a resort to eradicate "social injustice" is equally harmful. As a physician using a pathological symbol Doc says, "Yes, and disinfection and prophylaxis will prevent the others. It's different though men are doing one, and the germs are doing others" (*IDB* 103).

Partially agreeing with Mac, Doc thinks that there are other things too, equally important to save humanity from the onslaught. Doc thinks that the violent ways Mac takes to eradicate social injustice are unjust for they outrage the sense of brotherhood, the transcendental dream of the dignity of man, without which social reforms become meaningless.

Among the characters in *In Dubious Battle* only Doc Burton comes out as a figure with a clear and definite concept of all the happenings around. Mac and Jim fail in waging a war against the people who "dump apples in the river to keep up the price, when guys like you and me need an apple to keep our God damn bowels open" (*IDB* 206). Burton feels that violent things bring more violence and no permanent settlement, even not the settlement Mac and Jim aim at. Doc thinks; nothing is absolute, nothing is permanent. He says to Jim, "There've been communes before and there will be again. But you people have an idea that if you can establish the thing, the job will be done" (*IDB* 103).

Burton once most waveringly aligned himself with the strikers with radical humanistic views but his pragmatic standpoint enables him to think that Mac's way of solving social problems is not

absolute. He says, "Nothing stops Mac, if you were able to put an idea into effect, tomorrow it would start changing right away. Establish a comma, and the same gradual flux will continue" (*IDB* 103).

Doc is here pragmatic and argues in dialectical approach. He does not rest on any dogma nor is he a conservative. He keeps his eyes open and senses wide, never confines himself in any parochialism. In the present world context, Mac and Jim have only dreams and illusions about communism, while too much of party dictatorship and party bureaucracy in established communist countries had "right changing away" and changed to disintegration which only Doc Burton could apprehend long ago. His powerful practical sense and method of interpreting the social events never "blind" him to megalomania, and his sharp imagination enables him to become a pragmatist philosopher, superseding the radical illusion of the strikers.

Doc Burton is the spokesman of Steinbeck. What Steinbeck thought of radical movements, humanism and pragmatism is revealed through the non-involved but closely attached contact of Doc Burton with the striking fruit pickers. Steinbeck did not believe in communism as the only solution of man's socio-economic problems. He never deviated from his belief. Fifteen years after he had written *In Dubious Battle*, Steinbeck predicted in *Journal of a Novel* that Communism would disintegrate because it was not a workable system.

> Now, mark my prophecy: The so called
> Communist system will break up and

> destroy itself in horrible civil wars because it is not a permanent workable system... it has been always my contention that political world government will only follow economic world government and that laggingly. There are indications that the Soviet states and its satellites are having some kind of internal troubles. This should be the time when we should help out with that by making or pretending to make deals with the dissidents. (*Journal of a Novel* 32)

Like Steinbeck Doc also can foresee that future of communism because of his close contact with fruit picking strikers. Steinbeck was also close and familiar with the labour problems especially of Salinas Valley. Peter Lisca says Steinbeck "was not merely... an observer for he had himself worked with migrant labourers on ranches, farms and road gangs since his boyhood" (*The Wide World of Steinbeck*, 110).

Steinbeck wants to demonstrate in *In Dubious Battle*, says Walcut, "that the Battle is fruitless because neither side is right. The love and brotherhood of the workers must be implemented by something closer to the American grain than Communism, if it is to come into own and unify American dream of a full life for all" (Walcut, 247).

Of Mice and Men (1937)

Steinbeck's idea that human beings are incomplete and man's struggle for completion within himself and outside himself, that man is always driven by dreams and illusions as dynamic forces necessary for survival, and that human beings in their nature bear opposite attributes making them a whole of dialectical unity are illustrated in the novel *of Mice and Men*.

Two landless migrants, Lennie and George, are the central characters of the novel, moving from the "north" in search of land and work. While rich people buy thousands of acres of land, small ownership fails before big farming. When big farming spread in America specially in the south, it made small owners landless forcing them to become farm laborers and ranch workers. Their pleasant, simple agrarian life was put to an end by the big farmers and mechanized cultivation, making them a workless, homeless and rootless floating mass. George and Lennie, members of this floating mass, move in search of work, bread and shelter. George describes the poor ranch workers, "guys like us that work on ranches are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They belong no place" (*OMM* 9).

Though George and Lennie have lost their land, they never lose their dream of ownership; "some day—we're gonna get the jack together and we're gonna have a little house and couple of acres an' a cow and some pigs and..." (*OMM* 10). They think of regaining their lost ownership. The simple illiterate fellows cannot understand that big farming would not retreat to small farming to make them land owners again. So George describes their dream,

> We'll have big vegetable patch and a rabbit, hutch and chickens. And when it rains in the winter, we'll just say the hell going work and we'll build up a fire in the stove and set around it and listen to the rain coming down to the roof. (*OMM* 10)

They continue to dream in their leisure and working hours. Lennie eagerly asks almost every day, "George how long it gonna be till we get that little place and live on the fatta the lan'an – rabbits?" (*OMM* 37)

George affirms Lennie's dream:

> An' we could have a few pigs. I could build a smoke house like the one granpa had, an' when we will kill a pig we can smoke the bacon and the hams, and make sausage and all like that... we can sell a few eggs or something or some milk. We'd just live there. We'd belong there. There would be no more runnin' round the country and getting fed by a jap cook. No, Sir we'd have our own place where we belonged and not sleep in no bunk house... we'd have a little house and a room to our self... It ain't enough land so we'd have a little house and a room to self... It ain't enough land so we'd have to work too

> hard. May be six, seven hours a day. We would have to buck no barely eleven hours a day. (*OMM* 38)

They dream of a free life of less labor and more ease in a house to claim as their own. Their nostalgic imagination centers around this small possession. In *Tortilla Flat* Danny is sentimentally indifferent to small possessions; in *of Mice and Men*, George and Lennie are sentimentally attracted to small possessions. This is not a contradiction in Steinbeck's characters. Rather this shows the two traits of the same problem—poverty. Poverty acts on a man in two ways; one attracts him to possessions and the other turns him against possession. In both cases, Steinbeck protests against poverty: one created by the war another by economic reform—both are made by society.

So when George sits entranced w□ th his dream of land and a house, another ranch worker, Candy comes to him to ask about their dream land, "Where is a place like that?" In the ranch Candy had worked hard to save money to buy a piece of land. He had saved about four hundred dollars. Like Danny in *Tortilla Flat*, Candy proposes to George, "I'd make a will an' leave my share to you guys in case I kick off, cause I ain't got no relative nor nothing" (*OMM* 39). Candy, a great heart like Danny, joins George and Lennie to make them his relatives as he has no relation on earth. Both Danny and Candy are poor but they are great hearts. Candy says, "May be if I give you guys my money, you will let me hoe in the garden even after I ain't no good at it. And I'll wash dishes and let chickens s□ uff like that. But I'll be in our own place" (*OMM* 39). Steinbeck's poor characters are happy people, but when they become rich they become

lonely sufferers as Henry Morgan in *The Cup of Gold* does. Henry Morgan has wealth, but he has no pleasure to be shared by his friends. Underneath the surface most men are not only dreamers, but also unsuccessful dreamers. The real heroes are not those dreamers, but the doers. The heroic doers, however, are not those who act only for personal aggrandizement but those who try to do their best out of an affection and who feel compassionate rather than scornful toward the dreamers.

Lennie, George, Candy dream always of the same thing. Their dream is their driving force. They live in dreams, work in dreams, and sleep in dreams in their bunks. This dream induces them to a striving and thriving force so that they live. Without dreams they are laboring machines. Candy's dream is more dynamic; he just sits in the bunkhouse sharpening his pencil and "sharpening and figuring". Steinbeck shows that only dreams and illusions are the living force of these poor ranch workers but their dreams are not idle dreams and the illusions do not retard them of their life motion, rather these are inspiring. At the end of the novel, their dream is seen remaining unfulfilled but upto the last they dream. Even before his death Lennie repeatedly asks George, "Go on... How's it gonna be. We gonna got a little place" (*OMM* 68).

In contrast Danny and his friends in *Tortilla Flat* do not dream of land and life; they are anti-life, asocial, and indifferent to possession and social position. This they do in protest against the war that makes them poor, whereas, George, Lennie, Candy and Slim in *of Mice and Men* dream. Dream and illusions on one side and indifference and indignation on the other are the two ends of the same discomfiture created by poverty which shows that in many ways

a man can react to poverty. As Steinbeck believes, too much attraction to property makes man too greedy, consequently much too lonely. Most of Steinbeck's characters belong to the second group. In *of Mice and Men*, Creeks, for example, does not dream. Creeks, "who was a proud aloof man" (*OMM* 44) scornfully says to George,

> I seen hundred of men came by on the road an' on the ranches with their bundles on their back and that same damn thing in their heads. Hundreds of them. They came an' they quit an' go on' every damn one of theme's got a little piece of land in his head. And never a God damn one of them ever gets it. Just like heaven. (*OMM* 48)

Creek, somewhat like Doc Burton in *In Dubious Battle*, harshly interrupts the dream of George, Lennie, and Candy saying, "You guys is just kiddin' yourself. You'll talk of it about a hell of a lot, but you'll get no land" (*OMM* 49). Most of the characters in these three novels fight against poverty, they react to poverty in three ways: indifference in *Tortilla Flat*, violence in *In Dubious Battle*, and dream in *of Mice and Men*. Then three phases are the illustration of the same reaction. This reaction to poverty thematically unites these three novels of Steinbeck.

Like *Tortilla Flat* and *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men* consistently indicates poverty as the only social problem creating disequillibrium in individuals. Steinbeck did not advocate the acquistion of too much wealth. He thought too much wealth and too much poverty are equally enemies of humanity. Steinbeck thought

that a sympathetic and humanistic equilibrium of riches and property would eliminate poverty. He wanted to see the homeless people in *Tortilla Flat*, the landless people in *of Mice and Men* and the low-waged people in *In Dubious Battle* equally happy.

In his philosophy also, Steinbeck is non-traditional. In almost all of his novels his philosophical views are against the conventional views and dogmas. In *of Mice and Men* he holds a non-conventional concept of human entity. The unity of George and Lennie is a unity of opposites, a dialectical unity. George is "Small and quick, dark of face with restless eyes sharp strong features" and Lennie is "His opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large pale eyes and wide sloping shoulders" (*OMM* 2). Their intellectual ability is also contrasted like their physical features. George is intelligent but weak, Lennie is a fool but very strong; both of them are dependent on each other for their entity. The name Lennie is derived from Leonard; Peter Lisca explains, "Leonard means strong," strong, or brave as a lion and George means "husband man" (*The Wide World of Steinbeck*, 134). So the strong man is ruled by the intelligent man; merit rules the muscle, and they together make an entity. One cannot move without the other. They are a unity in diversity. Although Peter Lisca argues, "it is easily perceived that George the 'husband man' is necessary for Lennie but it has not been pointed out that Lennie is just as necessary to George" (*The Wide World of Steinbeck*, 140). From a close scrutiny of the novel it is observed that they are necessary for each other. George, disgusted at Lennie's foolishness, once says, "I could get along so easy and so nice if I did not have you on my tail. I could be so easy" (*OMM* 68). But George says, "I want you to stay with me Lennie" (*OMM* 68). George thinks, that they should remain together because they have a common dream to share;

George says, "we got a flutter... we don't have to sit in bar room blowin 'in our jack, jus' because we got no place else to go. If them other guys gets in jail they cannot for all anybody gives a damn. But not us" (*OMM* 9). Lennie retorts, "but not us, an' Why? Because ... I got you to look after me and you got me to look after you, and that's" (*OMM* 9).

So their interdependence is overt and hence the unity. George confesses to Slim a great deal of their unity, of their being brought up together. George says it to Slim, the man with "the calm God like eyes" about Lennie that "he's dumb as hell, but he ain't crazy. An'I ain't so bright neither." George modestly says to Slim that he is not bright, he is not a complete brilliant man. He says that Lennie has simply, "made me seem God damn smart along side of him" (*OMM* 26).

Like Lennie, George is also obsessed with their dream and lives a life of illusion life until at the end of the novel George is disillusioned. The only thing that makes George different from Lennie is that Lennie wants to touch all the soft things which are soft like his dreams; "he wants to touch everything he likes. Just wants to feel it" (*OMM* 27). Lennie says of himself, "I like to pet nice things with my fingers, sof' things... I like to feel silk and velvet" (*OMM* 58). Since his dreams are psychologically conditioned by the soft silk and velvet like things, so Lennie's shaded sense wants to touch the softness of a mouse, of the red dress of a girl, and a puppy but he foolishly breaks them all as he breaks their dream when he kills Curley's wife trying to feel the softness of her hair. The symbolic softness of his dream that he feels in the red dress of the girl, the mouse, the puppy in an enlarged form is focused in the softness of

the hair of Curley's wife and habitually he breaks the dream, kills the softness. Lennie's liking for his dream like soft things move from inanimate object like red dress of the girl to animals like the mouse and a puppy, finally they symbolically are centered in the soft hair of Curley's wife. When they move from inanimate objects to animals, they are crushed. Lennie's dream does not turn to reality; his animality does not turn to rationality.

Unlike George, Lennie does not have the intelligence nor the planning to bring the softness of their dream to reality. This difference of intelligence does not make them totally divided; instead both of them together constitute a whole. Lennie's might and George's wit compose a totality—a total being. Steinbeck shows that quantitative loss of rationality in Lennie qualitatively changes him to animality. This interaction of animality and rationality in quantitative and qualitative degrees in human nature is universal: they interact within Lennie himself and within Lennie and George. Despite this contradiction, Lennie is an identity and Lennie and George together are a total entity.

George cannot bear too long Lennie's animality. He shoots Lennie through the head: the center of his animality. George has shot Lennie as Lennie has crushed their dreams symbolically when he crushed Curley's wife to death. Having killed Lennie, George has killed half of himself. He becomes a part, no longer a whole.

George cannot survive alone. With the death of Lennie, George has to depend on someone else, on a superior workman Slim. At the end of the novel, George leaves the ranch with Slim. On his unknown journey he needs a witty Slim. George is incomplete

without Lennie or Slim. He depends either on Lennie or on Slim, either on might or on wit. George then represents the average man.

Although quite different from the dreams of Lennie, Curley's wife also dreams. Her dream is to have fashionable dresses like an actress, but she is alone in her dream. Her husband does not share her dreams, so she wants Lennie to share her dreams. But one dreamer kills another dreamer, the basic dreamer kills the romantic dreamer as in nature one animal kills another animal; "a heron kills a water snake, a silent head and beak lanced down and plucked it out by head and the beak wallowed the little snake while its tail waved frantically" (*OMM* 164). This killing scene is a symbolic contrast to Lennie's killing Curley's wife.

Lennie's fate illustrates Steinbeck's belief, that not only environment but human nature also is responsible for his discomfiture; Lennie is born with a nature to ruin his own dreams. It is this nature then not the environment (social system) which is responsible for his destruction. Despite his foolishness, Lennie understands that he has demolished his dreams by killing Curley's wife. Lennie's suffering is over with his death but George also suffers. With his broken dreams George mumbles, "guys like us got no fambly. They make a little stake and they blow it in. they ain't got no in the worl 'that gives a hoot in hell about' em" (*OMM* 67). George made a little stake but blowing in the shade he becomes a poor migrant again leaving behind his dreamy past in the twilight. He starts an unknown journey and nobody knows what he will eat. The unknown journey is, however, man's eternal journey, his continual change (Slim for Lennie) his eternal quest for completion. But man

never achieves completion. The outward completion visualizes inward incompleteness of man.

George is not alone, however. Lennie has been replaced by Slim. So the life process of the migrants, symbolically of man, does not come to an end, it continues. So *Of Mice and Men* is a story not of defeat at the hands of an implacable nature, but of man's painful conquest of this nature and of his difficult, conscious rejection of his dreams of greatness and acceptance of his own mediocrity, of his limitation to achieve his dreams. George is not the embodiment of altruism: he is a common man, an average man of mediocre ability, an incomplete man without either Lennie or Slim. By killing Lennie, George kills part of himself, so Lennie's death is neither tragic nor brutal as every average man has to negate part of himself for survival and adjustment with the environment. For the realisation of his dreams, George (the average man) kills Lennie (the animality in an average man), for adjustment with the environment, because society cannot permit, out of pity, the destructive force of bungling to operate.

Steinbeck's themes of an individual's relation with the group and the unending motion of the life process in *Of Mice and Men* act is a prelude to *The Grapes of Wrath* where these elements are dealt with in a broader, bigger life- process: a procession of migrants from Oklahoma to California. The unknown journey of George and Slim to the town along the highway is a prelude to the journey of the Okies in *The Grapes of Wrath*. In fact, *Of Mice and Men* marks the beginning of the mature period of Steinbeck's literary career and reveals a calmer consolidation of his philosophical ideas which found their best expression in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Of Mice and Men may be interpreted both allegorically and realistically as all objective stories are often interpreted but the best interpretation should be a realistic and philosophic interpretation. As a socially conscious novelist, as a naturalist, Steinbeck was always a close observer of real people in real life. George and Lennie are real people like Muley Graves in *The Grapes of Warth* who had profound love for the land and simple agrarian life. Moreover, with some twist and turn, Steinbeck had a clear philosophy of life to be embodied in his characters. Man and society he observed in relation to the environment as an interacting phenomenon. His philosophy like his social consciousness, protests any conventionality.

The Long Valley (1938)

The Long Valley, like the episodes of *The Pastures of Heaven* and *The Red Pony*, is a collection of short stories. Despite its apparent disjunctive composition, *Pastures of Heaven* possesses a situational unity. Similarly there is thematic unity in the eleven short stories of *The Long Valley*, despite the apparent disjointed structure. The stories in *The Long Valley* reveal Steinbeck's psychological interest and sympathy for the poor and the dim-witted. The first two stories are a satirical treatment of psychological complexities of two rich, childless ladies whose affluence does not bring for them any contentment. As a novelist, Steinbeck never views the rich with much esteem; rather he glorifies the poor as in the third story of *The Long Valley*. Peep's mother, for the survival of herself and her children, wants Peep soon to grow into a man but, instead of getting her son as a man, she loses her son. Peep is killed. With the tragic death of Peep, the reader's sympathy is evoked for the poor family. Steinbeck is at his best when he paints the poor people, the working people and the

handicapped. So in *The Long Valley* most of the later stories are a sympathetic delineation of the poor, the workers and the morons, aimed at rousing reader's sympathy for them. They successfully show Steinbeck's profound love for the poor, his emphasis on human relations.

The first story 'Chrysanthemums' is the psychological story of a rich lady, Elisa, who has virtually nothing to do. To get rid of her idleness, she diverts her attention to gardening, especially to chrysanthemums. While chrysanthemums are the center of her attention, the center of the pot mender's attention is to get a chance to mend a pot and earn a quarter or two a day. Elisa busies herself with gardening while the pot mender wanders about the whole day for his survival. This satiric contrast of subterfuge and survival constitute the story. Elisa centers all her interest in the garden, in the chrysanthemums. She conceals herself in her own smug world. While working in the garden she says to herself, "Yes, they'll be strong this coming year" (*TLV* 11). In her tone there was a little smugness.

Elisa has no child to take care of and to love. Her husband is also a busy man with his money making affairs. Elisa is virtually a lonely woman. She wants to fill her lone moments with the garden and chrysanthemums. The hardy, hungry pot mender wants to draw her attention with a show of love for the chrysanthemums. When he fails to draw Elisa's attention he says, "I ain't had a thing to do today. May be I won't have a supper tonight. You see I'm off my regular road" (*TLV* 15). The potmender then takes a tricky way to draw her attention:

> What's them plants ma'am? The irritation and resistance melted from Elisa's face. Oh, those are chrysanthemums, giant whites and yellows. I raise them every year, bigger than anybody around here. (*TLV* 15)

Seeing that his trick has had an effect on her, the potmender then says,

> Look, I know a lady down the road a piece, has got the nicest garden you ever seen. Got nearly every kind of flower but no chrysanthemums. Last time I was mending a copper bottom wash tub for her (that's a hard job but I do it good) she said to me, "If ever you run acrost some nice chrysanthemums, I wish you would try to get me a few seeds" That's what she told me. (*TLV* 16)

Elisa, a simple and docile lady, believes the potmender and feels that, by nursing the chrysanthemums, she is doing something of many people's interest. She gives the potmender little sprouts of chrysanthemums packed in damp sand. This increases her self-satisfaction. She is happy with the potmender and gives him some work so that he can earn some money. She also becomes sympathetic to the potmender: "You sleep right in the wagon?" Elisa ask, "Right in the wagon, ma'am. Rain or shine I'm dry as a cow in there" (19). The potmender's words affect Elisa.

> Elisa's voice grew husky. She broke in on him, I've never lived as you do, but I know what you mean. When the night is dark – why the stars are sharp and pointed and there's quiet. Why you rise up and up, every pointed star gets driven into your body. It's like that. (*TLV* 119)

Out of sympathy for the potmender, Elisa is about to touch him compassionately:

> Kneeling there, her hand went toward his legs in the greasy black trousers. Her hesitant fingers almost touched the cloth. Then the hand dropped to the ground. (*TLV* 18)

But Elisa is shocked when in the evening she goes to enjoy a boxing competition with her husband Henry. She sees that the pot mender has discarded the chrysanthemum sprouts by the wayside;

> Far ahead on the road Elisa saw a dark speck, she knew. She tried not to look as they passed it, but her eyes would not obey. She whispered to herself sadly, "He might have thrown them off the road. That wouldn't have been much trouble, not very much. But he kept the pot." (*TLV* 22)

Elisa feels that she is defeated, the pot mender has paid no value to Elisa's chrysanthemums. To the pot mender his immediate earning of fifty cents is more important than the chrysanthemum sprouts. Chrysanthemums are Elisa's last resort, her only pride and that has been crumpled by the pot mender. She is lost. She feels she has nothing in the world; all her pride has gone, all her disguised business is lost. She becomes alone, all alone again. So before her husband Henry she hides her defeat of a fragile vanity and aloneness: "she turned up her coat collar so he could not see that she was crying weakly like an old woman" (*TLV* 23).

Steinbeck in his writing style sometimes rancorously treated the aloneness of the rich people when they hide their aloneness with a fake vanity as he did in *The Cup of Gold*. James Gray observes, "Steinbeck chose sometimes to present in the form of rancorous comedy his deeply

felt protest against the false values of the property minded world." (35). In *The Long Valley*, Steinbeck treats Elisa's aloneness and defeat in the same manner.

Elisa is not like Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*. While Ma Joad has poverty to fight with, the children to love and take care of, and Grampa to nurse; Elisa has none to take care of, none to love. Elisa's husband Henry talks of love, but does not love her spontaneously, his love is rather imposing. Steinbeck shows that real love exists in poverty, but only the concept of love reigns in wealth.

In the second story, "The White Quail," Mary Teller is another rich lady who has no children. Her husband is the only man in their large, well furnished house. Mary passes her days alone in the house, whenever she finds her husband, "she [talks] about the garden modestly, hesitantly almost as though she were talking about herself" (*TLV* 32). Inside her mind there is a vacuum and outside in her house "It was utterly calm and eternal out there. And then the garden ended and the dark thickets of the hill began" (*TLV* 32).

Elisa in "The Chrysanthemum" vested all her interest in the flower and Mary in "The White Quail" identified herself with the garden and a white quail. To Mary the garden is part of herself. She says, "I've thought about it so long that it's part of me. If anything should be changed it would be like part of me being torn out" (*TLV* 30). Mary's identification of herself with the garden and bird is no philosophic identification. It is a schizophrenic identification: schizophrenia has developed in Mary out of her aloneness, her husband Harry tries to make her forget the garden and the bird with his love:

> He put out her hand to touch her, and then withdrew it. "I love you so much" he said, and

> then passed. "But I'm afraid of you too". She smiled quietly. "You? Afraid of me? What's there about me you can be afraid of?" "Well, you are kind of untouchable. There's an inscrutability about you. Probably you don't know it yourself. You're kind of like your own garden–fixed and just so. I'm afraid to move around. I might disturb some of your plants" (*TLV* 30).

Harry attempts to understand his wife: "I wish I could see the inside of your mind. It seems to flute around, but it's a cool, collected mind. It's so sure of itself" (*TLV* 33). Mary also does not make her mind clear to Harry; she keeps a veil around herself, "Not so awfully sure. You don't know, and I'm glad you don't" (*TLV* 33). The couple are not as unified as their rhythmic names, Mary and Harry, suggest. Since Mary hides herself, Harry cannot see the inside of Mary's mind. Steinbeck with a rancorous comic intent selects these two names to show that they have a fake vanity inside their hollow personality.

Mary lives in two separated selves. She tries hard to understand her separated selves and correlate them to a unity, to a single self:

> "What is she thinking about?" Mary whispered. "I wonder what's going in her mind. Will she get up? No she is just sitting there. The neck of that dress is too wide, see how it slips sideways over the shoulder. But that's rather pretty. It looks careless, but neat and pretty. Now she is smiling. She must be thinking something nice." Suddenly Mary

> came to herself and realized what she had been doing. She was delighted. "There were two ME's she thought. "It was like having two lives, being able to see myself. That's wonderful. (*TLV* 33-34)

Mary cannot connect her two different selves; so they are schizophrenic. She does not like her husband's money-making business. When Harry says, she comments, "When times are hard we make money" "It sounds terrible... It sounds like taking unfair advantage" (*TLV* 35). However, when he insists that his making money is not unfair, Mary suddenly appears very glad and pleased: "I'm not ashamed, silly. Every one has a right to make a living. You do what you do well" (*TLV* 35).

From their conversation it is clear that Mary does not take anything very seriously. No serious issue can confine her too long. Her first feelings about her husband's business do not last long in her mind. She seems to enjoy his uneasiness over his money making process.

Mary's schizophrenic identification with the garden continues. It reaches the climax when she identifies herself with a white quail in the garden, "that white quail was me, the secret me that no one can ever get at, the me that's way inside" (*TLV* 41). While trying to frighten the white quail, Harry unwittingly kills the white quail with his airgun. Harry wanted to save the white quail from the wild cat; instead he kills the white quail. Symbolically he kills one self of Mary which was disgusting to him.

Steinbeck in both "The Chrysanthemum" and "The White Quail" shows the unfulfillment, the inaccomplishment that dominates affluent people. Despite their riches they lead a life of disintegrated selves. This

disintegration is not observable in any of the common folk drawn by Steinbeck.

The third story "The Flight" is about a boy—Peep Torres—growing into manhood. His mother wants him to grow up quickly because the family needs a man. His mother maintains their farms for ten years after the death of his father. The family with the minor children Pepe, Emilio and Rosy need a man, so the mother says, "A boy gets to be a man when a man is needed. Remember this thing. I have known boys forty years old because there was no need for a man" (*TLV* 50). Pepe's mother encourages him to grow quickly into a man and shake off his laziness, "some lazy cow must have got into thy father's family, else how could I have a son like thee ... when I carried thee a sneaking lazy coyote came out and looked at me one day. That must have made thee so" (*TLV* 52).

The adolescent psychology of the boy Pepe was very much influenced by his mother's encouragement. To show his manhood one day, Pepe knives a man to death in Mrs. Roderiguez's house. What he did as a sign of manhood ultimately brings death for him. The mother is equally afraid and thrilled:

> Yes, thou art a man, my poor little Pepe. Thou art a man. I have seen it coming on thee. I have watched you throwing the knife into the post, and I have been afraid. (*TLV* 52)

Having killed the man in Mrs. Roderiguez's house, Pepe gets scared. He wants to flee and his mother encourages the flight. When Pepe's sister Rosy asks, where Pepe is going his mother replies, "Pepe goes on a journey. Pepe is a man now. He has a man's thing to do." (*TLV* 53)

The whole family comes to see him off and say good bye. Pepe's mother says,

> Look my son, do not stop until it is dark again. Do not sleep even though you are tried. Take care of the horse in order that he may not stop of weariness. Remember to be careful with the bullets—they are only ten. And forget not thy prayer. (*TLV* 54)

Pepe could not bear to see the fierceness in his mother's face:

> Pepe turned to ... Mama. He seemed to look for a little softness, a little weakness in her. His eyes were searching but Mama's face remained fierce, "Go now" she said "Do not wait to be caught like a chicken" Pepe pulled himself into the saddle "I am a man" he said. (*TLV* 54)

In an adverse social circumstance Mama had to be strong and fierce; the widow with her three children had to be strong to survive. She had to take care of the farm and the children; she needed to wear a stiffness in her face until her boy grew a strong man, sturdy enough for survival. But beneath her stiffness she is a mother with all her love for son so;

> When the gray shape of Pepe melted into the hill side, and disappeared, Mama relaxed. She began the high whining keen of death wail. "Our beautiful, our brave" she cried

> "Our protector, our son is gone" It was a formal wail. It rose to high piercing whine, and subsided to a moan. Mama raised it three times and then she turned and went into the house and shut the door. (*TLV* 54)

The sixth story 'The Raid' is about two rebel labor leaders, Root and Dick. The story narrates how they are maltreated by their fellow workers of a different group. The two rebel leaders are like the labor leaders *In Dubious Battle*. Root is older and experienced, Dick is a young man. They take part in an operation in which they are caught and beaten.

Steinbeck has sympathy for the honesty of these two men without supporting their line of action--- their party line. In *In Dubious Battle* Steinbeck gave more of his moral support to Doc Burton who worked for the striking labors without adhering to their party line. In "Raid" Steinbeck shows an honest indignation against the economic system having sympathy for the rebels and their helplessness as they are misunderstood by their fellow workers. Steinbeck supports their means not their ways, and the people also do not support their ways. Root says to Dick that his father had kicked him out of house for being a rebel. His father was scared of losing his job. Root says, "That's the trouble with them" he went on harshly, "They can't see beyond their jobs. They can't see what's happening to them. They hang on their chairs" (*TLV* 97).

The rebel workers are neither accepted nor understood. If any one supports them at all, one supports their means not their ways. The rebels become a group of people totally cut off from the mass, even from the working mass; the labor class. But Root ostensibly pities those people who do not understand them saying, "Sure, they cannot see the future. They

cannot see beyond their nose" (*TLV* 103). Root encourages Dick to stick to the party line and to make his wavering mind more determined,

> Take hold kid, You take hold, and listen to me. If some one busts you, it's not him that's doing it. It's the system. And it isn't you that he's busting. He's taking a crack at the principle. Can you remember that. (*TLV* 104)

Root, with all his devotion, tries to make the people understand that they are working for the welfare of the people,

> "Comrades," he shouted, "you're just like we are. We're all brothers... His split ear spilled a red stream down his neck. The side of his face was mushy and purple. He got himself erect again. His breath bust passionately. His hands were steady now, his voice sure and strong. His eyes were hot with an ecstasy. "Can't you see?" He shouted "It's all for you. All of it. You don't know what you're doing. (*TLV* 107)

But the people for whom they think they are working yell, "Kill the red rats" (*TLV* 107). Root consoles his friend Dick with a Christ-like superiority, saying,

> You remember in the Bible, Dick, how it says something like: "Forgive them because they don't know what they're doing." Dick's reply was stern, "you lay off

> that religious stuff kid." He quoted "Religion is the opium of the people." (*TLV* 108)

Steinbeck has a sympathetic attitude to these communist workers. He supports their honesty of purpose but does not support their ways of action as they are totally cut off from the people. They guide themselves with their party dogmas without having mass support for their line of action. They make themselves members of a clan distant from the main stream of the thought of the people. Steinbeck thought for the alleviation of suffering of the labor class but could not support the communist activity. Again he held a softness for the communist workers. This wavering adherence and abhorrence works in Steinbeck's famous works like *In Dubious Battle* and in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Steinbeck himself could not suggest any solution for the elimination of the suffering of the poverty-ridden people. Nor could he support the communist way of elimination of poverty but he had sympathy for the poor. So Steinbeck wavered between adherence and abhorrence to the communist's means and ways.

The ninth story "Johnny Bear" is about a moron who can imitate any voice Johnny Bear imitates the voices of customers in the village saloon. In return he begs drinks from the customers in the saloon. He is an object of fun. At the same time people can know from him secret love affairs in the village. Once, Johnny out of his habitual fun, told the customers about the illicit pregnancy of an aristocrat lady—Amy Hawkins. Immorality in an aristocratic family is a matter of much public concern. Alex, another aristocrat, cannot tolerate Johnny Bear's foolish fun when he divulged the secrecy. It hurts Alex's aristocratic sentiment. He objects. Through his objection, Steinbeck satirizes the aristocrats; their inner immorality and outer moral show:

> "Oh, damn it Listen! every town has its aristocrats, its family above reproach. Emelin and Amy Hawkins are our aristocrats, maiden ladies, kind people. Their father was a Congress man. I don't like this. Johnny Bear shouldn't do it... Why they feed him. Those man shouldn't give him whisky. (*TLV* 154)

Steinbeck had sympathy for half-witted people, for mentally and physically handicapped people. In this story blind Tom is the incredible piano player, Johnny Bear is an incredible imitator. Steinbeck shows that these handicapped people are not to be pitied, they have their own qualities to be honored too. In *The Pastures of Heaven* Tulerecito is such a mentally handicapped character who can paint nice things. These characters are the outcome of Steinbeck's deep love for them. He feels that although they are either physically or mentally handicapped, they have some perfection to present good things.

The tenth story, "The Murder," is the story of a newly married couple: Jim Moore and Jelka Sepic. Jelka comes of a Yugoslav family. She is beautiful. Her physical beauty attracted Jim to marry her; "Jelka had eyes as large and questioning as a doe's eyes. Her nose was thin and sharply faceted, and her lips were deep and soft" (*TLV* 172). Soon there developed a maladjustment between Jim and Jelka. Jim finds Jelka too cold, too mild, too measured in conversation.

> Jim realised before long that he could not get in touch with her in any way. If she had a life apart, it was so remote as to be beyond his reach... when a year had passed, Jim began to crave the company of women, the

> chattery exchange of small talks, the shrill pleasant insults, the shame-sharpened vulgarity. (*TLV* 174)

Jim grew curious about Jelka's coldness, about her indifference towards hir. Trying to learn why she is cold towards him, one night Jim leaves the house. He tells Jelka that he is coming back the next noon. But actually he does not leave the house. He hides himself. Thus he discovers Jelka sleeping with her cousin in their bedroom. Jim shoots and kills Jelka's cousin and beats Jelka severely.

The moral texture of the story did not seem sound to Linclon R. Gibbs who says

> "The Murder" is total anachronism. An injured husband vindicates his honour by neatly puncturing the skull of his wife's lover with a rifle bullet and beating his wife within an inch of her life with a bull-whip. The sheriff puts the murderer under arrest as a matter of form but assures him that no conviction ever results in such cases. And the couple live happily ever after. This tale contains every element of an antiquated morality, including the double standard of sex, for the husband was not himself a model of marital fidelity. (*Steinbeck and His Critics* 99)

Linclon R. Gibbs is too stern a moralist; he reviews Steinbeck's moral standard from his own view point. Steinbeck never accepted morality as a set of certain rules to be imposed upon. Steinbeck held a

liberal view of morality. Thinking that human nature is not controlled by strict moral rules, it never abides by the moral rules. Steinbeck held that human nature makes its own moral standard according to circumstances. Steinbeck's morality is thus circumstantial, his ethics are situational ethics. He does not like to be dictated by the moral orders. As a pragmatist Steinbeck treated morality and ethics in terms of possibility, probability and practicability of the situation. So Steinbeck's characters interpret morality differently from the established order; Jim Casy for instance, in *The Grapes of Wrath* shuns the established moral order. So adulteries and casual sex adventures are condoned by Steinbeck, sometimes with an indulgent smile as negligible peccadillo; sometimes with approval as revolts against too rigorous domestic discipline.

Steinbeck is not an antiquated moralist in "The Murder" as has been charged by Linclon R. Gibbs. The charge thus is the result of viewing the same thing from two opposite positions. Bertrand Russell explains why some murderers are not condemned to death:

> Shall a man kill his wife's lover? The Church says no, the law says no, and common sense says no; yet many people would say yes, and juries often refuse to condemn.

Why this contradiction occurs, Russell explains:

> The rules of morals according to the age, the race and the creed of the community concerned, to an extent that is hardly realised by those who have neither traveled

> nor studied anthropology... It is true that in a given community, an ethic which does not lead to the moral rules accepted by that community is considered immoral. (Bertrand Russell, *An Outline of Philosophy*, 234).

The stories in *The Long Valley* contain the same social and philosophical protest and human appeal of Steinbeck against the existing social order, injustices and values. Steinbeck shows the hollowness of riches. He is sympathetic to the Communist activists but cannot support the line of action dictated by the party. Philosophically, he protests against the moral concepts that reign in the society, indicating that morality is the name of something discreetly termed good and bad by a group of people. Steinbeck shows that morality has no universal standard, it is situational, variable in circumstances. This social protest and philosophical consciousness of Steinbeck always aims at a humanistic appeal. In his major novels these are embodied most subtly and artistically.

The Grapes of Wrath (1939)

Steinbeck's masterpiece, *The Grapes of Wrath* is the compassionate narration of a migrant family moving from Oklahoma to California. The new land reforms in Oklahoma made many small peasants landless. Farming with bank loans began in Oklahoma, more capital was invested in agriculture for more production. Small landowners lost their lands as the agrarian economy turned to capitalist economy. Along with the land reform, the Oklahoma dust bowl made thousands of families homeless. People starved, they had no work, no food, as mechanized cultivation made manual labor surplus. So thousands of families left Oklahoma in search of work

and food in California. The Joad family is one of those thousand families.

The long journey in *The Grapes of Wrath* begins with big lines of motor cars packed with the belongings of the migrant families, Before the journey started the men sat before the houses, thoughtfully drawing lines in the dust while the women and children carefully observed the thinking men. The families did not want to leave their land which their forefathers had cleared and farmed long ago: "grampa took up the land, and he had to kill the Indians and drive them away, and pa was born here and killed weeds and snakes" (*TGW* 43). But the economic system forced them to leave their forefathers' land.

Steinbeck does not draw the new farmers entirely inimical to the small land owners; there is conflict among the big farmers, but they are not inimical to the small farmers:

> Some of the owner men were kind because they hated what they had to do, and some of them were because they hated to be cruel and some of them were cold because they had long ago found that one could not be an owner unless one were cold, and all of them were caught in something larger than themselves (*TGW* 41)

The system "larger than themselves" bound the rich landowners with capital--the bank which is something else than man. "It happens that every man in a bank hates what the bank does, and

yet the bank does it, the bank is something more than man... man made it but cannot control it" (*TGW* 34). So the system can do nothing for the people, who say about themselves "we're half starved now, the kids are hungry all the time, we got no clothes, torn an'ragged" (*TGW* 43).

Steinbeck's involvement with the lives of the migrant workers which had already provided the subject matter of *In Dubious Battle* became keener in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Steinbeck had direct contact with the migrant workers. He himself had worked with them, observed their way of life keenly. In a letter to Lawrence Hagy, Steinbeck writes:

> When I was sixteen I differed with my parents and walked away and got a job in a ranch ... I slept in the bunk house with all the other, got up at four thirty, cleaned my stall and saddled or harnessed my horses depending on the job, ate my beef steak for breakfast and went to work, and the work day was over when you could no longer see. ... I learnt about man, how some are good, some are bad and most are sum of the both. And I learnt about money, and how hard it is to get. (Letter to Lawrence Hagy, November 24 1959, *LIL* 654)

The Grapes of Wrath is a development upon *In Dubious Battle*. *In Dubious Battle* is a dispassionate description of the state of

the strikers; *The Grapes of Wrath* has more of compassion for the migrants. While being compassionate towards the migrants, Steinbeck showed some indignation against the economic system. Peter Lisca says, "But this compassion, this honest indignation, did not carry Steinbeck into propagandism or blind him to his responsibilities as a novelist (*The Wide World of Steinbeck*, 147). George Miran, however, holds an extreme view, saying that he "can think of no other novel which advances the idea of class war and promotes hatred of class against class ... more than does *The Grapes of Wrath*" (Miran, 17).

After the publication of *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck was criticized as a propagandist and a liar. In April 1940, Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt made an inspection tour to California migrant camps. According to *The New York Times* of April 3, 1940 when a reporter questioned her she replied "I never have thought *The Grapes of Wrath* was exaggerated" (*LIL* 202). Steinbeck thanked Mrs. Roosevelt, writing,

> Meanwhile may I thank you for your words. I have been called a liar so constantly that sometimes I wonder whether I may not have dreamed the things I saw and heard in the period of my research. (Letter to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt April 24, 1940 *LIL* 202)

The responsibility of a novelist is to represent life, in Henry James's words "the only reason for existence of the novel is that it does attempt to represent life" (Quoted in, Wellek 220). Steinbeck

represented the life of the migrants; his presentation is artistic not propagandist.

Steinbeck denied that his work was propagandist saying, "I cannot see how *The Grapes of Wrath* can be Jewish propaganda but then I have heard it called a communist propaganda also" (Letter to Reverend L.M. Birkhead May 7, 1940 *LIL* 203). While feeling compassionately for the miseries of the migrants, Steinbeck proposed policy changes in a letter to President Roosevelt.

> In the light of this experience and against a background of international situation, I am fired to the conclusion that a crisis is imminent in the Western Hemisphere, and to be met only by an immediate controlled, considered and directed method and policy. (Letter to Franklin Roosevelt, June 1940, *LIL* 206)

This proposal clarifies Steinbeck's responsibility as a socially conscious novelist. Steinbeck's radicalism did not advocate fundamental change of the system. Instead, he proposed some "control" over the system so that it could minimize the suffering of the poor migrants. It is thus unjust to hold any extreme view like George Miran that *The Grapes of Wrath* "advances the idea of class war and promotes hatred of class against class." Steinbeck's main approach is for some "considered and directed" concession, for some humanistic and sympathetic steps. Stanley Edgar Hyman has justly opposed George Miran saying,

> Actually a careful reading makes clear the central message of *The Grapes of Wrath* is an appeal to the owning class to behave, to become enlightened rather than to the working class to change its own conditions. (195)

A careful reading of *The Grapes of Wrath* nullifies any extreme or pejorative view of the novel. The novel presents truly the suffering migrants to draw sympathy for them. The novel reveals the alarming hunger of the migrants and it cautions lest the hunger turn to anger. If anger accumulated, Steinbeck apprehended that it might cause a severe explosion, "three hundred thousand hungry and miserable men, if they ever know themselves ... three hundred thousand ... if they ever move under a leader ... the end" (*TGW* 248). The owner class was indifferent to the rising anger that the hunger was slowly forming. Steinbeck warns the owner class of their callousness:

> The great companies did not know that the line between hunger and anger is a thin line. And money that might have gone to wages went for gas, for guns, for agents and spies for black lists, for drilling. On the high ways the people moved like ants and searched for work, for food. And the anger began to ferment. (*TGW* 295)

Steinbeck wrote in a letter to Elizabeth Otis:

> Four thousand families drowned out of their tents are really starving to death ... the death of children by starvation in our valleys is simply staggering. I've got to do it. If I can sell the articles I will use the proceeds for serums and such. Cod liver oil would give live kids a better chance. Of course no individual effort will help. Ten thousand people are affected in one area. Any way, I'll do what I can. (Letter to Elizabeth Otis, February 4, *LIL* 154)

So the flood scene in *The Grapes of Wrath* is no allegorical flood; it is a real flood, that made thousands of people starve and children die. Steinbeck felt that so severe a catastrophe was too large for an individual's help but as a man he felt that he had some responsibility to the suffering people. Without depending on any help from the government, he felt intensely that he had to do something for the people. Although later he wrote in a letter to Elizabeth Otis,

> I am going to see the Secretary of Agriculture in a little while and try to find out for my own satisfaction any way just how much of the government's attitude is political and how much humanitarian. Then I will know what course to take. (Letter to Elizabeth Otis, March 7, 1938 *LIL* 161)

With this genuine humanitarian feeling Steinbeck thought that there were some defects in the agrarian economy of California for which flood and poverty ridden people could not be saved. So Steinbeck wrote a series of articles in *The Nation*, San Francisco, and *San Francisco News* for alleviating the sufferings of the migrants. In one of the articles he wrote:

> It is fervently to be hoped that the great group of migrant workers so necessary to the harvesting of California's crops may be given the right to live decently that they may not be so badgered, tormented and hurt that in the end they become avengers of the hundreds and thousands who have been tormented and starved before them. ("Dubious Battle in California" 304)

In another article of this series, Steinbeck offers three suggestions for alleviating the misery of the migrants that the economic system had spawned:

> First that the migrant labourers be allotted subsistence farms on which they can live and work when there is no call for migrant labourers; second, that a Migratory Labour Board be created to help allot labour where needed and to determine fair wages; third that vigilantism and terrorism be punished. If

> on the other hand, as has been stated by a large grower, our agriculture requires the creation and maintenance of a peon class, then it is submitted that California agriculture is unsound under a democracy. ("The Harvest Gypsies" 8)

Steinbeck cautiously observed the migrants and warned the government that if no step were taken to lessen the poverty and sufferings of the migrants it might tell upon the political scene of the country. Steinbeck writes,

> We regard this destruction of dignity, then as one of the most regrettable results of the migrant's life since it does reduce his responsibility and does make him a sullen outcast who will strike at our government in any way that occurs to him. ("The Harvest Gypsies" 16)

The social reality in the agrarian economy of California made the migrants an outcast class; Lincoln R. Gibbs writes

> In California the condition of land tenure and the character of the land product cause and magnify all the evils that industrialism had brought earlier to factory towns: poverty and extreme wealth, over production, and housing and sanitation, strikes and armed conflict, perversion of justice in the interest of the

> owners, destruction of property and life, danger of violent revolution. (*Steinbeck and His Critics*, 97).

In such a social milieu Steinbeck advocated for the dignity of migrants in California so that it might not affect the healthy social life of California.

In no way can Steinbeck's feeling for the migrants be called a proletarian sentiment. The communist party had only a temporary influence on writers, as Eisinger points out:

> The experience of communist party in America was that it could not dictate long the writers; the political ideas and psychological assumptions that were to get into their work. Writers must have reacted in the same way to the official line of new nationalism. The withdrawal of many writers in the forties to an apolitical stance is a result in part of this rejection of a 'given' political line. The spirit of opposition the quest for living alternatives withered in the forties under its impact. (Eisinger 11)

Still then, why did the fiction writers of the forties continue to involve themselves in social affairs? Eisinger writes, "people continued to write fiction because they felt a need to confront, even if they could not resolve, the moral and social tensions of their culture and their lives" (Eisinger 13). Moreover the novel's "original

tradition was observational, realistic and analytical, as it drew its habits of mind and mode, its mode of discourse from science" (Eisinger 14). So Steinbeck, like other novelists of the period, continued to write with social consciousness knowing well that he could not solve the problem; Steinbeck did not want to suggest any reform of the economic problem. James Gray rightly observes that,

> Steinbeck had no precise scheme of reform to expound, no nostrum to offer. As an artist he could only observe and record the struggle of man against himself, hoping by vivid presentation of problem in human affairs, to awaken minds to its crucial character. Without assuming the responsibilities of a reformer he wished to influence the temper of the time simply by urging acceptance of some attitudes in matters of economic opportunity and attitudes favouring equality in the administration of justice. (31)

Steinbeck's social protest is thus in *The Grapes of Wrath* neither a rebellion nor a reformatory move against the economic system; rather, it urges a sympathetic attitude to the poverty-ridden people by the propertied, profit-obsessed class. But Steinbeck had often been misunderstood as being a proletarian sentimentalist. John Ditsky defends Steinbeck from the charge of proletarian sentimentality saying that,

> Only the Marxist critics of the 30s could possibly have lumped Steinbeck together with such writers as James T. Farrell ... missing completely the fact that Farrell in moving from Catholicism to Marxism, had simply substituted one metaphysics for another. Steinbeck a believer in no 'isms' whether political, religious or philosophical insisted in looking the truth in the face, even if in *In Dubious Battle* he seemed to stray from a party line Steinbeck never claimed adherence to. (*John Steinbeck: Life, Works and Criticism*, 26)

The change of manual farming to mechanized farming concerned Steinbeck emotionally. He felt that manual farmers have a far deeper connection with the soil; they love the land as a living thing. Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown* loves the land as a living thing. So also do Mulley Graves and Grampa. They think that mechanized cultivation separates the cultivator from the cultivated land. The mechanized farmer "could not see the land as it was, he could not smell the land as it smelled; his feet did not stamp the clods or feel the warmth or power of the earth" (*TGW* 36). Mulley Graves cannot bear the separation from the land. Mulley Graves loves the land, he does not want to leave the land. He says,

> I'll be aroun' I says I'll be aroun' till hell freezes over. There ain't no body can run a

> guy name Graves outa this country. An' they ain't done it neither. If they throw me off I'll come back, an they figure I'll be quite underground, why I'll take couple there of the sons of bitches along for company ... I ain't a going. My pa came here fifty years ago An' I ain't a goin.' (*TGW* 46-47)

Mulley Graves does not leave his forefather's land. He stays there and dies there; like Mulley Graves, Grampa also does not want to be separated from the land he was born in. He cries, "this here's my country. I b'long here... I ain't a goin'. This country is no good but if it is my country. No, you all go ahead. I'll just here where I belong" (*TGW* 114).

Mulley Graves and Grampa could not bear the separation with the land; they could not tolerate the machine polishing the land without feeling the warmth of land. But the tractor driver accepts the change both for his survival and the inevitability of change. The tractor driver belongs to the same community of Mulley Graves and Grampa; he is Joe Davis' son. It is his survival that draws him to the tractor "[He] sat in his iron seat and he was proud of the straight lines he did not will, proud of the tractor he did not own or love, proud of the power he could not control" (*TGW* 36).

Steinbeck thinks that socio-economic changes are beyond human control although man has created them. In describing the bank as an economic agent and the land as being controlled by the bank, Steinbeck shows that although individuals like Mulley, Grampa do

not change, change is inevitable. Mulley Grave's and Grampa's emotional attachment to the land and their livelihood cannot prevent economic expansion. The tractor driver on the contrary is more practical and pragmatic; he accepts the change and adjusts himself with the change. The tractor driver warns the emotionally attached people:

> Times are changing, Mister, don't you know? Can't make a living on the land unless you've got two, five, ten thousand acres and a tractor. Cropland is not for little guys like you any more, you don't kick up or howl because you can't make Fords or because you can't make Fords because you're not the Telephone Company ... Nothing to do about it. You try to get three dollars a day some place. That's the only way. (*TGW* 37)

People like Mulley Graves and Grampa cannot accept big land ownership. They think small farmers are close to their land.

> If a man owns a little property, that property is him. It's part of him, and it's like him. If he owns property only so he can walk on it and handle it and be sad when it's not doing well... and feel fine when the rain falls on it, that property is him... (*TGW* 37)

Mulley Graves and Grampa cannot do anything even with their rifles. The tractor driver explains to them that even their anger cannot stop change: "and look—suppose you kill me? They'll just hang you, but long before you're hung there'll be another guy in the tractor" (*TGW* 38).

The system is so big, the change is so inevitable, that the helpless Oklahoma people stand and stare.

> The tractor cut a straight line on, and the air and ground vibrated with its thunder. The tenant man stared after it, his rifle in his hand. His wife was beside him and the quiet children behind. And all of them stared after the tractor. (*TGW* 39)

Mulley Graves cannot accept what the tractor is doing to the land, he cannot bear the heartlessness and cruelty of the machine. He thinks since machine is man made, it can be checked.

> The thing that give me much trouble was it did not make no sense. You don't look for no sense when lightening kills a cow or it comes up a flood. That's jus' the way the things is. But when a bunch of man take and lock you up for four years it ought to have some meaning. (*TGW* 55)

At long last, Mulley Graves surrenders to the machine, to the change. He feels his opposing strength gone; he is being hunted, "when you're hunting 'somepine' you're a hunter an' you're strong.

Can't nobody hit a hunter. But when you get hunted—that's different. You ain't strong, may be you're fierce but ain't strong" (*TGW* 58).

Steinbeck does not oppose mechanization in agriculture, he feels for the individual ownership which mechanization draws to an end. Steinbeck had emotional alignment with the small farmers and thought that the big farmers; "farmed on paper and they forgot the land, the smell, the feel of it, and remembered, only that they own it, remembered that they gained and lost on it" (*TGW* 241). Despite Steinbeck's feeling like Mulley Graves, mechanization in cultivation did not stop in America rather, "and in Kansas and Arkansas, in Oklahoma and Texas and New Mexico, the tractors moved and pushed the tenants" (*TGW* 247).

Mechanization in agriculture is not altogether a bad thing to Steinbeck. He only feels that machines separate man from land. Machines would not have been bad, Steinbeck thinks, if the small farmers together could have owned a machine:

> Is a tractor bad? Is the power that turns the long furrows wrong? If this tractor were ours it would be good—not mine. If our tractor the long furrows of our land, it would be good. Not my land but ours. We could love the tractor as we have this land when it was ours. (*TGW* 162)

Steinbeck's social protest in *The Grapes of Wrath* is thus a protest for sympathy, compassion and humanitarian feeling for the poverty-ridden group of people. It is not a proletarian protest, it does

not advocate any class division or class war. It protests against disparity and appeals for justice and subsistence.

Steinbeck's philosophy is parallel to his protest in *The Grapes of Wrath*. The development of events in the novel centres upon the socio-economic problem. This problem comes to the front, and the characters attitudes to love, religion, morality and God are influenced by the problem. The characters make their own moral values, ethical standard, quite different from the prevalent social values.

Jim Casy, a former priest, finds himself morally degraded. He finds nothing spiritual that can control human nature. Casy confides to Tom Joad that he slept with girls almost every night. He asks himself if the Holy Spirit had something to do on his nature why did he repeat the same things; he says,

> I figgered there just wasn't no hope for me, an' I was a damn old hypocrite. But I didn't mean to be... now they say laying up with a girl comes from the devil. But the more grace a girl got in her the quicker she wants to go in the grass. An' I got to thinking' ... how can the devil get in when a girl is full of Holy Spirit. (*TGW* 22)

Casy decides he is not a sinner.

> I says to myself, what is gnawing you? Is it the screwing? An' I says it is the sin. I says may be it ain't a sin. May be it's just

> the way the folks is. May be we been whippin' the hell out of ourselves for nothing. (*TGW* 23)

Casy turns pragmatic; he leaves behind the dogmatism of religion, God and sin. He willfully rejects them. Jim Casy drifts away from God and turns from Heaven to man; he loves man with all the good and bad things in man. Casy says, "No I don't knew no body name Jesus. I knew a bunch of stories but I only love people. May be all men got one big soul everybody's a part of" (*TGW* 24). Casy then remakes his concept of sin:

> Sure I got sins. Ever'body got sins. A sin is somepin' you ain't sure about ... if you think it was a sin then it is a sin. A fella builds his own sin right up from the groun' (*TGW* 233)

Casy's rejection of morality and religion has a counterpart in Tom Joad's social rejection. Jim Casy thinks differently about religion, Tom thinks differently about society. The former priest and the prisoner on parole are united. Both outcasts are complementary to each other. With these two characters Steinbeck brings up the socio-economic problem which is the central issue of the novel. Poverty brings them nearer and they decide that men discover God not in the wilderness like Jesus but in the places like jailhouse.

> Here's me been a goin' into the wilderness like Jesus to try find out somepin. Almost got her sometimes, too. But it's in the jail house I really got her

> ... I begin getting' at things. Some a them fellas in the tank was drunks, but mostly they was there' cause they stole stuff; and couldn't get no other way ya' see? Well, they was nice fellas, ya see. An' I begin to see, then, it's need that makes all the trouble. (*TGW* 397)

Casy's Emersonian oversoul concept influences Tom Joad. Tom also begins to feel that he is a part of the totality; as an individual he is not more important than the totality. Tom feels that his life and death should be bound with the life and death of the community. This is Jim Casys's influence that Tom Joad begins to feel about the individual and the community; Tom remembers Casy's influence and Casy's sayings:

> But now I been thinking' what he said and I can remember all of it says one time he went out in the wilderness to find own soul, an'he found he jus' got a little bit of a great big soul. Says a little wilderness ain't no good less it was with the rest, an' was whole. Funny how I remember. Didn't no good alone. (*TGW* 434)

Tom then decides after Casy's influence,

> Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lip up his fellow, but woe to him that is alone when he

> falleth, for he hath another to help him up. That's part of her. (*TGW* 434)

Remembering their life in the government camp, Tom is convinced that Casy had rightly mentioned that human beings can live in peace and amity if there is no poverty. They can make their own laws and discipline, they need no vigilantism to guard against any indiscipline because poverty is the creator of maximum of the indisciplines in a community. Tom remembers Casy's estimation;

> I been thinking how it was in the gov'ment camp, how our folks took care a' themselves, as' if they was a fight they fixed it themselves; an'they want no cops waggling their guns, but they was better order then them cops ever give. (*TGW* 434)

The Joad family and other families unite into one large family: "the twenty families became one family, the children were the children of all. The loss of home became one loss" (*TGW* 200). The contrast of life desired and the life lived by the migrants- that is the life lived in the government camp and life in Hooverville- is the exposure of Steinbeck's belief that migrants are not born nasty, dirty and rowdy as the big land owners think. Rather they can be neat and law abiding if opportunities are offered such. But they are not given such opportunities.

> Carloads of oranges dumped on the ground. The people came for miles to take the fruit but this could not be... and

> men with hoses squirt Kerosene on the oranges, and they are angry at the crime... A million people hungry needing the fruit and Kerosene over the golden mountains. (*TGW* 362)

Tom Joad cannot change the social scene all he can do is unity with the poor around. This transcendental unity of Tom gives him a perfection as a man. Tom says to Ma Joad,

> Then I'll be all aroun' in the dark. I'll be every where- wherever you look. Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever they's a cop beatin' up a guy. If Casy knowed, why I'll be in the way guys yell when they're mad an' -- I'll be in the way kids laugh when they are hungry an' they know supper's ready. An' when our folks eat the stuff they raise an' live in their houses they build—why I'll be there, see? God I am talking like Casy. Comes of thinkin' about him so much seem like. I can see him sometimes. (*TGW* 436)

Dire poverty and misery cannot destroy the spirit of the people in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Neither death, desertion, hunger nor destruction can rob them of their spirit and vigor to live on and continue the life process. Tom Joad leaves Ma Joad hoping that he

would meet Jim Casy somewhere again. Ma Joad is not frustrated before all the hazards and tragedy. She stands firm and hopes to live:

> We ain't gonna die out. People is goin'on—changing a little, may be, but goin' right on ... Everything we do seems right at goin' on. Seems that way to me. Even getting hungry—even being sick; some die but the rest in together. Jus' try to live the day jus' the day (*TGW* 440)

Steinbeck believed in man, in the eternal goodness of man. Betrayal, ingratitude and avarice in man could not spoil his faith in man. The hunger for riches in man Steinbeck thinks is man's mental poverty, he shows pity for those mentally poor people, but above all he believes in man's self. Steinbeck says,

> The last clear definite function of man... muscles aching to work, minds aching to create beyond the single need... this is man... for man unlike any other thing organic or inorganic in the universe grows beyond his work, walks the steps of his concepts, emerges ahead of his accomplishments. This you may say of man... when theories change and crash when schools, philosophies when narrow dark alleys of thought national, religious, economic grow and disintegrate man

> reaches stumbles forward, painfully, mistakenly sometimes. (*TGW* 161)

This belief of Steinbeck in man and manself has its basis in transcendentalism, because transcendentalism is "an assertion of supernatural attributes to the natural constitution of mankind (Werkmeister 46).

The Grapes of Wrath is thus a documentary and realistic representation of the life of the migrants in the Depression and the Second World War period urging compassion for the migrants without inclining to proletarianism. In the novel Steinbeck's philosophy runs parallel to his protest. In fact Steinbeck's protest and his philosophy are hardly separable in his early works as well as in his mature works.

George Bluestone has justly commented on Steinbeck's attainment as a novelist in *The Grapes of Wrath:* "Steinbeck was able to create a well made and emotionally compelling novel out of the materials which in most other hands have resulted in sentimental propaganda (George Bluestone "*Novels into Film*" Baltimore 1947). Unfortunately the most honest depiction of life and reality has not been justly appreciated by many critics (Miran, Wilson). Many others have generalized the novel as a proletarian novel (Champney, Donhouse). Against the labeling of *The Grapes of Wrath* Peter Lisca rightly comments;

> Generalities seem to solidify so quickly into stupidities. A writer can only honestly say—"this is the way it seems to me at this moments." Steinbeck did not

> think he knew enough about the situation and did not wish to retire into some terminology-- fascism or communism for example. He was simply listening to men talk and watching them act, hoping that the projection of the microcosm will define the out lines of the macrocosm, and it is just conjunction of the microcosm and the macrocosm, the concrete and the universal which makes *The Grapes Wrath* a real novel. (*Steinbeck and his Critics* 13)

A much closer reading and keener observation will reveal that *The Grapes of Wrath* is not a novel to be labelled with any of the terms used by the critics; rather this is a novel of radical approaches aimed at humanitarian appeals.

CHAPTER V: THE ECLIPSE—LATE NOVELS (1941-51)

The economic condition that made the background of *The Grapes of Wrath* started changing with the social legislations in America. Roosevelt's New Deal adopted a series of measures to change the agricultural economic condition. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration was passed in 1933, The Farm Security Administration was adjusted in 1937 and other administrative bodies were adjusted during the period 1933-38 to provide various facilities and assistance to the agricultural economy. The New Deal felt it necessary that the economic affairs in the country should have supervision and control of the government. In close co-operation with private enterprises, the New Deal made efforts to encourage price rises, to increase profits and to raise wages for increasing people's purchasing capacity of consumer goods and thus guaranteeing people's future through programs of social security.

The suffering of the farm laborers concerned Steinbeck most. The New Deal took steps to develop the agriculture sector by providing relief and rehabilitation programme for marginal and submarginal farmers and landless agricultural laborers, it proposed for curtailment of food production to keep the price and wage level static. In 1934 The Farm Mortgage Foreclosure Act, The Farm Refinancing Act and Frazier-Lemke Act, Bankruptcy Act was passed in the Congress. The Soil Erosion Act, 1935 aimed at compensating the agriculture sector in case of any soil erosion or similar disaster. All these steps taken by the New Deal, remarkably but temporarily diminished the misery of the agricultural laborers. The Full

Employment Act, 1946 diminished the number of unemployment in America.

So Steinbeck's concern was shifted from microcosm (misery of laborers in Salinas Valley in California) to the macrocosm: ontology, cosmology, existence of man and his position in the Universe, conflict of vice and virtue, ethical paradox all these concerned Steinbeck in his novels of this phase.

Coincidentally Steinbeck's *Sea of Cortez* was published in the year 1941 when the United States got actually involved in the Second World War. *Sea of Cortez* goes on to philosophically inquire the origin of war instinct in man, other works of this period *The Moon Is Down*, *Once There was a War* solidifies Steinbeck's anti-war attitude. His hatred of war as a curse to humanity and sentimental decision of the political elites both in Capitalism and Communism became his object of criticism. He criticized totalitarian governments; both Communism and Fascism and found humanity gnawing in the clutches of these two monsters. He preferred welfare state under a democratic government as the best form of government (*The Moon Is Down*).

Later novels of this phase drew Steinbeck to the conflict in man of vice and virtue. Steinbeck believed in inherent goodness in man and found goodness hindered by the economic and social condition, in his novels of the first and second phase. But the post war scenario was quite different in the United States, which emerged from the war as political and military leader of the west and the richest and the most powerful country of the world. Moreover, the post war political steps like the Truman Doctrine found that the seeds

of totalitarianism nurtured by misery and want pushing it up to the peak, when people fail to get a better life dreamt by them. The Truman doctrine along with the Marshall Plan changed conditions of America both nationally and internationally. The surge of socialist thought; and the Marxist approach in the middle class intellectuals in America got totally changed. Steinbeck shifted his focus from socio-economic reasons to moral questions hindering man's inborn perfectness in the later novels of this phase (1941-51).

Agricultural and industrial development in America during the Second World War and after it paved the quick rise of urbanization in America. Steinbeck's curiosity in observing the urban people made him critical of the urban values and urban life, he could not uncritically accept the quick expansion of urbanization, urban life meant to him rowdy spot of revelry, wine and bad woman. He found a sort of moral hollowness in the life and manners of the urban middle class and lower class people (*The Wayward Bus*). Steinbeck preferred rural life to urban life. As in *East of Eden*, Steinbeck inquires into the human moral dilemma as man's constant companion from the genesis to the present continuing up to the future. In the novels of this period Steinbeck's interest centres on and around science and philosophy which enabled him to contribute some basic thought in linking up mysticism and materialism.

The full moon then started waning, growing comparatively less luminous. The only illumination that kept the moon shining came from the philosophical concepts aimed at interpreting the physical and the metaphysical world in his own way. Discovering some discontinuities in the interpretations of both philosophy and science, Steinbeck concluded with his own basic philosophy—"non-

teleology"—as the easiest logical process to find the solution of the problems of philosophy and science.

Only two years after the publication of *The Grapes Wrath* (1939), Steinbeck's centre of interest veered. The social consciousness changed to scientific observation. The Second World War shattered the socio-economic scenario. Steinbeck's sympathy for the elimination of poverty that the war had caused could not find any solution acceptable to him. Moreover, as a novelist Steinbeck did not like to uphold despair and despondency. So Steinbeck preferred the life of an observer of animal life, not as an escape from the present day reality but as a sort of side-tracking, a willful avoidance of the unrest and weariness of everyday life.

Steinbeck felt like Edward Arnold that "it was the writer's responsibility to expose and hopefully to correct the shortcomings and injustices of contemporary American society" (Arnold 63). Having been a failure in correcting the shortcomings and injustices, Steinbeck was looking for something else. Chester E. Eisinger most logically evaluates this diversion of Steinbeck and other contemporary American novelists: "Rebellion and reform were unacceptable tactics, and many writers saw no alternative but to withdraw form political scene ... and turn their attention elsewhere" (Eisinger 7). The war drove the writer to withdrawal; the social and political scene served to confirm the wisdom of his retreat. The whole socio-cultural gamut of the age was restless and uncertain. Chester E. Eisinger summarizes:

> The cultural life, which the writer found everywhere about him in the forties, was

> marked by incoherence and uncertainty. He had to examine the possibilities of literature in a universe of fragmented beliefs where multiplicity of values or none at all had long ago replaced a unified world view...
>
> The culture of the forties could offer the writer neither an ideology nor a faith that must sustain him. The available ideology of the previous decade had been Marxism but the treachery of Russia had moved the writer to take the first quick step toward disenchantment with political philosophy and politics. (5-6)

Steinbeck withdrew his social consciousness to scientific observations and to philosophically arrange the observations of science. He wanted to connect science with philosophy as the two ways to reach the same goal. To Steinbeck and other naturalists, Walcut mentions, "science and intuition were equally fruitful ways to realise man's aspiration to the tangible present" (290).

Steinbeck's interest in science, especially in biological science, was initiated by two things: firstly, that he had been a student of biological science in his University days; secondly, his interest in Darwinism. Steinbeck was against determinism and supernaturalism. Darwinism was a powerful form against traditional supernaturalism and the views of man as a special creation with a

peculiar elevated relation to his creator. Darwinism encouraging a scientific adherence to truth and fact and stressing the view of man as a product of environment, gives little sanction to sentimentalizing and glamorizing the role of man. Steinbeck's attitudinal unity with Darwinism made him curious about the ontological quests; Steinbeck did not treat the creation of man as something preordained. Darwinism also does not treat man's creation as something divine. The publication of Darwin's *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* in 1871 was an attempt to fix man's genealogy. It was a denial of the concepts of genesis of man as a divine creation. Darwin asserts that

> Man, like every other animal, has no doubt advanced to his present high condition; through a struggle for existence consequent on his rapid multiplication; and he is to advance still higher; it is to be feared that he must remain subject to a severe struggle. Otherwise, he will sink into indolence, and the most highly gifted man would not be more successful in the battle of life than the less gifted. (385)

Steinbeck's belief in 'Manself' as he narrates in *The Grapes of Wrath* is similar to this assertion of Darwin. 'Manself' Steinbeck defines:

> The last clear definite function of man—muscles aching to work, minds aching to

> create beyond the single need—this is man... For man, unlike any other thing organic or inorganic in the Universe grows beyond his work, walks up the stairs of his concepts, emerges ahead of his accomplishment. (*The Grapes of Wrath* 161)

So this is Darwinism that influenced Steinbeck to biological observation for consolidation of his ideas on the creation of animals and man. Darwin challenged the teleological concept of 'purpose' and 'design' in the Universe and asserted that there was no divine force of purpose behind life. He set forward the idea of evolutionism through natural selection and observed that an organism cannot be biologically successful unless it is well adopted to its external environment. Darwin explains his theory:

> This principle of preservation, or of the survival of the fittest I have called natural selection. Natural selection also leads to divergence of character; for the more organic beings divergence in structure, habits and constitution by so much the more can a large number be supported □ n the area, -- of which we see proof by looking to the inhabitants of any small spot and to the productions naturalized in foreign lands. Therefore during the modifications of the descendents of any one species, and during the incessant struggle of all species to increase in

> numbers, th[illegible] more diversified the descendents become the better will be their chance of success in the battle of life. (225)

In *The Sea of Cortez* Steinbeck critically reviews teleology in the light of Darwinism that immensely influenced him and after the arguments of Darwin, Steinbeck disregards teleology as a philosophic concept arguing for a different concept 'non-teleology.' *The Sea of Cortez* is all about Steinbeck's ontological searches, for Steinbeck speculates a bit clumsily but expansively about creation, sin, organized religion and existence of God. He began his approach with Darwinian trend with deviations at the middle to end with a concept, which is absolutely a Steinbeck concept–the non-teleological concept.

Steinbeck's progress from transcendententalism through scientific observation to pragmatism is due to his knowledge from John Dewey that, "the appeal to experience in philosophy was coincident with the emancipation of science from occult essences and causes... it sprang from the desire to command nature by observing her instead of anticipating her inorder to deck her with aesthetic garlands and hold her with theological chains. (*Essays in Experimental Logic* 62). Emersonian transcendentalism held nature by theological chains. Since Steinbeck wanted to command nature by observing her so he turned to pragmatism and experienced life and nature "as immense and operative world of diverse and interacting elements" (*EEL* 7). To reach this end one essentially needs the knowledge of physical sciences, because without the physical sciences one's experience is bound to remain incomplete for it cannot

know the process of interacting elements. Steinbeck in *Sea of Cortez* searched for these interacting elements. Moreover as a pragmatist he could not neglect sciences. Because John Dewey says neglecting science "that deal specifically with facts of natural and social environment leads to side tracking of moral foresee into an unreal self" (*Human Nature and Conduct* 10).

Dewey was convinced that science could provide the standard of value judgement. To the question, where does man discover regulating norms of the traditional moral and religious standards, Dewey answered "for the most part the findings of natural sciences" (Stumff, 419). Therefore for a real understanding of physical and social environment, Steinbeck started observing nature. In the course of the observation he did not treat science as merely physical, he did so to follow Dewey's argument that "many remediable suffering of the world is due to the fact that physical science is looked upon as merely physical" (*Human Nature and Conduct* 10). So to put an end to "the impossible attempt to live in two unrelated worlds" physical and spiritual, Steinbeck with his friend Ed. Ricketts went to the Sea of California. He went there with the hope to locate the point of effective endeavor and to see for himself the evolution of life of animals—the unicellular to multi-cellular and the influence of natural objects like the sea, moon, and tide on the formation of life and life process of animals and man.

So as a naturalist and a pragmatist he had turned to the physical sciences for finding better consolidation to his philosophical searches. Above all as a novelist he turned to physical sciences because the original tradition of novel, which, as Eisinger says, "was

observational, realistic and analytical, it drew its habits of mind and its mode of discourse from science" (14).

Through the achievements of natural science, especially by Darwinism, Steinbeck and Ed. Ricketts tried to interpret life and the cosmic unity in the sea of California. Steinbeck says, "Our curiosity was not limited but was wide and horizonless as that of Darwin" (*Sea of Cortez* 2). Steinbeck begins his search with evolution of species and proceeds far to the cosmic unity and finds "moon, sea and tide are one."

Studying the life of animals Steinbeck wanted to interrelate the cosmic entities by philosophy and science in the tradition of the late nineteenth country American philosophers and theologians like James McCosh, John Bascom, Edward Hitchcock and John Fiske whose continuity of thought was threatened by the discoveries of Newton and Darwin. In such a context Fiske took both science and philosophy for cosmic interpretation, the others submitted to theology. In cosmic interpretation Steinbeck is similar to John Fiske.

Fiske regarded it as his life's work to develop a social physics to discover the laws which govern human relations in the same manner in which the laws of Newtonian mechanics govern the physical events (Werkmeister 96). Fiske's cosmic philosophy was founded on the recognition of an absolute power manifested in and through the world of phenomena and it consisted in synthesis of scientific truth into a universal truth, science dealing with the order for the phenomenal manifestation of the absolute "power." Fiske's opinion on science and philosophy is "While science studies the part, philosophy studies the whole, while science in its highest

development must be a synthesis of all general doctrine." (39). Fiske thought that matter is unknowable and immutable. Fiske says, "We only know a group of co-existent states of consciousness which we call the perception of resistance, expansion and colour or odour." (John Fiske, *OCPBDE*, Vol.1, 40). Fiske says, equally we do not know motion but

> We know sequential states of consciousness produced by minor alterations in the muscles of the eye... in the act of attending to the moving object. Nor do we know force but we know continued force modifications of our consciousness which we are compelled to regard as the manifestations of force, or do we even know consciousness in the relation of co-existence and sequence, likeness and unlikeness. (*OCPBDE* 44)

Thus Fiske's observation while interpreting the "part" in the light of the "whole" becomes a subjective interpretation. The "whole" he thinks is the basis which contains the "part." The "whole" then becomes an idealistic "whole." In observing "matter," "force," and "consciousness" Fiske could not connect causally the interaction of matter and force influencing the consciousness. Fiske ignored the continued changes in matter, the mutation and combination of particles within the matter. While force is an external agent bringing changes in matter, Fiske mistook force: as continued modification of consciousness as internal organic and conceptual change in the observer. Science explains the mutability of matter as a continuing

and unending process. Even the nucleus and the electrons and protons outside the nucleus are in a continued process of mutation. Modern nuclear physics claims that electrons and protons can also be mutated. So Fiske's synthesis of science and philosophy; the "part" and the "Whole" is thus unscientific and idealistic. Fiske of course, agrees that "there is going on throughout the universe a continued redistribution of matter and motion" (*OCPBDE* 44).

About the formation of matter Fiske thinks "any composite body is a series of more or less complicated rhythms of which the differential result is at first the integration of its constituent matter accompanied by the re-absorption of its motion or its equivalent" (*OCPBDE* 45). Matter therefore according to Fiske is a complicated rhythmic cycle of "integration," "dissipation" and "diffusion." Fiske's matter analysis advancing so far could not causally correlate the interaction of matter and motion. To Fiske "the sciences were interesting" they led him to the epic of nature and nature led him to God. He gave to evolutionary theory a religious turn taking his cue from New England Transcendentalism: adopted his theory of cosmic evolution to a liberal theology culminating in cosmic theism: a theism which is higher and purer, relatively purer than the anthropomorphic phase defined by theologians (Werkmeister 101).

Steinbeck held almost similar view on science and philosophy. The only difference with Fiske is that Steinbeck ended with cosmic theism without any final verdict on the existence of God. About the existence of God, Fiske reaches the conclusion that there exists a power "to which no limit in times or space is conceivable, of which all phenomena as presented in consciousness are manifestation but which we can know only through these manifestations" (Werkmeister

101). Fiske further says, "and this absolute power may be called God" (Werkmeister 101). Steinbeck's philosophical searches ended with about the same conclusion with the only difference that Steinbeck did not find any power any 'absolute power' to call God. In fact, Steinbeck was silent all through his cosmic quest about the existence of God. Like Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown*, he was in search of God who was unknown to him. In none of his works does he make it clear whether he ever knew the hitherto unknown God. To a pragmatist novelist like Steinbeck, God becomes evident when he serves some practical purpose. Thus Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown* with a God-like pose sacrifices himself for a practical purpose of saving the wasteland and the life of animals and man in the wasteland. In Steinbeck's other works God does not serve any practical purpose so the characters do not talk of God, they do not talk of religion even, as religion does not serve any practical purpose to them. In almost all of his novels there is a conscious indifference to God and religion as they do not do any work of any utility. Steinbeck's characters then ignore religion and any anthropomorphic concept of God. God attributed with human qualities, anthropomorphic shape is not accepted by Steinbeck.

Fiske used cosmic theism as descriptive of a less anthropomorphic phase of religious theory so did Steinbeck through Joseph. According to Fiske the external reality is an "Open secret in so far as it is secret, but in so far as it is open is the world... while the universe is the manifestation of Deity, yet Deity is something more that the Universe." (Fiske *OCPBDE* 224). Steinbeck accepted that the universe is the manifestation of deity but he did not agree with Fiske that deity is something more than the universe. Steinbeck rather felt the universe is part of the deity and deity is part of the

universe. So Joseph Wayne continually asks, "Who is he to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?"

In combining science and philosophy, Steinbeck, like Fiske, turned to idealist interpretation of science as he could not find out in phenomena the scientific relation of cause and effect. It shows the limitation of Steinbeck's view like Fiske's view. While inquiring about the underlying pattern of things, the formation of things in the cosmos, Steinbeck thinks the symbols of things, the formation of things in the cosmos, the symbols and indices used by science are insufficient to explain the pattern of things in *The Sea of Cortez*.

Steinbeck followed the scientific interpretation of the cosmic evolution upto a certain extent. Then, again like the American philosophers, John Fiske and John Eloff Boodin, he retreats back to cosmic unity. Boodin's "Functional Realism" denies any bifurcation of environment and matter. Boodin agrees that,

> Properties are dynamic relations of energies involving time and space. No individual organisation, be it an atom or a human personality, lives to itself or dies to itself but all are members, one of another and the whole cosmic communion with its super individual control. (149)

Steinbeck oversimplifies Boodin's argument and without thinking of Boodin's "dynamic relation" Steinbeck says, "all things are one thing and one thing is all things; Plankton..." (*Sea of Cortez* 217). While Boodin had the opinion that "the whole of nature is but

mutual interaction and in an indefinite number of perspectives in the plurality of integrating systems of energy" (149).

Despite these arguments, Boodin and Steinbeck are similar in their view of life and the cosmos. So Boodin says, "within the cosmic whole no part liveth unto itself but it lives and dies in obedience to the life and order of the whole..." (4). Steinbeck says, "all things are one thing and that one thing is all things"(*Sea of Cortez* 217). Like Boodin, Steinbeck believed that "nothing is wasted in the macrocosm, the equation always balances... nor can there be, any actual waste, but simply varying forms of energy" (*SC* 263).

In many novels of Steinbeck as well, the best models of true friendship are found among the homeless people. Drawing the similarities of Steinbeck and Comte, Ross says that, "they are similar in that both insist upon the necessity of thought based solely upon observation, both deny the power of reason to control man, both believe that the proletariat as a class is the principal repository of social values..." (*Steinbeck and His Critics* 180). There is no evidence, however, that Steinbeck had read the works of August Comte. Ross says, "I don't claim that Steinbeck has ever read Comte" (*Steinbeck and His Critics* 180). Furthermore, Steinbeck himself says in a letter to the Editor, *Colorado Quarterly* "recently a critic proved by parallel passages that I had taken my whole philosophy from a seventeenth century French man of whom I have never heard" ("A Letter on Criticism," February 5, 1955 as in *Steinbeck and His Critics* 52).

Steinbeck suggests, like Fiske, that God is not anthropomorphic. Steinbeck does not think God is an existence far

removed from the universe and accessible only through the offices of an organized Church. In the Emersonian tradition God, for Steinbeck, is immanent in the universe. Through Joseph Wayne, Steinbeck stresses God in man. How close Joseph Wayne is to Steinbeck himself, is clear when we see Steinbeck saying this directly in *Sea of Cortez* "I am the rook, I am the rain, I should know when I will rain" (*Sea of Cortez* 75).

Thus, Steinbeck's close observation of human beings and the ideas of the philosophers that molded him wield together a version that is essentially humanistic. Steinbeck both in his social views and in his philosophical ideas held a humanistic view, a view for compassion for the social problems especially in solving the problem of poverty. In solving philosophical problems he held a simple pragmatic phenomenological interpretation. Both are humanistic in appeal. Although the term humanism has shaded meanings, Steinbeck's humanism may be termed as fundamental humanism for it emphasized on the existence of man and a healthy human relation in a society. In his philosophical interpretation, he was ready to accept as much as concerned man in finding his position in the Cosmos. He did not accept ideas that did not emphasize the worldly affairs of man on earth. So love for man and faith in man alone constitute his social and philosophical ideas. His novels are the embodiment of this humanistic appeal. In *Sea of Cortez* Steinbeck observes animals and natural phenomena with the intention to find a simple connection between animals, man and nature to reveal man's cosmic connection as an antithesis to alienation created by material expansion and war in modern society.

The Sea of Cortez (1941)

Steinbeck along with his friend Ed. Ricketts spent some time at sea, the sea of California, they went to observe animal life and collect various species. In their quest they were inspired by Darwin to find something to corroborate Darwin's assertion. Steinbeck says, "our curiosity was not limited but was as wide and horizonless as that of Darwin" (*SC* 2). Both the friends hoped that they would contribute remarkably to the totality of scientific knowledge, "we knew that what we would see and record and construct would be warped as all knowledge patterns are warped" (*SC* 2). Both Steinbeck and Ricketts installed their voyage and search in such a period when,

> Hitler was invading Denmark and moving up towards Norway; there was no telling when the invasion of England might begin... Hitler marched into Denmark and into Norway. France had fallen, the Maginot line was lost -- - We did not know it but we knew the daily catches of every boat within four hundred miles. (*SC* 7-8)

Steinbeck observed animals and tried to connect animal behavior with human behavior as an enlarged form of animal behavior. The murder instinct in Homo-Sapiens Steinbeck observed is related to the war and murder instinct of the Cary fish:

> It is a diagnostic trait of Homo-Sapiens that groups of individuals are periodically infected with a feverish nervousness which causes the

> individual to turn on and destroy, not only his own kind, but the works of his own kind. (*SC* 17)

Despite the similarity of behavior of man and animals, Steinbeck does not equate men with animals. Steinbeck differentiates human beings from animals:

> Some species like bees and spiders even create complicated homes, but they do it with the fluids and process of their own bodies. They make little impression on the world. But the world is furrowed and cut, torn and blasted by man, its flora has been swept away and changed; its mountains torn down by man: its flat land littered by the debris of living. (*SC* 87)

Human beings are superior to animals by their thinking power and ability to change the environment. But human beings are also influenced by natural phenomena. For example, Steinbeck shows how the moon and the tides influence, men, animals and even machines.

> Tidal effects are mysterious and dark in the soul and it may well be noted that even today the effect of the tides is more valid and strong and wide spread than is generally supposed. For instance, it has been reported that radio reception is related to the rise and fall of the Labrador tides and that there may

> be a relation between tidal rhythms and the recently observed fluctuations in the speed of light. (*SC* 33)

From this observation of influence of tide Steinbeck infers that, "One could safely predict that all physiological process correspondingly might be shown to be influenced by the tides, could we but read the indices with sufficient delicacy" (*SC* 33).

The moon, another natural phenomenon, Steinbeck shows, influences animals and human beings, "consider then the effect of a decrease in pressure on gonads turgid with eggs or sperm already almost bursting and waiting the slight extra pull of discharge" (*SC* 33).

Steinbeck thus shows that man is the creation of natural objects, and natural phenomena influences his physical and psychic being. The psychic being which makes man superior to other animals is influenced by nature. Like animals, man for his survival makes a group; in the group there are feuds and skirmishes for survival, "in his fight for dominance he has pushed out others of his species who were not so fit to dominate" (*SC* 95). The survival process of man is the action of man and man's attempt to reshape nature favorably. Man makes his own way of life counteracting with nature, himself being a part of nature and creating paraphernalia which are also part of man.

> [Man's] drive is in external things: property, houses, money, concepts of power. He lives in his cities and factories in his business and job and art. But

> having projected himself into these complexities he is them. His house, his automobiles are a part of him and a large part of him. (*SC* 87)

Steinbeck accepts the progress of science in explaining the underlying pattern of things, but mentions the limitation of science in discovering the causal relation in the universal patterning. He argues, "the pattern which it indexes however, would be real but not intellectually appreciable because the pattern goes everywhere and in everything and cannot be encompassed by finite minds..." (*SC* 149). So he comes to synthesis by non-teleology and tries to find solution of "anomalies" and minute "differentials" which science could not bring into calculation for solving the patterning problems. In his own words, "this deep underlying pattern inferred by non-teleological thinking crops up everywhere- a relational thing, surely opposing factors on different levels, as reality and potential are related" (*SC* 150). Elaborating "reality" and "potential"—reality being the macrocosm and potential the microcosm– he says that reality and potential are inter connected but the relation must not be considered as causative. Steinbeck notes "it simply exists, it is, things are merely expressions of it, as it is expression of them" (*SC* 150). Reality is the whole and potential is the part.

Steinbeck stresses more on the importance of the whole because he says, "the whole is necessarily everything, the whole world of fact and fancy, body and psyche, physical fact and spiritual truth, individual and collective life and death, macrocosm and microcosm, conscious and unconscious, subject and object" (*SC* 151). Steinbeck thus sums up the "whole" as "the whole picture is

prototyped by 'IS' the deepest word of deep ultimate reality, not shallow or partial as reasons are, but deeper and participating possibly encompassing the oriental concept of being" (*SC* 151). But the oriental concepts of being are metaphysical. Steinbeck then comes to the synthesis on universal patterning of things that the residue of logical arguments on patterning of things reminds us of the medieval philosophers:

> The psychic or spiritual residua remaining after the most careful physical analysis, or the physical remnants obvious, particularly to us of the twentieth century, in the most honest and disciplined spiritual speculations of medieval philosophers all bespeak such a pattern. (*SC* 149)

The "residua" or the "minute differentials, the 0.001 percentages" in universal patterning is of more significance to Steinbeck.

Steinbeck's thought process which started with a scientific outlook gets diverted to mysticism, His thought process has not been finally welded, in significant form, into the union of spirit and matter by science that Steinbeck so obviously yearned for.

Steinbeck was quite conscious that he could not solidify his thought process. He confided his unsuccessful attempt in working out the vastness of the universal patterning in a letter to George Albee in 1933. "I am neither a scientist nor a profound investigator. But I am experiencing an emotional vastness in working this out" (*LIL* 89).

Steinbeck's inference that "all things are one thing and that one thing is all things-plankton" (*SC* 216), is mystic, since in mysticism "distinction of individuality disappear." Historically in philosophy, mysticism appears as a protest against mechanical fashions of representing the divine and its relation to man and the world, "but in its impatience of separation it overlaps the conditions of thought altogether" (Baldwin 124). Steinbeck in his observation of the mechanism of universal patterning has overlapped the conditions in such a way that he has concluded with "a union so immediate that the distinction of subject and object disappears which involves the suppression or the conscious Persian" (Baldwin 125). Thus Steinbeck's observation turns to mysticism. He finds a unit of the microcosm and the macrocosm;

> we tried to say that in the macrocosm nothing is wasted, the equation always balances. The elements which the fish elaborated into an individual physical organism, a microcosm go back again into the undifferentiated macrocosm which is the great reservoir. There is not nor can there be, any actual waste, but simply varying form of energy. To each group, of course, there must be waste—the dead fish to man, the broken pieces to gulls, the bones to some and the scales to others— but to the whole there is no waste. The great organism, life, takes it all and uses it all. (*SC* 263)

About cosmic life, Steinbeck held a mystic unity but about the history of human civilization he held "our history is as much a product of torsion and stress as is of unilinear drive" (*SC* 264). He elaborates;

> Among men, it seems, historically at any rate, that process of co-ordination and disintegration follow each other with great regularity, and the index of the co-ordination is the measure of the disintegration which follows. (*SC* 264)

This natural integration and disintegration determines human behavior morality and human society. Steinbeck says:

> There is a strange duality in the human which makes for an ethical paradox. We have definition of good qualities and bad; not changing things, but generally considered good and bad throughout the ages and throughout the species. Of the good, we think always of wisdom, tolerance, kindness, generosity, humility and the qualities of cruelty, greed, self-interest, graspingness and rapacity are universally considered undesirable. And yet in our structure of society, the so called and considered good qualities are invariable concomitants of failure, while

> the bad ones are the cornerstones of success. (*SC* 96)

So the bad people rule the world and the good people are threatened to extinction. Despite that, man feels that the "good" should rule, they should win but they do not. This ethical paradox continues in humanity. So Steinbeck concluded that good and bad will continue to exist paradoxically as they are. However, Steinbeck did not give the verdict that "bad" must not exist and only "good" shall reign. But in his anti-war attitude, Steinbeck favored the "good" (anti-war views). He supported neither the Nazis nor the allied forces thinking that war was a totally "bad" thing threatening human existence.

In *Sea of Cortez,* Steinbeck's observation of nature leads him to a common man's philosophy that means an easy acceptability of things as they are because a man's over-thought will lead him to uneasiness, "the whole structure of his would be endangered if he permitted himself to think" (*SC* 41). Steinbeck then draws a simple conclusion that "we are no better than animals; in fact, in a lot of ways we aren't as good" (*SC* 69). So the murder trait in man in wars is like animals, "the murder trait of our species is as regular and observable... (*SC* 17). Man, Steinbeck thinks is, a simple creature, a combination of "potentially all things too, greedy and cruel, capable of great love or great hatred, of balanced or unbalanced socalled emotions. This is the way he is-one factor in a surge of striving" (*SC* 165).

Steinbeck understands that his philosophy formed out of his observation both in the sea and the society making a hypothesis of

'laws of thought' and 'laws of things' interlinked as 'part of one evolving matrix' and his beliefs that moon, tide influences rocks, animals and man equally, is not an absolutely true hypothesis. But he willfully does not like to discard his hypothesis; Steinbeck explains:

> There is one great difficulty with a good hypothesis. When it is completed and rounded, the corners smoothed and the contents cohesive and coherent, it is likely to become a thing in itself, a work of art. It is then like a finished sonnet or painting completed. (*SC* 180)

Steinbeck argues, his beliefs may contradict his findings both in the sea and the society his "beliefs persist long after their factual bases have been removed and practices based on beliefs are often carried on, even when the beliefs which stimulated them have been forgotten" (*SC* 180). So his hypothesis remains a common man's hypothesis on common phenomena with a slight intellectual polish. Steinbeck does not claim that he had any "Socratic" mission to perform; he tried to evolve a common thought process to make the life process of the "mediocre" man undisturbed, unperturbed and unagitated from the "dangers of unease and disquietude" (*SC* 258).

Sea of Cortez was Steinbeck's attempt to reaffirm his biological concept of man, contrasting man with other species of animals. Immediately after *Sea of Cortez*, Steinbeck published *The Moon is Down* (1942) and *Once There Was a War* (1942). *The Moon is Down* in fiction and *Once There Was a War* in nonfiction reveal

Steinbeck's concern with the social, political and economic complexities that are created by war.

The Moon is Down (1942)

The Moon is Down bears Steinbeck's lackadaisical attitude to totalitarianism, war and his critical attitude to democracy and humanism. Steinbeck did not like totalitarianism as a form of government because it is against democracy and democratic fervor. The Russo-German non-aggression pact 1938 before the second great War between the two totalitarian governments in Germany and Russia shocked Steinbeck. Steinbeck believed democracy considerably better since democracy assures individual liberty and rule of the majority in a more tolerable way. Steinbeck had deep humanistic feeling for the suffering mass, but the fear of totalitarian extremism prevented him from turning to Communism. Steinbeck had never been a member of the American Communist party. Steinbeck also could not favor democracy unconditionally as it always favored the brute majority.

In *The Moon is Down*, Steinbeck aims at contrasting the two forms of government: totalitarianism and democracy. No form of government was above merits and demerits, in Steinbeck's consideration. As a novelist, he found individualism partly or totally curtailed. So he could not suggest any one of the forms of governments totally free of defects. Berry Bertram rightly mentions, "Steinbeck's plan is to contrast Nazism and Democracy as two opposed social systems so that we hate the one and love the other. Instead it advocates by inference a third which is neither Nazism nor

Democracy but a vague kind of government" (*Steinbeck and His Critics*, 117).

In *The Moon is Down* the invading army comes from a totalitarian country (Italy) to conquer a country, with a democratic government (Norway). The invading army tries to suppress the conquered people. Colonel Lanser of the conquering army misunderstands the conquered people who were democratic, thinking that if he could convince the Mayor, he could convince the whole people of the country to work for the invading army. He says, "Mayor Orden is more than a Mayor. He is his people. He knows what they are doing, thinking without asking because he will think what they will think" (*TMD* 25). He mistakes them as people under a fascist government. But in face of opposition of the people and the coal miners, the invaders hopelessly fail in their mission. The people remained obedient to their country, they remained submissive to the democratic leadership, very few join the invaders. The Mayor of the city, Orden, is arrested by Colonel Lanser of the invading army, and he is pressed hard to ask his people to submit to the invading army. The Mayor refuses. He says, "they elected me not to be confused, six town boys were murdered this morning... the people do not fight war for sport" (*TMD* 7). Orden goes on showing his dislike for the army as well as the totalitarianism which they represent, saying, "some people accept appointed leadership and obey them, but my people have elected me they made me and they can unmake me" (*TMD* 12).

The Moon is Down emphatically shows the futility of the war. The soldiers are exhausted and their cry is to get rid of the manacles that the war had bound them with. They understand neither the purpose of the war nor their involvement in it. The homesick soldiers

and officers often become lonely and are isolated, as they cannot justify their involvement in the war. They uselessly try to subjugate the conquered people. The invaders cannot break the spirit of the invaded people, so the hope of the soldiers and officers to become heroes through the war become fake and the army only mechanically carries the order, they do not spontaneously participate in the war. The warring spirit of the soldiers and officers are marred by their isolation, and their homesickness.

The soldiers and officers look for loving hearts to come out of their loneliness and sickness, they want a temporary relief but they do not get any honest love in the conquered country, because they are people divided into two groups: conqueror and the conquered, so no natural human relationship develops in that divided humanity. Annie throws hot water on a soldier when he proposes love. Molly kills Lt. Tonder when Tonder proposes love to Molly. Steinbeck's anti-war attitude shows the war as an evil around which both the invaders and the invaded people move with their shadowy existence, they are not normal men, they are suspicious people afraid of each other. Steinbeck shows how, in war, rational thought is eclipsed, people cannot think what they ought to think. War strangulates virtues; discrimination of vice and virtue is overcast with confusions and misunderstanding. Mayor Orden rightly understands war.

> In marching, in mobs in football games and in war outline becomes vague, real things become unreal and fog creeps over the mind. Tension and excitement, weariness, movement all merge in one great gray frame, so that when it is over,

> it is hard to remember how you killed men and ordered them to be killed. The other people who were not there, tell you, what it was like and you say vaguely. "Yes, I guess that's what it was." (*TMD* 17)

Lanser in turn argues that in war both the invader and the invaded become the victim of such an invincible circumstance that they cannot retreat from killing or be killed. Lanser says, "This is war. Don't you know, you'll have to kill all of us or in time we'll kill all of you" (*TMD* 35). Steinbeck's socio-political consciousness was always against war. He thought war could never solve nor can ever solve the human problems as man is not an animal to solve problems by war. At the outbreak of Korean war he expressed his indignation against war and asked his friends to raise anti-war slogans. In a letter to Bobskow on July 1950, Steinbeck wrote:

> I can't think that wars can solve things but something must stop this thing or the world is done and gone into a black chaos that sharp ages shine. If that is what we are headed for, I do not live to see it, and I won't because I will fight it. God knows you and we are far from perfect but we are far better than that. We can make a noise even if not many people listen. (*LIL* 402)

A decade after the Korean War, at the beginning of the conflagration in Vietnam, Steinbeck held the same attitude. Although he had sent his son to Vietnam, Steinbeck still felt repugnant towards war. In a letter to Elizabeth Otis, August 31, 1967 Steinbeck wrote:

> I understand your feeling about the war. We seem to be sinking deeper into the mire. It is true that we are. I am pretty sure by now that the people running the war have neither conception nor control of it... .
>
> I know, we cannot win this war... and it seems to me that it designs for us to sink deeper into it, more and more of us. When we have put down a firm foundation of our dead and when we have by a slow losing process been sucked into the texture of south east Asia, we will never be able nor will we want to get out. (*LH*, 847)

Ten years before the end of the Vietnam War, Steinbeck could foresee the defeat of the United States in the war. It is Steinbeck's keen observing ability of the social and political scenario that enabled him to foretell most accurately the end of the Vietnam War. Steinbeck out of his habitual dislike for wars could not approve of America's involvement in the Vietnam War. He believed that invaders can conquer a country but not its people. In *The Moon is Down* the invaders try their best to make the invaded people their

friends but they fail miserably, they simply remain as the occupying army. Steinbeck believed such a state of suspicion and hostility between the rulers and the ruled can never form a stable government congenial to a smooth civil society. So, Steinbeck thought, such sanguinary invasion and conquest ultimately brought nothing beneficial to civil life. Steinbeck's comment on the Vietnam War is pertinent here:

> If we should win this war, in the old sense of defeating and deadening the so-called enemy, then we would become just another occupying army, and such an enemy loses contact with the place occupied. But we are not winning in that sense and we will not. (*LIL* 847)

Steinbeck did not like to see the American army as an "occupying army" in Vietnam. In *The Moon is Down* as well Steinbeck shows his dislike for the occupying army. When Col. Lanser, chief of the occupying army, presses the Mayor for submission and coal extraction, Orden argues in favour of people's leadership, free people and people's government. He does not submit to the colonel. From their conversation two different kinds of people and people's leadership become evident:

> The Colonel said, "you will be doing them a service if you keep them in order."
>
> "A service?"

> "Yes, a service. It is your duty to protect them from harm.
>
> They will be in danger if they are rebellious. We must get the coal, you see. Our leaders do not tell us how; they order us to get. But you have your people to protect. You must keep them safe... Orden said, a little proudly, "My people don't like to have others think for them. May be they are different from your people... I am sure of [it]. (*TMD* 12)

Explaining how decisions are taken and executed in a democratic society, Orden explains, "you won't believe this, but it is true: authority is in the town. I don't know how or why, but it is so. This means that we cannot act quickly as you can, but when a direction is set we all act together" (*TMD* 14). Along with the Mayor Dr. Winter goes on differentiating the two forms of government and their leadership:

> They think that just because they have only one leader and one head, we are all like that. They know that ten heads lopped off will destroy them, but we are a free people, and in a time of need leaders pop up like mushrooms. (*TMD* 74)

War and conquering countries become meaningless to soldiers and officers alike. So Lt. Tonder, the only prude□ t officer who could foresee the consequence of war, who had some ability to look into

things with some insight, laughs at conquest, comparing it to fly-paper. Tonder says:

> "Conquest after conquest, deeper and deeper into molasses." His laughter choked him and he coughed into his handkerchief. "May be the Leader is crazy. Flies conquer the flypaper. Flies capture two hundred miles of new flypaper. (*TMD* 49)

While the common soldiers and lower rank officers could not actually figure out the role of war in their personal life and in the lives of people, the conquest and the effect of conquest, Colonel Lanser knew what war really meant, in the long run.

> He knew that war is treachery and hatred, the muddling of incompetent generals, the torture and killing and sickness and tiredness until at last it is over and nothing has changed except for new weariness and new hatreds. Lanser told himself, he was a soldier, given orders to carry out. He was not expected to question or to think, but only to carry out orders: and he tried to put aside the sick memories of the other war and certainly that this would be the same. (*TMD* 17)

The Moon is Down is about the futility of war. Divided humanity, harshness of military life, homesickness of the soldiers and

officers all these show that whatever glory the totalitarianists and democrats may attribute on war, war never glorifies humanity. A war is the tale of man killing man without any ethical basis; and making millions of people homeless and million others restless. Steinbeck personally found no glory in war. He had no high estimation about the wars that he had seen in his life-time: the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. During the Vietnam War Steinbeck visited Vietnam on January 4, 1967 and in a letter to Elizabeth Otis Steinbeck wrote about the Vietnam War:

> This has been a good trip and many ways a sad one. I haven't dwelt on the killed and the wounded. I've seen other wars and have hated those too. But every dead (and many of them have been my friends) breaks your heart in a way that can never be repaired. If I could shorten the war by one hour by staying here, I would never come home. (*LIL* 846)

Steinbeck held totalitarian and democratic leadership equally responsible for creating wars. He believed that democratic leaders may sometime also turn totalitarian when they become too much enthusiastic on the opinion of the majority. Steinbeck had clear concept of forms of government and the way their leaders are elected; he held that:

> The elections are vague. They mean nothing in themselves. They are a sop:

> thrown to our congress for the purpose of getting more money. The leaders are venial and shortsighted ... (*LIL* 847)

Democratic leadership elected in such a way may call wars because they are "short sighted" leaders who want "more money" and cannot foresee the damage that the war causes to humanity. Steinbeck criticizes such leadership in both totalitarian and democratic forms and shows what wars bring in the long run under their leadership. In *The Moon is Down* Steinbeck show clearly his abhorrence to war. Steinbeck did not even like the battle for survival; in *In Dubious Battle* he called it a "dubious" battle suggesting that there might be other ways of solving the problem of survival of the striking laborers. In almost all of his novels beginning with *Cup of Gold*, Steinbeck shows the futility of war and the presumed heroism that a war may accrue: Henry Morgan ravages towns and plunders them but ultimately discovers himself hopelessly alone.

Scholars have dealt with Steinbeck's major works and have ignored *The Moon is Down* as a minor work. In fact, *The Moon is Down* is equally important like his other major works. Despite the apparent variety of themes of his works, Steinbeck was consistent on some points: hatred of war is one of them. Scholars did not find this consistence in *The Moon is Down*, for example, Edwin Berry Bergrum says, "When the war against fascism demanded a still more comprehensive social awareness, he broke under the strain in *The Moon is Down* and lapsed under the amiable superficiality of *Tortilla Flat* with *Cannery Row*" (*Steinbeck and His Critics* 105). But Steinbeck had not been superficial in either *Tortilla Flat* or *Cannery Row*. He had always a definite philosophy to be embodied in his

novels and stories. The logical arrangement of his philosophy may be accepted or refuted but undeniably he had a definite philosophy a definite point of view in almost all of his works; in this sense *The Moon is Down* is definitely an anti-war novel. Steinbeck's comprehensive understanding of the society, politics and a clear world-view led him to hold this anti-war attitude. *The Moon is Down* is an anti-war novel proving the futility of war by pinpointing the degradations that war brings for humanity, the misery that it creates for both the conqueror and the conquered.

Once Tthere Was a War (1942)

Steinbeck's anti-war attitude in *The Moon in Down* gets a deeper and clearer shape in *Once There Was a War*, which is an analytical, journalistic report on the Second World War, on his war experiences on the war fronts in Italy, England and Africa. Both in Italy and in England, Steinbeck saw the same ugliness of war, the same isolation that war creates in the soldiers and in the people.

With the advancement of civilization, Steinbeck thought man should develop a dislike for war, frequency of wars in the human history should go down in number. Steinbeck believed that since the Grecian civilization man had advanced thousands of years, so modern man should no more think what once the Grecians thought of war. "In ancient Greece it was said that there had to be a war at least every twenty years, because every generation of man has to know what it was like" (*OTWW*, Introduction). As an advancement of civilization, Steinbeck thinks, "with us we must forget, or we could never indulge in the murderous nonsense again" (*OTWW*, Introduction). Up to a

certain period man needed wars to settle controversies among themselves, says Steinbeck:

> Our civil war has been called the last of gentleman's war and the so-called Second World War is the last of the global wars. The next war, if we are so stupid as to let it happen, will be the last of any kind. There will be no one to remember anything. And that is how stupid we are, we do not in a biological sense deserve survival. (*OTWW*, Introduction)

Man cannot involve himself in too much of "mutational" disputes, other wise, like other species, man will be extinguished from the earth.

> Many other species have disappeared from the earth through errors in mutational judgements. There is no reason to suppose that we are immune from the immutable law of nature which says that over armament, over-ornamentation, and, in most cases, over-integration are symptoms of coming extinction (*OTWW*, Introduction).

War takes from man his individual identity, his freedom of thought. He becomes a machine, as Steinbeck says, "man cannot be

treated as individual on this troopship. They are simply units... they are engines which must be given fuel to keep them from stumping... there is no way of considering them as individuals" (*OTWW* 11). The soldiers with their uniforms look "like long rows of mushrooms, their rifles are leaning against their knees. They have no identity, no personality" (*OTWW* 11).

Irrespective of their forms of governments, the politicians and the statesmen of the warring countries have in their brains only "states" to conquest, they do not think either of the "men" in the war front or "men" in the countries: "the red necked politicians foaming with enthusiasm and burbon whisky, screaming the eagle on a bunting covered platform while his audience longed for the watermelon and potato salad to come" (*OTWW* 43). While the people think of everyday necessities, their basic requirements, the politicians and statesmen go on uselessly delivering lectures to motivate the people with their high hopes that the war would bring for them. People and leaders then stand separated.

Leaders think war important for territorial expansion, people think for their survival. Leaders purposively build artificial walls of separation, of enmity between man and men to such an extent that they divide things of universal appeal like music and song:

> The powers hesitated considering whether it was a good idea to let a German song... become the favorite song of the British army which the Americans were beginning to experiment with a

> close harmony and were putting off beat in it. (*OTWW* 64)

The soldiers then feel that out of their sacrifice in the war field the benefit of the war goes to the profiteers.

> The black markets are flourishing and the operators are not little crooks; but the best people. The soldiers hear that the price of living is going up and wages are following them. A soldier is not a lone man. He usually has a family dependent to a large extent on the money he can allot, and his pay does not increase with the cost of living. (*OTWW* 77)

In *The Cup of Gold*, Steinbeck shows how the great victory of the hero Henry Morgan goes for the benefit of the tradesman; in his non fiction *Once There Was a War*, Steinbeck confirms the same thing showing that the real beneficiaries of any war are the trading class who make profit out of the sacrifice of the soldiers. For this reason the soldiers in *Once There Was a War* are seen isolated from the war; they are isolated from each other, "in the moon light on the deck they look at each other strangely. Men they have known well and soldiered with, are strange and every man is cut off from every other one and in their minds they search the faces of their friends for the dead" (*OTWW* 151).

The soldiers cannot participate whole-heartedly in the war. They cannot be fired by the determination to win the war at the cost of their lives. They think of their lives, of remaining unwounded, of

living with unamputated limbs. They consider their lives more important than the war so, "A great many soldiers carry with them some small articles, some lucky piece of symbol which if they are lucky in battle, takes on an ever-increasing importance. And being lucky in battle means simply not being hurt" (*OTWW* 195).

Sometimes they carry "a Testament bound in steel covers to be carried in their shirt-pockets... who has faith neither in the metal nor in the Testament but they carry" magic articles of all kinds. There will be a smooth stone, an odd shaped piece of metal, small photographs encased in cellophane. "Many soldiers consider the pictures of their wives and parents to be almost protectors from danger" (*OTWW* 196). "One soldier had installed photographs of his children on his pistol" (*OTWW* 196). Someone keeps, a small wooden pig:

> in a bombing he held the pig in his hand and said, "pig, this one is not for us." And in shelling he said, "pig, you know that the one that gets me, gets you." (*OTWW* 197)

The soldiers make a private way of worship so "the association between a man and his amulet becomes not only very strong but very private" (*OTWW* 197). This privatization of ways of worship is

> by no means limited to ignorant or superstitious people. It would seem that in times of great danger and great emotional tumult a man has to reach

> outside of himself for help and comfort, and has to have some supra-personal symbol to hold to. (*OTWW* 198)

Irrespective of their cultural background (the ignorant and the educated), the soldiers depend on this private worship to come out of 'loneliness and littleness' in times of war. Both from material and mental point of view, the soldiers cannot accept the war as an all-solving action.

The war is then a turmoil separated from the soldiers, from the people. The war cannot bind the people and the soldiers morally and ethically together. It is then an isolated attempt of the politicians, of the elites for territorial expansion and economic superiority over others. The mass do not take the war wholeheartedly. In the name of economic superiority and personal aggrandizement, the politicians dismantle their economy and the economic stability of others, causing age long malady which needs ages for remedy; "men in prolonged war are not normal men" (*OTWW* 201).

Hence, the so-called heroic deeds that occur in the prolonged wars are no instinctive heroism. They are the outcome of non-aligned dullness, Steinbeck explains:

> In dullness all kinds of emphases change. Even the instinct for self-preservation is dulled so that a man may do things which are called heroic when actually his whole fabric of reaction is changed. The whole world becomes unreal. You laugh at things which are not ordinarily funny and you

> become enraged at trifles. During this time a kind man is capable of great cruelties and a timid man is capable of great bravery. (*OTWW* 200)

Steinbeck shows the heroic deeds as products of dullness; the participation of the warriors as forced participation to prove that the war and wars in general are meaningless massacre. Through his journalistic report in *Once There Was a War*, Steinbeck shows that the war is an isolated turmoil caused by sentimental issued of the politicians. Moreover, the economic supremacy for which they fight, dismantle their own economy with the only result of a temporary territorial expansion. *The Moon is Down* in fiction and *Once There Was a War* in non-fiction embody Steinbeck's conviction that in war man turns against man, making war a sore on the history of humanity.

Cannery Row (1944)

In *Cannery Row* Steinbeck uses the central figure of Doc to discourse on an individual's quest for a private moral code. Like other Steinbeck heroes who often make their moral codes by themselves, hardly conforming to conventional mores. Doc in *Cannery Row* also frames his own moral law.

Doc has no conventional house and family life. He is a constitution of opposite natures; as Cannery Row itself is a constitution of opposites. Cannery Row, Steinbeck narrates:

> Cannery Row in Montery in California is a poem, a stink, A grating noise, a quality of light, a tone, a habit, a nostalgia, a

> dream. Cannery Row is the gathered and scattered; tin and iron and rust and splintered wood chipped pavement and... Sardine canneries of corrugated iron, restaurants and whorehouse. Its inhabitants are as the man once said, "whores, pimps and gamblers and sons of bitches" by which he meant everybody. Had the man looked through another peephole he might have said, "Saints and angels and martyrs and holy man" and he would have meant the same thing. (*CR* 1)

Doc's self is the creation of opposites reconciled in one entity like Cannery Row. He is a scientist and a mystic, cautious but soft-hearted. He can kill cats for experiments, but can beat a man for being harsh to a dog. He reads a lot, imagines things intelligently, but drinks with illiterate boys of Mac. Imaginative individuals, Steinbeck shows are then the reconciliation of opposites. Doc sympathetically treats the whores, invites them to parties but never goes to brothels. None of Steinbeck's heroes, except Charles in *East of Eden,* are brothel-goers, but all of them are curious and sympathetic to prostitutes, accepting prostitution as a necessary evil for the society. His heroes are socially conscious, but not licentious, never indulge in debauchery. They are careful observers of society and its outcasts.

After *The Moon is Down* and *Once There Was a War,* Steinbeck turned once more to the loose episodic from of *Cannnery Row* to explore private morality. In the loose episodic construction of *Cannery Row* Doc is the thin string that binds the whole book from

the beginning to the end. In the middle of the novel come some outcasts, some marginalized people who leave society and the traditional life pattern. William is first among them. He is a pimp in Dora's whorehouse, Bear Flag. William does not want this life.

> William thought dark and broody thoughts. No one loved him. No one cared about him. They might call him a watchman but he is pimp–a dirty pimp, the lowest thing in the world. And he thought how he had a right to live and be happy like any one else, by God he had. He walked back angrily but his anger went away when he came to the Bear Flag and climbed the steps. (*CR* 10)

Being tired of his vile profession he tries to be free, carefree like Mac and his boys, he wishes to join them whenever he looks at them;

> Through the windows he could see Mac and the boys sitting on the pipes in the vacant lot, dangling their feet in the mellow weeds and taking the sun while they discoursed slowly and philosophically of matters of interest but of no importance. (*CR* 10)

William tries to join Mac and his boys for a thoughtful, free life.

> William began to wish that he could join that good group. He walked out one day and sat on the pipe. Conversation stopped and an uneasy hostile silence fell on the group. After a while William went disconsolately back to the Bear Flag and through the window he saw the conversation sprang up again and it saddened him. He had a dark and ugly face and a mouth twisted with brooding. (*CR* 10)

Mac and his boys do not allow William in their company. Mac says, "But God damn it, I hate a pimp" (*CR* 10).

Hazel is the next outcast. He is the eighth child of his mother, who could not rear him healthily and happily due to poverty. His mother was

> Tired and run down anyway from trying to feed and clothe seven children and their father. She had tried every possible way of making money– paper flowers, mushrooms at home, and rabbits for meat and fur. (*CR* 17)

But she failed, Hazel grew up;

> Did four years in grammar school, four years in reform school and did not learn anything in either place. Reform schools

> are supposed to teach viciousness and criminality but Hazel did not pay enough attention. He came out of reform school as innocent of viciousness as he was of fractions and long divisions. (*CR* 17)

While narrating the life of Hazel, Steinbeck the socially conscious novelist comments how poverty and socalled reform schools deform a growing child, incriminate him. However, Hazel gets shelter in the palace flophouse with Mac and the boys. He helps Doc, collect animals for Doc's experiments in the western Biological Laboratory.

Like Danny in *Tortilla Flat*, Mac has four other mates; Eddie Gay, Jones, and Hughie in the palace flophouse. They all do petty jobs and finacially support each other to make a family all by themselves. They are happy with their family. Only Henry sometime mourns over his ill fate whenever "he was left alone, he mourned formally for a while but actually he felt a sense of relief" (*CR* 77).

There are people, such as Mr Malloy, who make money out of people's misery. Thus Mr. Malloy rents his unused larger boiler pipes as sleeping quarters: "With a piece of tar paper over the end a square of carpet over the other, they made comfortable bedrooms, although men used to sleeping curled up had to change their habits or move out" (*CR* 26).

In *Cannery Row*, in "cosmic Monterey" Steinbeck shows all generous, sympathetic and honest people are poor. It is as if symphony, generosity, honesty are synonymous with poverty and failure, while unkind, dishonest and apathetic people are rich and

successful. Doc thinks over this disparity and asks himself why it happens.

> It has always seemed strange to me. The things we admire in man, kindness and generosity, openness understanding and feeling are the concomitants of failure in our system. And those traits we detest sharpness, greed, acquisitiveness, meanness, egotism and self-interest are the traits of success. And while men admire the quality of the first they love the produce of the second. (*CR* 82)

Doc finds no acceptable answer to this ethical dilemma. Tired of this dilemma Doc consoles himself with a concocted conclusion:

> There is no explaining of a series of misfortunes like that. Every man blames himself. People in their black minds remember sins committed secretly and wonder whether they had caused the evil sequence. One man may put it down to sunspots, while another invoking the law of probabilities does not believe it. (*CR* 83)

Steinbeck shows that the common people are really great, noble.

> They are the virtues, the Graces, the Beauties of the hurried mangled craziness of Monterey and the Cosmic Monterey, where men in fear and hunger destroy their stomachs in the fight to secure certain food, where man hungering for love destroy everything lovable about them. Mac and the boys are the Beauties, the Virtues, the Graces. In the world ruled by tigers with ulcers, rutted by structured bulls, scavenged by blind jackals, Mac and the boys dine delicately with the tigers, fondle the frantic heifers and wrap up the crumbs to feed the sea gulls of Cannery Row. (*CR* 8)

As compared to the "tigers with ulcers," "structured bulls," "scavengers," that is the propertied and the profit minded people, Mac and the boys live a better adjusted, harmonious and complacent life. Steinbeck asks, "what can it profit a man to gain the whole world and to come to his property with gastric ulcer, a blown prostrate and bifocals?" (*CR* 8). To his own question thrown to the world, Steinbeck answers preferring the boys and Mac for they can avoid trap (property) and poison (profit):

> Mac and the boys avoid the trap, walk around the poison, step over the noose while a generation of trapped, poisoned and tressed up men scream at them and call them no goods, come–to–bad–ends,

> blots-on-the-town, thieves, rascals and bums. (*CR* 8)

Steinbeck thinks that nature also prefers and loves Mac and the boys.

> Our Father who art in Nature, who has given the gift of survival to the coyote, the common brown rat, the English sparrow, the house fly and the moth, must have a great and overwhelming love for no-goods and blots-on–the–town and bums, and Mac and the boys. Virtues and graces and laziness and zest. Our Father who art in nature. (*CR* 8)

Steinbeck thinks, Nature loves Mac and the boys for their self complacence and contentment for they are not "ulcered," "strictured," blind "scavengers" crazy for acquisition and avarice, they are so tolerant and ever happy for they do not complain, have no grudge. Mac for example says, "It don't do no good to say I'm sorry. I've been sorry all my life. This ain't no new thing. It's always like this" (*CR* 75). They ungrudgingly accept life without complain and despair. Mac and the boys who represent common men unfortunately have become the outcasts in the novel. Steinbeck is sympathetic to the outcasts saying, "they had become social outcasts. All of their good intentions were forgotten now" (*CR* 80). Steinbeck can see "Mac and the boys were under a cloud–a pale cloud but socially Mac and they boys were beyond the pale" (*CR* 80).

> Socially Mac and the boys were beyond the pale. They drew into themselves and no one could foresee how they would come out of the cloud. For there are two possible reaction to social ostracism—either a man emerges determined to be better, purer and kindlier, or he goes bad, challenges the world and does even worse things. This last is the commonest reaction of the stigma. (*CR* 80)

But Mac and his boys do not follow any of the probable ways that social outcasts usually follow as mentioned by Steinbeck, instead they were unusually "balanced on the scales of good and evil... they were forbearing and patient with one another" (*CR* 80). They love each other and they are kind to animals (the pointer dog Darling and the seagulls). Their only antipathy is towards the establishment and state ceremonies. For example, Mac and his boys sit near the Fourth July Parade ground but they have not the least interest to look at the Parade. "By just turning their heads they can see it, by standing up they can watch it, and by walking two short blocks they can be right beside it. Now I'll bet you a quart of beer, they won't even turn their heads" (*CR* 81). So Mac and his boys stoically react to the established social order.

In *Cannery Row* the two characters that concern the careful readers most are Doc and Mac. Doc himself is a philosopher, a bundle of opposites reconciled, but he thinks Mac and his boys are better philosophers than himself. Doc says,

> "Look at them. There are your true philosophers, I think," he went on, "that Mac and the boys know everything that has ever happened in the world possibly everything that will happen." (*CR* 81)

Doc then comments on the life style of Mac and his boys:

> I think they survive in this particular world better than other people. In a time when people tear themselves to pieces with ambition and nervousness and covetousness, they are relaxed. All of our so-called successful men are sick men, with bad stomachs, and bad souls, but Mac and the boys are healthy and curiously clean. They can do what they want. They can satisfy heir appetites without calling them something else. (*CR* 81)

People who "can satisfy their appetites" calling them appetites without looking for any other meaning of appetite are great people to Doc. Mac and the gang have no money–they are poor but they are not crazy for money. If they had wished they could have had enough of it. Doc says,

> "They could get it," Doc said "They could ruin their lives and get money. Mac has qualities of genius. They're all very clever if they want something. They just

know the nature of things too well to be caught in that wanting." (*CR* 81)

In these two statements underlie the novel's basic philosophical and moral system. These are Doc's statements as the spokesman of Steinbeck. Peter Lisca comments that these two statements "constitute the conceit out of which the novel's episodes are fabricated, episodes which comment on various aspects of civilized man his business, his illusion, his sex drive, and his relations with his fellow man" 201).

Upholding the life of Doc, Mac and the boys Steinbeck draws the attention of his readers to the disparity that a modern society creates. Steinbeck suggests this pernicious disparity in the life of a society should be eliminated. Some concessions should be allowed to the people living in "boiler pipes" and deserted houses so that they may find some opportunities to try their lot for a healthy normal life like other people, so that they do not turn to violence for survival. It is nobility of the people in *Cannery Row* in Monterey that they do not turn violent. If neglected too long, they may not remain patient. Apprehending that they may turn to violent ways, Steinbeck suggests that the elites and rulers should take possible preventive measures by allowing maximum concession to the outcasts.

East of Eden (1951)

East of Eden is Steinbeck's longest novel of five hundred pages divided into fifty-five chapters containing his repeated search for a philosophical solution of man's eternal conflict between virtue and vice. Man in his nature has inherited, Steinbeck believes, "both

the scars of the fire and the impurities which made the fire of necessary" (*EOE* 486). That scar of fire, man has inherited in his being "when once an angry and disgusted God poured molten fire from a crucible to destroy or purify his little handiwork of mud" (*EOE* 486). *East of Eden* ask whether man is to face "destruction" or "purification," with almost all of the chapters repeatedly asking for the solution of this question which is as old as human moral history.

Adam Trask is the hero of the novel. He has a brother Charles. Adam's father sends Adam to the army. When Adam returns from the army, he marries Cathy, and gets twin sons Aaron and Caleb. The Trasks have a good relation with the Hamilton family—Samuel Hamilton is the best man in the Hamilton family and intimately related with the Trask family. Adam's wife Cathy suddenly leaves Adam and his two sons. She becomes a whore and runs a whore house in the city. When Cathy dies, she leaves her ill earnings to her son Aaron. Lee is the Chinese cook in the Trask Family. Conventionally Steinbeck's novels do not have a definite plot to be developed with a beginning, a middle and an end. In his novels, characters come to embody his main point of view.

In *East of Eden* all the characters are grouped in two groups: Alice, Adam, Aaron and Abram represent virtue and Cyrus, Charles, Cathy, Caleb represent vice. They are all placed in Salinas Valley, in a nature full of opposites of droughts and floods, grasses and dust bowls. The Hamiltons were based on Steinbeck's maternal ancestors. Hamiltons being the antecedents of Steinbeck's mother Olive Hamilton, Steinbeck's says, "the physical background of the book is next to grandfather... I remember a friend of my father—a whaling

master named Captain Trask. ... I am relating to every reader the story as though he were reading about his own background" (*JON* 7).

Steinbeck says, "I have put the forces of evil against a potential good" (*JON* 150). In putting evil against good, Steinbeck returns to the Cain and Abel story of the Bible. About the Biblical story Steinbeck says, "this story is the basis of all human neurosis—and it you take 'fall' along with it, you have total of the psychic troubles that can happen to a human" (*JON* 104).

Steinbeck did not think that man could never reach perfection. As a philosopher he believed in the power of man to become perfect with all the imperfections in him. He however, did not believe in absolute perfection of man. As Steinbeck pointed out "it is the duty of the writer to lift up, to extend, to encourage" (*JON* 115).

Steinbeck believed in the potentiality of man. Whereas, other naturalists believe that man is a helpless product in the hands of heredity and environment. Steinbeck believed that man could change both his nature and the external environment to a considerable extent. In the process both heredity and environment reciprocally influence each other.

> It is true we are weak and sick and ugly and quarrelsome but if that all we ever were, we would millennium ago have disappeared from the face of the earth, and a few remnants of fossilized jaw bones, a few teeth in strata of limestone would be the only mark our species would have left on the earth. (*JON* 115)

Steinbeck was not optimistic about the total disappearance of evil from the earth. He conceded the existence of bad against good and good against bad acting as catalysts to each other, showing that "every man has Cain in him" (*JON* 128). Steinbeck's non-teleological philosophy essentially propagates that, both good and bad had been on earth and will remain so until the end. So commenting on his character patterning in *East of Eden*, Steinbeck says, "Aaron is not as important as Cal but he is surely as important in the sense that he is a catalyst of Cal" (*JON* 151).

Journal of a Novel is "a kind of arguing ground for the story" for the story of *East of Eden*. In the form of a diary *Journal of a Novel* contains the daily reports about the planning and patterning of the novel, that Steinbeck recorded while writing *East of Eden*. Thus this "document casts a flood of light on the author's mind and on the nature of the creative process" (*JON*, Intro.).

Steinbeck's original plan for *East of Eden* "was to set down in story for his two small sons the full record of their ancestors from the time they moved westward to Salinas Valley just after the civil war" (*Saturday Review*, 35, Aug. 30, 1952, 4). Later Steinbeck changed the family chronicle to a chronicle of universal conflict of the incompletion of human beings.

In East of Eden characters representing good begin with Adam. Conventionally in Steinbeck's works, good people are always poor, honesty runs hand in hand with poverty, poor people are honest and they can feel for the poor. Adam had also "developed a love for the poor people, he could not have conceived if he had not been poor himself" (*EOE* 45). Adam is innocent having a clean slate soul. Until

he was taken to jail on charge of vagrancy, he did not know blackness in man. Having been in jail, "he learned how man can consider other man as beasts" (*EOE* 45).

Adam becomes experienced in the world and begins to know human nature. To Louis he says, "some men are friends with the whole world in their hearts and there are others that hate themselves and spread their hatred around like on a hot dread" (*EOE* 111).

But Adam's nature is so simple, naïve and honest that he does not understand evil. He falls in love with the most monstrous character of the novel—Cathy. Thus, in *East of Eden* the best and the worst are placed contrapuntally to test each other. Cathy marries Adam but develops a clandestine love relation with Charles, Adam's brother. Cathy gets twin sons by Charles. Despite knowing full well her fickle nature, Adam loves Cathy. One day Cathy shoots Adam, and, leaving behind her twin sons, flees from Adam's house. Adam, a tolerant man, coninues to love Cathy, Adam says, "I guess I would not have minded so much if she had wanted my death. That would have been a kind of love. But I was an annoyance not an enemy" (*EOE* 211). Adam wonders whether it is Cathy's beauty that had attracted him. Adam asks Shamuel, "was she very beautiful Shamuel?" Shamuel answers that Cathy was not as Adam imagined her. Adam's imagination is beautiful not Cathy's appearance. Shamuel says, "to you she was beautiful, because you built her. I don't think you ever saw her—only your creation" (*EOE* 211).

Cathy's replica within Adam's mind is beautiful. Cathy is born vicious and she does not change until her death. The contrapuntal placement of Adam and Cathy is the eternal placement

of good against bad. Why bad things come on earth is a question to Steinbeck himself. In *Journal of Novel* Steinbeck attempts to explain bad things, especially Cathy's badness,

> Cathy is by nature a whore... why Adam Trask should have fallen in love is anybody's guess but I think it was because he [Adam] himself was trained to operate best under a harsh master and simply transferred that to a tough mistress... Cathy is a monster-- don't think they do not exist. If one can be born with a twisted and deformed face or body one can surely also come into the world with a malformed soul. (*JON* 39-41)

Steinbeck made Cathy represent evil. As he says, "she [Cathy] is a little piece of the monster in all of us" (*JON* 97). Steinbeck explains why Cathy shoots Adam:

> "Her life is one of revenge on the other people because of a vague feeling of her own lack. A man born blind must in a sense hate eyes as well as envy them. A blind man might wish to remove all of the eyes of the world." (*JON* 124)

So out of her "lack" (incompletion) and the "envy" born out of that lack; that incompletion, Cathy shoots Adam and leaves her twin sons. If Cathy had understood her "lack" she could have tried to overcome that. Adam says,

> I know that ther's part of you missing. Some men can't see the color green but they may never know they can't. I think you're only a part of a human. I can't do anything about that. But I wonder whether you ever feel that something invisible is all that around you. It would be horrible if you knew, it was there and you couldn't see it or feel it. That would be horrible (*EOE* 313).

Why it happens in human life and nature is a question to Steinbeck. In such mysteries of human nature, Steinbeck says, "I become confused" (*JON* 159). Through Cathy Steinbeck shows that evil things are hard to be blotted out from human nature; they are, they were, they will be. As a non-teleologist philosopher Steinbeck believed this but he is more inclined to show the victory of virtue. Steinbeck says, "I have repeated that good things do not die. Did you feel that Shamuel had got into Adam and would lie in him? Did you feel the rebirth in him? (*JON* 124)

Like the "rebirth" of Shamuel in Adam there is rebirth of Charles in Caleb, "Shamuel" win finally.

> This man [Shamuel] must not be defeated even though he may feel defeat all around him... I believe that the great ones Plato, Lao-tse, Bhuda, Christ, Paul and the great Hebrew prophets are not remembered for negation or denial. (*JON* 115)

Steinbeck does not impose the resolution straightway; his characters cross a long winding way wrung with conflicting questions. Through a catechism on the Book of Genesis, Adam, Shamuel and Lee want to make it clear for themselves. Lee the "philosopher... the thoughtful man" says, "virtue we think we learn because we are told about it. But sin is our own designing" (*EOE* 217). Mentioning the Book of Genesis Adam says excitedly,

> We are descended from this. This is our father. Some of our guilt is absorbed in our ancestry. What chance did we have? We are the children of our father. It means we aren't first. It is an excuse... (*EOE* 217)

Lee, "the interpreter... the active figure," says, "else we would long ago have wiped out guilt, and the world would not be filled with sad, punished people" (*EOE* 217). Shamuel adds to Lee's comment, "we are snapped back to our ancestry. We have guilt" (*EOE* 217). But Adam is outraged at God's judgement, saying, "I remember being a little outraged at God. Both Cain and Abel gave what they had and God accepted Abel and and rejected Cain. I never thought that was a just thing. I never understood it" (*EOE* 217). Shamuel argues with Adam.

> God did not condemn Cain at all. Even God can have preference can't he? Let's suppose God liked lamb better than vegetables. Cain got him a bunch of carrots may be. And God said, "I don't

> like this. Try again. Bring me something I like and I'll set you up alongside your brother." But Cain got mad. His feelings were hurt. And when a man's feelings are hurt he wants to strike at something, and Abel was in the way of his anger. (*EOE* 218)

Neither Adam, Shamuel and Lee are stern believers in traditional Christianity; they simply try to unlock the riddle. Like many other Steinbeck- characters (Casy in *Grapes of Wrath*, Doc in *Cannery Row*) Lee in *East of Eden* does not have any firm belief in God and religion; Lee thinks more of the human soul,

> I have no bent towards gods. But I have a new love for that glittering instrument the human soul. It is a lovely and unique thing in the universe. It is always attacked and never destroyed. (*EOE* 247)

The characters by themselves try to solve the paradoxes of the Bible. They want to see a world with less of vice, they want to know the origin of vice in man. Their conflict throws them into a riddle, a shadowy puzzle, but they continue to hope: "could not a world be built around accepted truth? Couldn't some pains and insanities be routed out if the causes were known" (*EOE* 219). Lee thinks of the conflict, "it's desperately complicated. But at the end there's light" (*EOE* 219).

The twins Aaron and Cal are the rebirth of Adam and Charles (virtue and vice). They are incomplete beings both sharing partially

traits of virtue and vice. Aaron believes that their mother is in heaven, but Cal does not believe it. Aaron believes as Lee gave him "a star to look at. He said that may be that was our mother and she would love us as long as that light was there" (*EOE* 274). As a child Aaron believes Lee, but Cal is not as simple as Aaron. Cal does not believe what Aaron believes, "father said she was in the Heaven" (*EOE* 274). Remembering his mother whom he had never seen, Aaron cries, but Cal does not cry. Aaron is soft in nature and sheds tears. However his softness is not absolute, it has toughness too: "Aaron would cry, but sometimes pushed to tears, Aaron would fight too. And when Aaron cried and fought at the same time he was dangerous. Nothing could hurt him and nothing could stop him" (*EOE* 275). This shows that Aaron is not simply a being of softness and tears alone. He has harshness and fury in him too. Strangely, Cal's physical appearance is like Adam (innocence) but he inherits the nature of Charles (vice) and the physical appearance of Aaron (innocence) is like that of Cathy (vice). So virtue and vice continue in man irrespective of physical appearance, and every apparent innocence contains some vice and every apparent vice contains some innocence.

Steinbeck's characters then ascertain that man is essentially a unified whole of opposites, every individual in his psychic being inherits both the elements equally. When quantity of either virtue or vice goes up in an individual he becomes virtuous or vicious, but in a virtuous man there remains some vice as in a vicious man there remains considerable elements of virtue. So along with the characters in the novel, the narrator in *East of Eden* also believes that,

> Humans are caught in their lives, in their avarice and cruelty and in their

> kindness and generosity too in a net of good and evil. I think this is the only story, we have and that it occurs in all levels of feeling and intelligence. Virtue and vice were warp and woof of our first consciousness, and they will be fabric of our last, and this, despite any changes, we may impose on field and river and mountain, on economy and manners. (*EOE* 337)

The narrator in the novel is invariably Steinbeck himself because in *Journal of a Novel* Steinbeck says about the philosophy in *East of Eden*, "the moral ideas, philosophies are my own" (*JON* 160). Steinbeck believes that both virtue and vice work together in a man, but man never helplessly surrenders to vice. Rather he tries for perfection in every generation. He repeats this conviction many times in *East of Eden*. The narrator defines the best man:

> Who perhaps made many errors in performance but whose effective life was devoted to making men brave and dignified and good in a time when they were poor and frightened and when ugly forces were loose in the world to utilize their fears. (*EOE* 338)

Clarifying human nature, the narrator reiterates that human nature in counteracting between virtue and vice tends to virtue

finally. So man in his life time tries to do something to be remembered after his death.

> In uncertainty, I am certain that underneath their topmost layers of frailty men want to be good and want to be loved. Indeed, most of their vices are attempted short cut to love... when a man comes to die, no matter what his talent and influence and genius, if he dies unloved his life must be a failure to him and his dying a cold horror. (*EOE* 338)

From commenting on human life in general, the narrator then goes on to comment on life in particular, "it seems to me that if you or I must choose between two courses (virtue and vice) of thought or action, we should remember our dying and try so to live that our death brings no pleasure to the world" (*EOE* 338).

The narrator thinks that this story of the duel of virtue and vice is the only story of man that recurs in almost all the creative branches of human thought, this is the archetype story in literature. The narrator says,

> We have only one story. All novels, all poetry are built on the never-ending contest in our selves of good and evil. And occurs to me that evil must constantly respawn, while good, while virtue is immortal, vice has always a new fresh young face, while virtue is

> vulnerable as nothing else in the world. (*EOE* 338)

Lee, the philosopher in the novel, repeats the same thing. Lee believes that the opposing qualities in man's nature are essentially his own. He believes, "hate cannot live alone. It must have love as a trigger, a good a stimulant" (*EOE* 405). Lee does not believe that only vice (hatred) or only virtue (love) can go alone; each of them is incomplete without the other.

> may be its true that we are all descended from the restless, the nervous, the criminals, the arguers and brawlers, but also the brave, independent and generous. If our ancestors had not been that, they would have stayed in their home plots in the other world and starved over the squeezed out soil. (*EOE* 462)

Lee believes that,

> Every man in every generation is refined... All impurities burned out and ready for a glorious flux, and for that more fire. And then either the slag heap or, perhaps what no one in the world ever quite gives up, perfection. (*EOE* 486)

With this belief, Lee says that "he had worked patiently and slowly and he succumbed in building Adam as the center, the foundation, the essence of truth" (*EOE* 349). In Lee's belief, there are

stages of perfection (from vice to virtue and virtue to perfection). Lee finds change as the essence of human nature. He believes that everything changes to a positive end.

> Observe constantly all things take place by change, and accustom thyself to consider, that the nature of the universe loves nothing so much as to change things which are and to make new things like them. For everything is in a manner the seed of that which will be. (*EOE* 458)

Lee's belief in "change" and "perfection" is Steinbeck's philosophy propagated, as Steinbeck claims, in the novel "all the morals, ideas, philosophies are my own" (*JON* 160).

Steinbeck has a definite point to make clear that human nature is a blend of opposites and incompletions but the freedom of human will leads everyone to goodness and virtue. For example, Cathy is an incomplete character both physically and mentally, she is too limited to understand her "lack." But, before her death, she understands her limitations, her evil life and evil earning, and she gives all of her property to her son Aaron: "I leave everything to my son Aaron Trask" (*EOE* 448).

She wanted to alleviate her vice by giving everything to her virtuous son Aaron. If she were incorrigibly vicious; if vice never tended to change to virtue, then she would have given her property even partially to her another son Cal (vice) to lineally integrate the descending order of vice, vice would have merged with vice. But it

does not happen. Rather the reverse happens. This illustrates Steinbeck's moral concept quite clearly.

East of Eden has been criticized as "a kind of eclectic irresolution" (*New York Times Book Review*, September 21, 1952, 22). Even Peter Lisca comments that, "the author himself denies free will to the novel's most wicked character Cathy" (167). However Cathy is allowed free will: she feels her "lack," she repents and gives all of her property to her virtuous son Aaron.

Although almost the whole novel deals with Steinbeck's moral concept, the social consciousness sparsely comes in the novel. The social consciousness is not so broadly dealt with in the novel as in his other novels like *In Dubious Battle, Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men. East of Eden* is a philosophical novel that bears the definite "advancement of Steinbeck's thought which has been defined by Edmund Wilson as too barely naturalistic" (22).

In fact, with *East of Eden* Steinbeck reaches the most profound level of his philosophy. He does not treat man as a helpless creature before heredity (human nature) and environment (external nature). As a non-teleologist philosopher, he accepts the existence of both virtue and vice in human life, emphasizing that man struggles to perfection with all the imperfections in his being. Steinbeck's is neither skeptic nor eclectic; in his philosophy there is more of optimism and pragmatism. *East Of Eden* is remarkable for its clarity of perception, boldness of simplification of a subtle and profound moral conflict. While commenting on *East of Eden,* Joseph Henry Jackson rightly comments, "he [Steinbeck] has been thinking more

deeply than ever before about life and human beings who live it" (11).

Steinbeck thought highly of *East of Eden*. While writing it, as he says in *Journal of Novel*, "It must contain all the world I knew and it must have everything in it of which I am capable—all styles and techniques—all poetry and it must have in it a great deal of laughter" (8).

The essential part of the novel could have been in a much smaller dimension as Steinbeck had done in *Of Mice and Men*. *East of Eden* is thicker in volume, thicker than necessary. Steinbeck is conscious of this. "Everything in this book turns larger than I had anticipated" (*JON* 24). About his aspiration with the novel Steinbeck says, "I really talk too much about my work and to any one who will listen" (*JON* 77). Steinbeck himself estimates his novel saying, "and it seems to me that the thunder has produced a mouse" (JON 171). As he "talks too much" he claims, here he has talked too modestly. In fact, *East of Eden* is a burst of thunder that has produced lightening, a sharp lightening, illuminating brightly a conflict in human moral history.

Sweet Thursday (1954)

Four years after *East of Eden*, Steinbeck wrote *Sweet Thursday*, a sequel to *Cannery Row*. Doc continues to be the central character who strings up the forty episodes in a changed *Cannery Row* in Monterey. There are some new characters: Whitney I, Whitney II, old Jingleballicks, Johnny, Patron, Joseph, Fauna, Suzy,

Hazel. The episodes of *Sweet Thursday* are filled with psychological inner action and interaction of the characters.

As in *Cannery Row* so in *Sweet Thursday* Doc is a relentless researcher in marine biology over a ten year long tiring period. Throughout the period, shades of confusion and hesitation overcast Doc. He looks back at his long research journey: "when people change direction it is a rare one who does not spend the first half of the journey looking back over his shoulders" (*STD* 216). So Doc looks back and asks himself; what is actually his mission, his search, "who knows, what is deep in any man's mind? Who knows what any man wants"(*STD* 11).

Doc meditates over his past journey and while in his deep thought he loses himself in a romantic illusion mingled in music; music is the constitution of abstract sound waves similar to the illusion of the researcher–Doc; until the research goal is logically arranged with a final verdict, it is an illusion. Doc then rolls back and forth to illusion on one side and music on the other, "he combined the beauty of the sea with man's loveliest achievement—music" (*STD* 21).

A sort of discontentment seizes Doc, as "discontentment is lever to change." Doc craves for change by discontinuing his research but he cannot even change the direction. In his conflicting phase "discontentment nibbled at him–not painfully but constantly" (*STD* 22). Doc thinks that he has something more to find out in the life of man, as man has more debt to repay to man and society than observing in vain the life of the animals in the seas. Doc is tired of

the "lovely purposelessness" of his laboratory. Doc thinks that he has more debt to man:

> Men seem to be born with a debt they can never pay, no matter how hard they try. It piles up ahead of them. Man owes something to man. If he ignores the debt it poisons him, and if he tries to make payments the debt only increases, and the quality of the gift is the measure of the man. (*STD* 27)

As a philosopher scientist, Doc thinks that no individual can do something either unique or extraordinary. Every individual's efforts are integrally related with the efforts of his predecessors, it is only the continuity that the individual can sustain. An individual's attempts are a part of the continual searching process of the humanity. Doc asks himself,

> What can a man accomplish that has not been done a million times before? What can he say that he will not find Lao-Tse or in the Bhagabat Gita or the prophet Isaiah. (*STD* 23)

Doc then infers a dialectical unity of the whole history of human thought saying, "it is better to sit in appreciative contemplation of a world in which beauty is externally supported on a foundation of ugliness: cut out the support and beauty will sink from sight" (*STD* 23). Doc searches within himself his ability, his individual talent: "What am I thinking? What do I want? Where do I

want to go? (*STD* 24) In answer, three voices within his mind sound together:

> The top voice of his thinking mind would sing, "what lovely little particles, neither plants nor animals but somehow both—the reservoir of all life in the world, the base supply of food for every one. If all of these should die, every other living thing will die as a consequence."
>
> The lower voice of his mind would be singing, "What are you looking for, little mind? Is it yourself you're trying to identify? Are you looking at little things to avoid big things?" (*STD* 25)

The third voice which came from his marrow would describe Doc's "felt failure" singing, "Lonesome! Lonesome what good is it? Who benefits? Thought is the evasion of feeling. You're walling up the leaking loneliness" (*STD* 25).

Doc discovers himself in a state of loneliness and thinks that his talent had left him much earlier. Doc aspired for some great contribution to biological science, he expected some greatness might fall on him. He waited for long ten years for the aspired greatness thinking: "no one knows how greatness comes to man. It may lie in his blackness, sleeping or it may lance into him like those driven fiery particles from outer space" (*STD* 256). Greatness, Doc thinks is not constituted of pleasure alone. He thinks, "it never comes without pain: it leaves a man changed, chastened and exalted at the same time

he can never return to simplicity" (*STD* 256). Doc now thinks that if any success were to come, it would have come much earlier. He mourns the elapsed ten years.

Doc sadly broods over his lost years and thinks that he is too late to show any sign of creativeness:

> Every one knows about Newton's apple. Charles Darwin said his *Origin of Species* flashed complete in one second and he spent the rest of his life in backing it up; and the theory of relativity occurred to Einstein in the time it makes you to clap your hands. This is the mystery of human mind –the inductive leap. Everything falls into place, the irrelevancies relate, dissonance become harmony, and nonsense wears the crown of meaning. But the clarifying leap springs from the soil of conclusion... (*STD* 28)

Apprehending the failure of his research work, Doc wants to face reality: "I love true things, even when they hurt. Isn't it better to know the truth about oneself" (*STD* 108). Doc feels himself "a little man pretending to be big man, a fool trying to be wise" (*STD* 108). His three inner voices tenaciously follow him, reminding him of his limitation and failure. Doc feels he is no better than any common man, he has vainly tried to achieve success in biological research. The middle voice sang subtly:

> Looking for yourself in the water-searching little man, in the hydroids of your soul--looking for contentment in vanity. Are you better than Mack that you should use the secret priestly words of science to cover the fact that you have nothing to say? And the bottom voice mourned Lonesome! Lonesome! Let me up in the light and warmth, Lonesome! (*STD* 45)

Like many other thinking man, Doc cannot find what actually is his mission on earth. Man does not know his role on earth; he is guided by incidents conditioned by the time. Events like waves push him forward and backward until Doc discovers himself all alone in the crowd, hopelessly alone amidst it. Doc could not foresee what Fauna could: "it was Fauna's conviction, born out of long experience that more people did not know what they wanted, did not know how to getting about it and did not know when they had it" (*STD* 176).

Now Doc wants to dispel the illusion of his discovery, to stop hearing the three voices who remind him of his failure. He wants to be a common man, forget his laboratory full of octopuses, rattle snakes and white rabbits. He loses interest in making slides of octopuses, in taking care of them in the aquarium dying one after another. Doc wants to leave the laboratory for a normal family life. He discovers an incompletion in himself, Jay reminds him of his incompletion stressing that,

> There's a lack of fulfillment in you. I think you have violated something or withheld something from yourself--almost as though you are eating plenty but no vitamin–A. you're not hungry but you're starving... May be you cannot be wholly yourself because you've given yourself wholly to someone else. (*STD* 187)

Doc feels that he needs someone to submit to, to be complete, to be a total being, which so long he could not understand nor had he cared to take into consideration. He says so long:

> Some kind of obscure self–justification, I guess, I wanted to make a contribution to learning. May be that it was a substitution for fathering children. Right now my contribution, even it came off, seems kind of weak. (*STD* 231)

In the second phase of the novel, Doc wants a loving hand to pull him back to her lap from the tiring biological observations, strenuous slide making and dull routine of feeding and caring the animals in the cages and aquariums. Doc thinks he should start life on a clean slate with Suzy. Suzy is a woman who in her teenage had married a teenage boy, got a child by him. Having lost both her teenaged husband and the baby, Suzy comes to Fauna in Cannery Row for shelter. In Fauna's care "Suzy had her meal free, and in the

boiler she had free shelter." Suzy chooses the unused boiler pipe as her dwelling house but she has an unbending sense of personality. When Doc proposes love to Suzy, Suzy does not accept it readily. She covers herself in a mysterious veil and does not allow Doc to get into it. She is afraid of her teenage love and does not want to repeat it.

With a view to reach an understanding with Suzy, Doc frankly asks her, "What you want in a man?" Unable to forget her fearful past life, Suzy has some vague conception of what she wants in a man. She says,

> May be what I want ain't anywhere in the world, but I want it, so I think there is such a thing. I want a guy that's wide open. I want him to be a real guy, may be even a tough guy but I want window in him. He can have his dukes up every other place but not with me. And he got to need the hell out of me. He got to be the kind of guy that if he ain't got me, he ain't got nothing. And bother, that guy's going to have something. (*STD* 251)

Suzy who once lost all faith, all hope in life has become a self-confident woman. Although she has neither beauty nor high intellect nor education, she has an over-estimation of her self, a sort of pride which, she says, Fauna, her shelter mistress had infused in her. Fauna taught her to regain her self-confidence and faith in life. Fauna taught

her that life is to be lived and not to be wasted in abuse and self-torture.

> She made me proud and I ain't never proud before in my life. ... She told me made me say it, 'There ain't nothing in the world like Suzy'—and she says Suzy is a good thing. (*STD* 251)

This infused confidence makes Suzy over-confident. Doc had also the complexity of aspired greatness. Doc now gets rid of all his complexities and seeks for contentment in Suzy's love. Once Doc thought that discontentment is the determiner of dynamism and creativity in man initiating volition and change, he thought discontentment is a "lever of change". After waiting for a long protracted pe□ iod of aspired greatness in biological research and attempt to correlate science with philosophy, Doc discovers that he even cannot finish his research paper entitled "Symptoms of some Cephalopods Approximating Apoplexy". And his mystic concepts of life turn to romantic love. Doc now knows that only the love of a woman can fulfill the life of a man and common traits of life entail contentment.

Doc is partly Steinbeck himself, partly a mask, a persona through whom he expressed his attitude and belief. *In Dubious Battle* Doc is a doctor, a patient sympathetic observer of the dubious battle, in *Cannery Row* a marine biologist, and in *Sweet Thursday* a marine biologist turned romantic lover. In all these novels Doc takes a superior position of a philosopher always trying to connect phenomenological laws with the laws of life. As a philosopher

novelist Steinbeck wants to correlate phenomena with noumena; at one stage he traces the mystic unity of all life: life of the rock, rain, man and animals all bound together in a cyclic chain. So also the philosopher and marine biologist, the teleologist thinker Doc, analyses the life of things all around.

Many critics have been unjust to *Sweet Thursday*, thinking it an inferior novel. The proposal for sympathy to the outcasts binds almost all of Steinbeck works into a thematic unity. *Sweet Thursday* in its loose, episodic form also contains the same theme. So critics like Louis Barron are not just in seeing *Sweet Thursday* as " still further evidence that Steinbeck is no longer an author to be taken seriously" (1052)

The compassion, the sympathy for the suffering people, for the outcasts is equally present in *Sweet Thursday* as it was in *Of Mice and Men*, *In Dubious Battle The Grapes of Wrath*, *Cannery Row*. If for these novels Steinbeck can be taken seriously, *Sweet Thursday* too can be taken seriously.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

The previous chapters while analytically studying Steinbeck's works show that Steinbeck's twin concerns, social protest and philosophical concept, sprouted from Steinbeck's social consciousness. Steinbeck wanted to correlate his protest and philosophy with a single thread, that is humanism. He wanted to stand against the main trend of American culture: the American dream of success. Too much material acquisition and acquisitive tendency, Steinbeck felt was meaningless. With a philosophical insight he showed that frantic scramble for material acquisition never brings pleasure and happiness for man. Rather, man may become happy with minimum possessions, and actual greatness lies in simplicity, less possession, and in thought for helping others. All the best qualities of man—fellow feeling, sympathy for the community and inspiration to do something compassionate for other men—are with the poor not with the rich. The rich, Steinbeck thought were so profit minded and obsessed with material advancement that they gave too much importance to money which in the long run did not bring happiness even for themselves. The rich had a proneness to measure men with the yardstick of money; their measuring criterion then invariably misinterpret man as a creature, the existence of man as a creature. The best of humanity were always in the poor, Steinbeck believed, but he did not advocate the life of a recluse. The common man's life with neither too much of property nor too little of it, Steinbeck proposed as the best life model.

As a socially conscious novelist, Steinbeck reviewed the social context of his time. In his time he saw the isolated, rural and agrarian culture that had dominated American life transformed into a sprawling industrial and urban technocracy that had reshaped America's physical landscape. Industrial expansion in the fifties ruthlessly ravaged the land,

while the American people grew increasingly dependent on the technology and on the material prosperity fostered by America's commercial interest. In fact, America began to dismiss traditional moral values and human values and appeals as archaic and irrelevant. Steinbeck opposed this dismissal of humanitarian qualities and exposed America as a spiritual wasteland where money determined the value of everything. The wasteland can be revived to fertility, Steinbeck believed, by rendering service to man. This service motif, Steinbeck observed, prevailed in an agrarian society, in the poor people.

So his characters were drawn from the lower middle class and the poor laboring class who were concerned with the problem of identity and at the same time repugnant to the prevailing social order, because society could not assure better future either for the individual or for the community. So the individuals lost interest in maintaining a traditional social life as Danny and his friends in *Tortilla Flat* and Doc in *Cannery Row* could not maintain it. Along with the incertitude of the society there was no moral standard by which man's conduct could be determined.

For the probable solution of this social and moral complexity, Steinbeck did not propose for non-expansion of industry and urban society. He was quite conscious that he would not be able to resist the expansion even if he wanted to, he knew that social expansion does not depend on a person's personal approval or disapproval, society expands from a simple to complex structure according to its unique formative principles. So in social stratification, Steinbeck proposed minimizing the economic disparity so that the hungry people do not become angry. He proposed a compassion for the hungry people. But Steinbeck was not a writer of "angry social realism" trend, he was a naturalist, a radical. Naturalism as a philosophy is antecedental to scientific views to life of animals, man and the universe.

American naturalism had two divided trends; one was escapist and visionary the other was confrontational and progressive. Steinbeck belonged to the second group. Steinbeck infused in his characters a moral dimension aiming to serve man. To Steinbeck morality was not a divine code of virtuosity; rather, it was a set of principles that man himself will frame in his life process in a society. Steinbeck believed that it was in serving humanity on the principle of live and let live that the best moral view existed. Steinbeck firmly believed that serving man in distress, making the earth worth living for man through fertility of land, regeneration of plants, animals for the survival of man is the only moral responsibility of man. He did not believe in the fall of man as the original sin. He believed that man is by birth virtuous, vices get into man through society; as a reaction to social injustice, and social disparity.

As a naturalist of the latter trend, Steinbeck viewed society and morality with no predetermined principles, he portrayed man as a creature who himself makes his moral laws, determines his destination. While the determinists insist that all actions, even the most carefully planned and deliberate, can be causally explained and that if one knew about a man's hereditary traits and the environmental influences which have molded his character, one could predict just how he would behave in any specific set of circumstances, Steinbeck believed that man has free will, he moves onward for his struggle for survival and builds laws, institutions again denies them to make newer ones. Man and social realism reciprocally influence each other; nothing can be predicted and imposed on human nature, conduct and morality.

The Marxist critics of the thirties lumped Steinbeck with such writers as James T. Farrell, missing completely the fact that Farrell, moving from Catholicism to Marxism, had simply substituted one metaphysics for

another. Steinbeck was not a believer in any 'isms' whether political, religious or philosophical. He insisted on looking the truth in the face. Steinbeck never claimed any adherence to proletarian realism, nor do his works reveal proletarian realism. He simply depicted the truth as it existed and inspired his readers to confront realism however depressing it might be, finally indicating that only a humanitarian appeal can relieve human beings of their suffering. Among his contemporaries Steinbeck is the novelist who most clearly understood man, society and the universe. He could definitely and clearly identify man's role in a society and his connection with the universe. Steinbeck observed man first as an animal, then advanced to "manself". This biological view of man's rise to a complex physical and mental stature is scientific. Refuting the charge that Steinbeck's characters are almost animals, Steinbeck himself says, "I find it valid to understand man as an animal before I am prepared to know him as man" (A Postscript from Steinbeck, December 7, 1956, *Steinbeck and His Critics* 307). But his contemporaries failed to understand man with such a clear and scientific view. So they had no message to be conveyed through their novels. Steinbeck consciously and cautiously conveyed his message of service to humanity through his novels.

Unfortunately, Steinbeck's clarity of perception, simplicity of depiction and propagation of a simple but bold philosophy was not understood by his critics. Marxist critics labelled him confusingly as a proletarian novelist and the high-browed critics like Edmund Wilson called Steinbeck's characters "lemmings assigned with human sentiments and speeches" (*Classics and Commercials* 42). The third group of critics ridiculed him, calling him a "village philosopher" (Mizener, "Does A Moral Vision of The Thirties Deserve A Nobel Prize?"). The analytical study in the previous chapters discovers the real Steinbeck, his real talent, substantively refuting the charges labelled by the unsympathetic critics. The critics had

most unsympathetically treated a novelist who himself was sympathetic to man. Indeed, Steinbeck seems to be a prophet without honor in his own country.

Steinbeck's greatest success is that, in an age of perplexity and moral despair, he could choose for man an alternative way to review life. For the purpose he turned to the life of primitive simplicity, from which his contemporaries could pick up no message for humanity. But Steinbeck could convey a message of love for mankind as a whole and the poor as the distressed people which Dos Passos and Farrell failed to do. Dos Passos and Farrell were radicals, they defied established social and moral principles angrily, but could signify nothing. Steinbeck was a radical with a significant humanistic appeal which makes him conspicuous among his contemporaries.

According to Sartre, "all literary work is an appeal... the writer appeals to the reader's freedom to collaborate in the production of his work" (375). Steinbeck appealed to his readers to review the miseries that he experienced in the society of his time. He was honestly "impelled by an inner need to express his feeling" (45). Steinbeck's honesty to express his feeling makes him a great artist, a naturalist, a radical humanist. "Radicalism usually means the assertion of dogma more or less basically opposed to the mores, opinions, tradition and values of an elite that has been long enough in power to accumulate against itself a great deal of active dislike" (Jones, 279). While the naturalists "had to revolt against the moral standards of their time; and revolt involved them more or less unconsciously in the effort to impose new standards that could be closer to that they regarded as natural laws" (Hall, 289).

In his social protest, Steinbeck is a radical humanist as in *In Dubious Battle*, and in defining moral dimension of his characters he is a naturalist as

in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Both radicalism and naturalism have one thing common: they deny established social orders and conventional moral dictates. Steinbeck did both. To reach this clear end of his decision, Steinbeck had to travel from Emerson to Dewey. His conceptual journey tested all the philosophical stages: mysticism, pantheism, materialism and pragmatism.

Steinbeck is remarkable both as a novelist and as a philosopher. He measured and tested the perplexity and morality of his time with the established philosophical principles and tried to find out the cause of the problems. He tried to arrange logically the cause of the problems and succeeded greatly with a coherent conclusion.

Undeniably, Steinbeck could not keep the compactness of his novels in conveying his message in his latter novels especially after fifties: *East of Eden* being the last one. *Winter of our Discontent* bears the message in a loose structure. His latter novels turned to loose repetition of the same point of view, contained the same message that he had already told in his major novels.

Steinbeck did his best work when he lived close to his characters. As soon as he left their company he became "split up by civilization" like his hero Henry Morgan in *Cup of Gold*. He himself became an affluent man; his personal affluence and the upliftment of the socio-economic condition of America in the post-war period distracted Steinbeck's talent. He could not make lively characters in his later novels; they seem to be narrated, moving mechanically, not moving like living men. They remain painted men on a painted social scene. Neither the people nor the social sequence becomes lifelike in his later novels. But despite the "split" made by affluence he did not lose sympathy for the deficient people because he ignored affluence as

something transient and valued most the permanence of humanity and humanitarian views.

So for the craftsmanship of story-telling one might regret, his decline as a novelist, but one is by no means justified in feeling that what had already been accomplished in his major novels is thereby devalued. Faith in man and man's improvement is a writer's responsibility, Steinbeck believed. He said in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech that a writer "is charged with exposing our many grievous faults and failures with dredging up to the light, our dark and dangerous dreams for the purpose of improvement" (*Portable Steinbeck* 691).

While most of his contemporaries lost their ways in their "dark and dangerous dreams" Steinbeck dredged them up to light for the purpose of improvement of man by holding a clear view of man's role on earth and appealing for compassion for the lower class people whom he treated as the best men and with whom he spent a major part of his life. Steinbeck's favoritism towards the lower class people and his humanitarian appeal for the survival of the essential man is his greatest achievement both as a novelist and as a philosopher.

This achievement of Steinbeck has so far not been discovered by scholars either at home or abroad. Sometimes confusion crept into his philosophical ideas, but his social concept was ever bright with a clear humanitarian appeal. This clear appeal makes him among the greatest of his contemporaries.

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