CHAPTER IV

BEYOND EVIL

Steinbeck, *sui generis* delineator of human life, aims at man as the main object of his writing to show his awareness of what is wrong with man during the Great Depression of the thirties and the post-war period. He does notice the different uncontrollable forces like capitalism, materialism and totalitarianism crushing man, but at the same time he finds man capable of resisting these forces to set right their tragic career and struggle to survive to envision new life. In order to envision new life he accepts evil as an inevitable part of human life, and celebrates the triumph of humanity by seeing beyond all evil.

Steinbeck studies the socio-economic, politico-economic, and cultural pattern of Europe in general and of America in particular and deeply examines the predicament of working class; labourers; migrants and the effect of capitalistic stand of modern economy; and discerns the struggle of man to establish his identity in modernity despite the pressure and presence of multiple forces of
evil in modern ethos. But synchronously he turns at religious literature to scan the philosophy of the eastern and the western religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christian—to find the beacon which may enlighten mankind to see beyond evil in life, though it is enveloped in the darkness cast by the complexity of modern age.

Man, the experimentee in the entire fictional lab of Steinbeck, has always been an ambitious, and optimistic creature. Though Steinbeck presents man getting disturbed, fractured, and sometimes even destroyed in the modern civilization, it is noteworthy to see that he is quite bold and strong of will to fight against destructive forces to affirming the innate worth of human life and surviving in the dichotomy of good and evil. Steinbeck has always been attracted by the dialectic of growth. Though the economic anarchy of the Great Depression and the moral moor of the post-war period affect his mind from the beginning of his career as a writer, he actually realizes the fate of man coiled in the net of good and evil with his East of Eden. In November 1951, upon completing the first draft of East of Eden he writes to Bo Beskow: "In my book just finished I have put all the things I have wanted to write all my life. This is "the book".... Always I had this book wanting to be written."¹

Steinbeck, getting aware of the unending battle between
good and evil in human life, notes in his journal that he hopes "to write of good and evil, strength and weakness, love and hate, beauty and ugliness", and tells that "how these doubles are inseparable—how neither can exit without the other and of how out of their groupings creativeness is born." Steinbeck thinks that it is the duty of a writer to discourage the hazardous tendency and to create hope by celebrating "man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit—for gallantry in defeat for courage, compassion and love." But he is not obsessed with the only primitive and multifarious existence of evil. He also deeply concentrates on the problem of evil to make man free from it with the message constituted in the Hebrew word, "Timshel" in East to Eden. He exploits the Cain and Abel story to propose, at greater length in the Christian message that each man is capable of choosing between good and evil. This part of the proposition is explained by Trask's educated Chinese servant, Lee. Lee accepts the situation of man's fall from grace into a net of good and evil, and deals with man's power for extricating himself from it. He observes that the centre of the problem lies in the interpretation of the fourth chapter of Genesis which provides Steinbeck with different layers of meaning as explained by Lee.

The American standard translation orders men to triumph over Sin, and you can call sin ignorance. The King James translation makes a promise in 'Thou
Shalt', meaning that men will surely triumph over sin. But the Hebrew word, the word timshel—'Thou mayest'—that gives choice... there are many millions on their sects and churches who feel the order, 'Do thou', and throw their weight into obedience. And there are millions more who feel predestination in "Thou shalt." Nothing they may do can interfere with what shall be. But "Thou mayest"!... makes a man great... that gives him stature with gods...."

Steinbeck does not agree with either King James version, 'Thou shall rule over it', or the American standard version, 'Do thou rule over it.' Because they seem to make prophecy and order. Hence, he prefers the Hebrew word, 'Timshel' to the other two versions, for the operative word, "Timshel", according to some scholars, may also be translated as "Thou mayest." In Nature and Myth, also Peter Lisca emphasizes Steinbeck's intention to assert man's ability to choose good inspite of man's contemporary views of himself as "weak and sick and ugly and quarrelsome," and states that the last word spoken in East of Eden is "Timshel" which Steinbeck prefers to translate as "Thou mayest." Lees says : "It might be the most important word in the world. That says the way is open. That throws it right back on a man." On this count, Steinbeck accepts this version. While interpreting "Timshel" even the American biblical scholar of Jewish faith, Julian Morgenstern, says : "Man is endowed by God with the power to choose between good and evil. And not only has he this power but sooner or later he is forced in
some way or other to make this choice."\(^7\)  

Steinbeck, being preoccupied with the eternal and self perpetuating existence of good and evil, eulogizes the very humanitarian notion of responsible choice to encourage man to go beyond evil because he feels:

...a man is a very important thing—may be more important than a star. This is not theology. 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—because "Thou mayest".\(^8\)

He empowers everybody with "Timshel" to confront the tragic margin in human life and to see beyond the horizon of evil. He spiritualizes man to exercise the very sacred choice in proper way to meet the problem of evil permeating every sphere of human life.

His vision of looking beyond evil is very much distinctive in all his novels. Of Mice and Men is one of the often read of Steinbeck's pessimistic work, smacking of pessimistic determinism. Howard Levant, in a critical reading of this novella, declares: "...the central theme is stated and restated—the good life is impossible because humanity in flawed and in itself is deeply poignant."\(^9\)  

However, if we carefully and closely look at the novella, the spark of surviving (hopefully) shines beyond the empire of evil, when the homeless, hopeless migrants of Californian valley follow the way of the deep mutual commitment which is
the chief ingredient in the creation of the Steinbeck hero. And it is the high-water mark of Steinbeck's optimistic insight to find out a way in the dark tunnel of economic wasteland of the Depression years.

Whenever and wherever destitute and helpless people like Lennie are thrown out into the pit of insecurity by self-centred and exploitative society, the god head like George is there to lift them by affirming fraternity openly and without embarrassment to hoist the flag of humanity. George, small of stature but clever, sensitive and compassionate, is an emblem of Steinbeckian hope for survival in a dry socio-economic environment. Despite knowing overwhelming and uncontrollable urge for contact in Lennie, George accepts him as his cousin to guide him properly in hostile society. "In accepting complete responsibility for Lennie, George demonstrates the degree of commitment necessary to the Steinbeck hero and in fact enters the rank of those heroes."\textsuperscript{10} Cain's question--"Am I my brother's keeper?"--is the question at the heart of this novella. And the answer found in the relationship between George and Lennie is an unmistakable confirmation. They contrive to reaffirm their solidarity all along, right up to the end including the last moment of Lennie's lynching. It highlights Steinbeck's sincere attempt to celebrate the bond of spiritual brotherhood. Acceptance of brotherhood opens a
new hope of George and Lennie for better life even in the
land of economic futility caused by the depression and
oppression of the 1930s. It is George's capacity to see
beyond the evil of Lennie's powerful monstrocity and
propensity for killing animate objects like mice, Curley's
wife, that he treats him as the part of his body. It is the
mutual commitment that makes George need Lennie just as much
as Lennie needs George. It pyramids their hope for better life representing a desire to defy the curse of Cain and
fallen man—to break the pattern of wandering and loneliness
imposed on the outcasts and to return to the perfect Garden.
The possibility of fulfillment is reinforced. They
constantly affirm their solidarity all along and come to the
ranch to eye their farm. Despite the discouraging opinions
of outsiders, the companionship remains intact and
unthreatened. Their partnership undergoes enlargement when
Crooks and Candy also get absorbed into the scheme of buying
the little hand. William Goldhurst considers this as "the
high point of optimism as regards the main them of the story"
and says that "this is the moment when a possible reversal of
the curse of Cain seems most likely, as Steinbeck suggests
that the answer to the Lord's question might be, "yes, I am
my brother's keeper." Actually, Steinbeck forms George-
lannie-Candy-Crook's universal brotherhood that can fight
against the evil of the mismanagement of ranch owners
exploiting unskilled migrating workers who drift about the villages and ranches of that area picking up odd jobs for short term of one day and saving up enough money to get a small farm of their own. It's the voice of Steinbeckian hero, George who does not only call individual migrants to merge their individualistic ethos into collective ethos of spiritual brotherhood in order to root out the sense of homelessness and loneliness, but also to inactivate the cause of economic futility as evil caused by the monster of modern capitalism and to raise the pillar of hope beyond the tragedy cast by economic evil.

The journey of George, as if it is so destined, goes beyond evil for the sake of humanity. The referendum would not accept the murder as commitment. But George accepts it without faltering over to the point of killing Lennie as natural and innocent as Love. He parts him "mercifully away, to let him die in full enjoyment of their common dream." George tries his hand at blameless murder as in stories like "flight", where a young Indian reaches manhood through a killing, then flees to his own death in the wilderness; or like "The Murder", where a husband kills his foreign wife's lover and then beats her into admiring.

When Lennie dies, the dream of the Edenic farm dies with him. However, the death of dream does not push George towards pessimism as the title, a fragment from Robert
Burn's poem, emphasizes the idea of the futility of human endeavour:

The best laid schemes o'mice an'men
Gang aft a-glay
An' leave us nought but grief pain
For promised joy.  

For a while the dream of farm perishes, but the spirit of love and human commitment flourishes when Slim comes directly to George and sits down beside him. Because of this, Louis Owens states: "Steinbeck is stressing the significance of the new relationship between George and Slim to conclude Of Mice and Men as a strong note of hope--man's commitment to man, which reappears in much greater dimension in his next novel The Grapes of Wrath."  

The great Greek philosopher, Aristotle observes that "poetry should be more 'philosophical' than history; and all books are eventually weighed for their content of wisdom. Novels that have become classics do more than tell a story and describe characters; they offer insight into men's motives and point to the springs of action. Together with the moving picture, they offer the criticism of life." Retracing the argument of the great master, Carpenter pinpoints:

Although this theory of acts may seem classical, "all important modern novels--especially American novels--have clearly suggested an abstract idea of life. The Scarlet Letter symbolized "sin", Moby Dick offered an allegory of evil. Huck Finn described the revolt of the "natural individual"
against "civilization", and Babbitt (like Emerson's "Self-reliance") denounced the narrow convenes of "society". Now The Grapes of Wrath goes beyond these to preach a positive philosophy of life and damn that blind conservatism which fears ideas. 16

The Grapes of Wrath is Steinbeck's affirmation that human life has meaning beyond material existence. He establishes the broad view of the human spirit to see beyond evil through one of the most significant characters, Jim Casy who posits the approach of love to meet the problem of economic evil people face during the period of the Great Depression, and shows the way of humanity to survive. In The Grapes of Wrath, the Joads, who are dispossessed by the Depression; the bad of economic condition; and the profiteering system of the banks that own the land but cannot wait for the natural balance to be restored, are forced to travel from the dust bowl to California. Their journey proves to be a journey from nothing to nothing as if they have brought the germ of corruption and infection with them. They are duped by the mirage of Californian granery. They are brutally crushed into the self-willed policy of economic exploitation. There is no one to give, no one to sympathize and no one to control. They are compelled to dwell in the land where plenty is to be seen but not to be shared. Unless love sweetens their souls and the spiritual light shines there, the grapes are bound to be the Grapes of Wrath. It is the reason that Jim Casy forsakes the Holy spirit for
the sake of Human spirit, and states the thesis of love as a faith and religious and spiritual doctrine according to which love in the individual soul must be dissolved into the ocean of universal soul. Casy's love for collective ethos recalls the transcendentalism of the nineteenth century. It empowers them to gather their capacity to hope for better life. He becomes the spiritual leader of the Joads and makes them dissolve their individual soul into universal soul to construct the tower of spiritual brotherhood beyond the region of evil.

It is Casy who rejects the notion of sin-- "There ain't no sin and there ain't no virtue. There's just stuff people do." But it does not mean that he rejects moral code of conduct and argues for licence. It is just the rejection of the formal ideas of sin born of selfishness. Love must be guided by positive purpose. He defines the religious impulse as human love and identifies the Holy Spirit as the Human Spirit in all mankind. "It is for this belief in a new sense of community that he gives his life, rediscovering for himself his American heritage of Thomas Paine's The Rights of Man, Ralf Wuldo Emerson's "The over soul", Walt Whitman's Democratic Vistas."18

Jim Casy has been a preacher himself but he gives up preaching and works himself into a kind of Christ-figure by enlarging his consciousness. Like Christ, he comes from the
mountains where he meditates and gets the revelation. He abandons the doctrinal aspects of religion and embraces the pragmatic religion of love and selfless service to prescribe the proper way to migrants' survival in the chaos of modern capitalism. He figures about "the Holy Spirit--the whole sheabang. May be all men got one big soul everybody's a part of it." Although varying considerably in their approach to share Casy's spiritual vision, Peter Lisca says: "...it is the Joad's growing acceptance of the social application of that vision that gives them and the other migrants their strength to endure their faith in a better future."

The material disintegration of the Joads' family that started in the dust bowl reaches its climax in California. The grandparents die on the way; Al marries and leaves the family; Connie and Uncle leave the family. California proves a nightmarish illusion of Eden of American Dream. But if the Joads have lost in material terms, they have gained in spiritual terms. Tom, Ma and Rose of Sharon by stages show the expansion of consciousness almost to the extent of a mystic realization of the unity of mankind and spiritual brotherhood. They share their lives, their food, and the things they hoped for in the new country. Twenty families become one family, the children are the children of all. They establish the new sense of identity and community which is too strong to fight against the evil that exploits them,
and through which they can survive. To self reliance Steinbeck thus adds Walt Whitman's concept of En Masse. It is through the voluntary corporate endeavour of the En Masse, that he hopes the welfare of the community to be ensured. Perry D. West Brook succinctly concludes that "the westward journey of the Joads is symbolic of their rebirth." In The Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck by this mode provides the most thorough evaluation and rejection of the American myth offered by any American writer. He condemns the illusion of Eden in the west and offers a way out of the wasteland created by the illusion. It is in this proferred solution to the problem of America, Louis Owens says:

Steinbeck breaks ranks with his predecessors in American fiction. Whereas many authors--including Hawthorne, Melville, James, and Fitzgerald--have offered visions of the danger inherent in the American Dream, only Steinbeck unhesitatingly offers to light the way out of this "doomed paradise."

Once again Steinbeck's central concern with the pattern of spiritual brotherhood, fraternity, and commitment is embedded in In Dubious Battle to commemorate the triumph of human species. But it works on two different contradictory dimensions. In In Dubious Battle, Steinbeck introduces a new character, Doc Burton whose commitment to humanity contrasts with the commitment of Jim and Mac to radical, dehumanizing revolt of communist party fashioned against the cruelty and the illegal action of selfish growers. Doc Burton's response
to the call of camps, and his selfish service and his compassion for strikers prepares the ground to judge his approach beyond evil caused by the end and means of radical communist party leaders. From the outset, Doc has been the man set apart—neither migrant nor landowner, neither party man nor townsman, but merely his own man. Mac, the communist party organizer, describes the role of Doc: "He's is a queer kind of a duck, not a Partyman, but he works all the time for the guys." His service itself is a sign of suspicion among the leaders like Mack and Jim. Mac's assumption—"I've been out with you before and I'm not sure you believe in the cause at all"—mirrors Doc's mission to envision humanity and commitment beyond evil in soulless communism. It is clear that he does not believe in communist cause. He compares the force of the party with an uncontrollable beast that devours humanity by transcending individual will. Still he offers his service to the strikers because he believes in man. When Mac asks him why he cooperates with them if he does not believe in the cause, Doc answers: "I don't get myself. I don't believe in the cause, but I believe in the men....I have some skill in helping men, when I see some who need help. I just do it."

The fountain of fraternity, humanity and love is never dried up in Steinbeck's fictional premises. In *The Moon is Down*, Steinbeck observes the festivities of humanism as the
way for survival of human beings beyond the darkness of political evil originated in the brutal Nazi monomaniacs. Immersion of individual will (free will) in the groups (will of groups) violates the law of democratic ideology that sustains individualistic freedom. Yet the "free men" are voluntarily united by discarding their individuality in order to meet the conditions of survival. The invaded defend liberty, thereby cherished as individuals, at the cost of their individualistic ethos, and celebrate fraternity to value the innate worth of human life in the presence of even the invaders' atrocities. "At this point Steinbeck merges his theory of group...with his faith in the strength of the people who are grounded in the long democratic tradition."

The burning battle of hatred between different forces like democracy and totalitarianism that vitiates human relations can also be repaired and restored by love and hope for better life. And happy postexist can be fulfilled beyond the cruelty of treacherous modern politics. In conformity with the same view Steinbeck portrays Lieutenant Tonder. Apart from knowing that Alexander Mordeen has been executed by German invaders, the German homesick Lieutenant Tonder loves Alexander's widow, Molly and tries his level best to outlive in the land of enemies. Steinbeck portrays "Germans as men, not supermen" who can cast off cruelty and show humanism to the townsmen. Also Colonel Lanser, who has been
ordered to "set booby traps and poison the chocolate," for killing citizens, criticizes the measure of headquarters' intelligence as it is all against humanity. Steinbeck therefore has been called a humanist.

In *The Pearl*, Kino instead of knowing that "each man and woman is like a soldier sent by God to guard some part of the castle of the Universe", and remembering that "each man must remain faithful to his post and must not go running about," violates the law of nature. It is nothing but Kino's struggle to hope better life for his family and to secure his family by working against religion.

Inspite of materialism and predatorianism, Steinbeck makes an affirmation of the individual will to survive in the dangers of the world. Like the Indian boy of the original story, Kino, too, throws the pearl back into the sea and returns to his former Eden. For he sees that to improve his standard of living it is necessary to join the "circling wolves" and "hovering of vultures" which characterize the predation in society. Moreover, he realizes that man is a double thing, and he cannot successfully be an individual before he has been a part of the group. Kino goes along with the duality of all things. As Harry Morris points out, Kino and Juana are double of Everyman who in his transit toward death discerns the verity of his subsistence.

The full significance of Kino's throwing the pearl
back into the sea now becomes clear: the act represents the willingness to accept a third journey, the journey still to be made, the journey that any fictional character has still to make after his dream-vision allegory is over. They must apply their new knowledge and win their actual deaths. But this real triumph, his real gains, the heights to which he has risen rather than the depths to which he has slipped back is the immense knowledge he has gained of good and evil. This knowledge is the tool that he needs to help him on the final journey, the inescapable journey that Everyman must take.

Steinbeck suggests that, while an individual has every right to strike out a path for himself, he should realize his role as a member of a community. He cannot break its traditions. It is with this view The Wayward Bus follows East of Eden to hold out hope for the regeneration of its hero, through an exercise of his will and shows him the fascinating pictures of life beyond evil hatched by matrimonial bondage. Juan Chicoy, an elected person, is skilled with mechanical things. As the initials of Juan Chicoy, suggests the initials of Jesus Christ, he becomes the savior of men in the little world of The Wayward Bus and consequently upholds himself by realizing the essence of matrimonial bond. Though he often finds himself dissatisfied with his quarrelsome wife, Alice Chicoy, he retracts the harmony in marital life and umpires to return to his home. It seems to be fashioned with autobiographical overtones by Steinbeck who couldn't find himself free from the traditions of matrimonial bond. He penetrates matrimonial bondage as a social evil highlighting
the dictatorial nature of a woman like Alice Chicoy whose submission to alcoholism makes her husband unpleasant. Although Steinbeck shivers in the winter's tale of his marriage with Carol and Gwyne, he steps further into a happy matrimonial bond with third life partner, Elaine about which he declares: "Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous...."32

Evolution of a higher consciousness, in *Burning Bright*, is an unique passage of Steinbeck that goes beyond the horizon of masculine pride treated as social evil and joins the ceremony of universal parentage. It's a new Steinbeckian formula to be introduced in the lab of society to dissect the cells of egoism--pride. Joe Saul's medical report that proves his sterility creates a problem in activating his free will to accept or deny the child and Mordeen's infidelity. He is on the horn of dilemma. His friend, Ed unfolds a new way of universal fatherhood to resolve this dilemma. Validating the consciousness of universal fatherhood, Carroll Britch and Cliford Lewis esteem that it is a "new, unknown road"33 where darkness would overtake Joe Saul. But the truth suddenly dawns upon Joe Saul. He enters the new world of the consciousness of universal fatherhood and outstrips the darkness of pride. He makes the best of his will to affirm: "This is my own dear son, with whom I am pleased."34 He echoes: "Here he lies sleeping, to teach me....I love my
His words, "I love my son," mark his final liberation from well-knit net of self-created consciousness—the egoistical trap that creates a private hell for an individual—to go beyond all evil. In the light of this new knowledge, he emerges from his supposed narrow dream into a larger acceptance to plead that "every man is father to all children and every child must have all men as father. This is not a little piece of private property, registered and fenced and separated." He delivers his inspired message of universal fatherhood. Carroll Britch and Clifford Lewis appreciate Joe Saul's discovery as the miracle of life beyond the self and presume: "The message now is not that of genetic determinants but of free will and responsible choice." And they further declares: "He discovers, as do Jim Casy and Tom Joad, that individual survival demands, a concern for the community; the recognition of social and individual independence is but a little spark lighting the darkness of Joe Saul's pathway." Steinbeck, by this token, presents Joe Saul as the man who moves from an ordinary love to extraordinary one to see his life as a microcosm of a greater human progression by ejecting his excessive pride and his craving for a biological heir to accept another man's child as his commitment. Considering Steinbeck's *Burning Bright* as an apologia for the harshest truths of human existence, John M. Ditsky states:
"Like the 'Tiger' of Blake's poem that is 'burning' in the dark 'forest' of racial fears, these truths must be accepted and their acceptance is the badge of manhood and the key to human evolution."

Another instance of vision of life beyond evil is manifested in Friend Ed. He, like George in Of Mice and Men, does not hesitate to violate the command of the Almighty for the betterment of human species. He ascends beyond evil he commits by ending the life of Victor to save Mordeen and her family integration. He perceives that Victor is the biological father of a child growing in the genital sack of Mordeen, and therefore Victor is making an attempt to claim for it. Thinking of Victor's claim for the same child, Ed concludes that Victor can disintegrate Joe Saul's family. He therefore kills Victor and sets right the way for sustaining the family integration of Joe Saul, his wife and new born baby.

Through the analysis of the cultural resource of Cain-Abel conflict in East of Eden, Steinbeck exposes that though it is the human destiny to suffer in the hand of evil, it is still up to the individual to triumph over it. Adam, arriving in California, glimpses the hope for Eden in the modern wasteland. But his wife, Cathy seriously explodes his hopes. She abandons his family and breaks lineal tie to establish herself as a prostitute in nearby town, Salinas.
Adam, being abandoned and crushed, succumbs to melancholia. But Sam Hamilton, fortified by Lee's interpretation of the "Timshel" abstraction, strives to enlighten the bereaved Adam with the hope of surviving beyond evil.

I do not believe all men are destroyed...surely most men are destroyed but there are who like pillars of fire guide frightened men through the darkness. 'Thou mayest, Thou mayest!' what glory!...the choice...of wining!

This choice proves wise. The talismanic word, Timshel, professed by Lee and Samuel, exercises its spell over Adam and helps him to return to life. It can be summed up in the words of Keith Ferrell which mean: "After Cathy abandoned Adam Trask to pursue her life as a whore, Adam attempted to build a life undisturbed by evil." 41

Adam, coming back to the life, accounts for the power of "Timshel" in connection with his son, Caleb whose spirit of life is fractured by his partiality. But it is Caleb who despite his disturbed life strives to see a hope for life beyond the belt of evil by confronting the ultimate truth about human life exposed by Lee. Therefore, the reality of Cathy's life that crushes Aron, cannot crush Caleb. He dares to confront the truth about his whore-mother. He denies the contribution of genetic factors in the formation of destiny and holds every individual responsible for his karma. His debate with his mother, Kate, supports his thesis,

Cal said, 'I was afraid I had you in me'
'You have', said Kate. 
'No, I haven't. I'm my own. I don't have to be you....If I'm, mean, it's my own mean.'

Caleb having confronted the truth about Cathy and thereby also having discovered the truth about himself, makes an attempt to order his disordered life. He speculates in the bean crop, is successful, and gives his father the offering of fifteen thousand dollars Adam so brutally rejects. Hatred descends upon him in such so blind rage that he wields knowledge of Cathy insinuatingly like a thrust of weapon to hurt his brother, Aron. The violence resides in Caleb's mind. There is no purgation for that violence. However, one may learn as Horace Quinn learns to establish social equilibrium to hold good and evil in social balance to confront truth of evil's penance and to control it by choice. Caleb intuitively feels sullied and his plan suddenly appears as "mean and dirty" to him. Guilt-ridden over the death of his brother and father's subsequent stroke, he considers suicide. He feels "lost and hungry" and does not know "what to do." In discovering "what to do" Caleb does the spadework to untangle his problem of existence. He is granted with benefactor, Lee who teaches him that the first step toward controlling evil is to control evil within oneself. Because of this, he confesses to his dying father: "'I'm responsible for Aron's death and your sickness. I took him to Kate. I showed him his mother. That's why he went away. I don't want
to do bad things--but I do them."\textsuperscript{45} This recognition of his own capacity for evil--his confrontation with it, and his willingness to master it by free will--does set him free. It opens the door to his emancipation. His prayer to the lord, "... 'let me be like Aron. Don't make me mean. I don't want to be. If you will let everybody like me, why, I'll give you anything in the world, and if I haven't got it, why, I'll go for to get it. I don't want to be mean. I don't want to be lonely,"\textsuperscript{46} reflects over his struggling to triumph over evil. Adam, who is persuaded by Lee, declines to reject Caleb and makes supreme effort to whisper "Timshel" on his death bed. Caleb affirms the value of life by accepting the biblical prophecy--"Thou mayest rule over sin."

Though Adam's ranch is a devastated Eden in which his Eve is, in fact, the serpent, Steinbeck discovers the truth that although East of Eden is not Eden, it is not inseparably far away. The story of Caleb is the story of this discovery. Steinbeck thus goes beyond evil by affirming that man is great because he can survive that struggle. His vision in this novel is of man victorious over evil. "Too many of us conceive of a life as enduring in defeat,"\textsuperscript{47} says Samuel Hamilton, but if man exercises the power given to him alone to choose between good and evil, that makes him great because "'that gives him stature with the gods.'"\textsuperscript{48}

"Timshel", the conclusion of \textit{East of Eden} that determines man's "stature with the Gods" if he exercises his
right to choose between good and evil, appears to be transformed in "Talisman" in *The Winter of Our Discontent* to educate Ethan Hawley to make him realize the worth of human life by discovering the light of optimism beyond the darkness of the pervasive cynicism engendered by the American craze for illusory materialistic prosperity. Ethan Hawley is the inheritor—as is America itself—of both, conscience of the past and the corruption of the present. He clings to the latter to trade "a habit of conduct and attitude for comfort and dignity and a cushion of security." But it eventually muddles him. He cries: "My light is out. There's nothing blacker than a wick....The world is full of dark derelicts." He, like several of more pathetic characters of Steinbeck's earlier novels, seriously plans suicide. But as he prepares to kill himself by the sea-shore, his conscience of the past—goodness—is resurrected. The moral weakness that drives him to the verge of self-destruction is replaced by a bright determination to fight back and redeem himself. The talisman which Ellen has secreted in her father's pocket draws Ethan away from the sea and death and back toward his responsibility to the living. As he discovers the talisman, he realizes that it enlightens him to sustain his living beyond the evil of corrupted present. It pulls him back to his commitment of life. Though his light is out—his own quest has failed—he concludes: [I have] to
get back—to return talisman to its new owner. Else another light might go out. Steinbeck celebrates the durability of this light beyond the darkness of evil that has transfused human life in modern age.

Steinbeck's heroines too have the potential—the humanistic vision to see beyond evil. These women, like men, possess strong religious bias that spiritualizes them to face life with strength and confidence. They are too able to function as sustainers of life by virtue of certain inherent qualities that qualify them for the role. Their immense and unfailing strength encourages them to withstand life though it is full of difficulties contrived by evil forces in the society.

Observing the twentieth century fictional world, Marilyn L. Mitchell surmises: "Most writers of the first half of this century concentrated on characterizations of men and the problems and motivations of men. Perhaps that is because most writers of anything other than romantic novels or popular magazine stories were men." But Steinbeck is a notable exception to such pattern. He releases woman from the pasteboard, shadowy role she generally assumes in fiction. In The Grapes of Wrath Rose of Sharon, considered as socially and morally the weakest Joad and though egoistical, grows wiser in her view towards mankind and expands her vision of life to universal dimension by feeding the dying man with her
breast milk, rejecting all the negative pulls of the social canons. Renewing the world with her compassion and love, she becomes the mother of all earth.

Mordeen's intention to sacrifice her wifely integrity or at least the traditionalistic view of it to produce an offspring for her impotent husband goes beyond all the barriers of evil in socio-cultural complex to solemnize the soul of mankind. She loves her husband, Joe Saul in spite of her knowledge that he is sexually incapable of making her pregnant. But knowing Joe's predicament, she prepares herself to fulfill his desire by offering him a child. For this she throws away all inhibitions and conceives a baby through Victor. If necessary, she also gets ready to violates one more commandment of God and prepares herself to kill Victor in order to secure the greatest good for mankind. All this underscores Mordeen's attempt to sustain life by going beyond evil she commits. Therefore, John M. Ditsky compares her with "Astarte Ishtar, lover and destroyer,...who exploits sacrificed youth so that mankind may progress, and so that seasons may resume their course." In bringing new life to Joe Saul, Mordeen is modeled after Elaine Scott, whom Steinbeck married in 1950. "Of Elaine's relationship there is no uncertainty, for both dedication, which reads, "To, for, and because of Elaine," and the text of Burning Bright testifies to the contributions Elaine made to his life and
Perhaps Steinbeckian feminine characters appear to be stronger than masculine characters in connection with their aptitude to affirm the innate worth of human life by looking beyond evil. Therefore the poet like Walt Whitman also is inspired to sing the glory of feminine spirit.

Be not ashamed woman, Your privilege enclose the rest,...
You are the gates of the body, and
You are the gates of the soul.55

Most of Steinbeck's positive men and women ascend to utilize the power of free will for creative purpose of honouring human species. Thus Steinbeck's awareness of the innate worth of human life always opens up a new vista of possibility to see beyond evil.
END-NOTES


4 East of Eden p. 303. Hereafter cited as East of Eden


8 East of Eden, p. 289.


13 Ibid., p. 69.


15 John Steinbeck's Re-Vision of America, pp. 104-5.


17 East of Eden, p. 23.

18 John Steinbeck: Nature and Myth, p. 103.


22 John Steinbeck's Re-Vision of America, p. 130.


24 Ibid., p. 129.

25 Ibid., p. 142.


30 Thematic Design of the Novels of John Steinbeck, p. 105.

31 Harry Morris, "The Pearl: Realism and Allegory," in Steinbeck and His Critics: A Record of Twenty-five Years,


35 Ibid., p. 106.

36 Ibid., p. 94.

37 The Short Novels of John Steinbeck, p. 231.

38 Ibid., p. 231.


40 East of Eden, pp. 308-9.


42 East of Eden, p. 466.

43 Ibid., p. 375.

44 Ibid., p. 375.


46 Ibid., p. 379.

47 Ibid., p. 303.

48 Ibid., p. 308.


50 Ibid., p. 311.
51Ibid., p. 311.


54The Short Novels of John Steinbeck, p. 219.