CHAPTER II

CONCEPT OF EVIL

The primary understanding of evil evolves from a religious perspective, since we perceive the different manifestations of evil as the disobedience and rebellion of the human race against God and God's will. "Evil occurs where and when God's will is hindered by human sin....Bad situation or natural calamities were sometimes referred to as 'evil', and such occurrences were frequently interpreted as having been send by God as a punishment for sin. Moreover, if something did not function properly or could not be understood, this too was seen to be evil."¹

In Hinduism, "Evil is inherent in finite existence; woe is irremediably bound up with life and with the attachment of life."² "Evil is an integral part of the world according to the Hindus."³ It is the doctrine of Karma "according to which our present experience is the direct result of the good or bad actions of previous existence."⁴ We reap today the harvest of the unknown past, sowing the present to harvest in some unknown future. Neither gods nor demons are then to
blame, and even blame itself is obliterated by the recognition of an eternal cycle in which "Man is doomed to rebirth; doomed to expiate the sin and the folly of unremembered past lives." This everlasting nightmare of reincarnation speeds up rumination as part faults and opens the ways for all sorts of speculation on the moral responsibility of man for the origin of evil. "The way doctrine of Karma, posits that the links in the endless chain of evil are our desires and our sins; Buddhism takes this as its starting point." Buddhism traces the origin of evil in a figure of "Mara, somewhat comparable to Satan in Judaism and in early Christianity." "Mara...is a part of the very experience of Buddha's enlightenment, a force that threatens, attacks, and seeks to distract the individual from contemplation--a force that the wise man must address, confront, and finally conquer." "In the first place, the doctrine is entirely directed toward the purely mental conditions of the evils of existence." Buddha personifies Mara as an internal enemy that distracts the mind absorbed in meditation. Buddha sees error, lust, anger and pride led by Mara as the manifestations of evil arising from self engrossment. But he provides: "...a gospel calculated to assure direct deliverance from self-engrossment, by following the Buddhist path of life." Thus the figure of Mara, the product of Buddhism, "...gives a symbolic expression to the
interior experience of evil as personal responsibility” whereas “the doctrine of Karma is essentially an impersonal conception.”\(^\text{11}\)

Man’s thought and outreaching zeal seem to have been the roots of evil in early Greek. The brief survey of the myths of Prometheus who steals the celestial fire of Zeus and gives it to man is very significant to bring out the enigma of evil in the field of Greek religion. But “The Socratic shift in Greek thought turned Greek’s attention to the problem of evil and emphasized the Greek tendency to seek an explanation of evil in the recalcitrancy of matter....”\(^\text{12}\)

We cannot ourselves be the source of evil. Good and evil cannot arise from the same source: there is accordingly a duality of cosmic principles. In all the religions of the world, we find very dualism appearing in the different forms of deity and demons. *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have always been the paradigms of the antithesis between good and evil. We see the bloody battle between Ram and Ravan in *Ramayana* and between Pandava and Kaurava in *Mahabharata* projecting the everlasting battle between good and evil. The Zoroastrian also begins with the eternal conflict between good and evil. The dualistic religious system of Zoroastrian upholds the conflict between Ahuramazda, the god of light and good, and Ahariman, the spirit of darkness and evil. The Zoroastrian holds on “...the goodness of Ahura-Mazda. The evil in this
world is not his work: he neither caused it nor permitted it.... The world is a battle ground on which Ahura-Mazda and Ahriman, creating and countercreating, strive for mastery...."13 R.A. Tsanoff admits: "No one so refused to blink at evil, no one perceived the universal conflict so thoroughly as the Zoroastrian."14

The doctrine of original sin, in the Christian sphere, ascribes evil to man's wilful disobedience. It is just like man's departure from the way of the Lord into the selfish way of the flesh. If we take the Adamic myth, evil can be seen in the figure of the serpent. "Quite early in the development of Israel's religious understanding, evil came to be concritized in specific persons or events, later it came to be understood as a separate and pervasive power in the created order. This system of evil had a leader (Satan, the devil) who exercised control over numerous underlings (demons). However, it was seen to be manifested in human experience."15 Thus, in Adam's fall, evil is interpreted as rebellion against God or the thwarting of God's will through action of eating of the fruit of knowledge offered by the serpent, the more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God has originated. Serpent beguiles Eve to confer the crown of miseries upon Adam and Eve. Despite God's command, they taste forbidden fruit of knowledge of good and evil, and violate God's plans and purposes, and eventually
lose paradise. Pfleiderer points out that the original meaning of the story is simply this:

The origin of evils of human life is to be found in the transgression by the first man of the divine prohibition which had denied to them the higher knowledge...the most elementary elevation of man above mere nature, the first dawning of the consciousness of super sensuous destiny which makes him higher than the beasts,—in fact, the first stirring of the impulse towards civilization. 16

We cannot have a vital literature if we shun or ignore evil. Insofar as the world of flux continues to reproduce itself, there would be evil in the world. Even utopia cannot be formed sans evil. David Pocock states: "Evil has its origin in Teutonic family."17 The term, Evil is probably used for the first time by anthropologist to recognize the people "evil doers" who broke into other people's property. But the most current meaning of evil in the eighteenth century deals with debtors as "evil persons" who had fled to avoid paying their debts.18 The meaning of Evil is undergoing a sea change with the passage of time. Modern critics interpret evil in the two different senses like:

...strong and weak which differ from each other. In the strong sense, 'evil' is used to mean the antithesis of good in all its principle sense; morally depraved, bad wicked, vicious—-but this strong sense is little used in modern era. The word 'evil' is now a days used only in the weak version, meaning to cause discomfort or pain, to be unpleasant, offensive and disagreeable, to be not 'not good'.19

Webster, who compiled International Dictionary of English
Language, defines evil as 'The fact of suffering and wickness; the totality of undesirable, harmful, wicked acts, and things.'\textsuperscript{20} Evil, in \textit{The New Columbia Encyclopedia}, is 'an antithesis of good. Traditional Christian ascribes evil to the misdeeds of men, to whom God has granted free will.'\textsuperscript{21} Martin Buber, in a chapter devoted to \textit{Images of Good and Evil}, goes on to say: 'Man's heart designs in images of the possible which could be made into the real. Imagery, 'the depiction of the heart' (Psalm 73-7), is play with possibility, play as self-temptation, from which ever and again violence springs....This imagery of the possible...is called evil.'\textsuperscript{22} In a voluministic conception of good and evil, Richard Taylor holds that 'the things...those that frustrate and threaten are bad.'\textsuperscript{23} Frederick Sontage sees the existence of evil into two modes.

1 pain, misery, and destruction which occur apart from any voluntary transgression of God's moral law, and

2 sin, which is a voluntary and conscious violation of a known law of God.\textsuperscript{24}

In \textit{God and Evil}, H.J. McCloskey accepts physical evil and moral evil as two general forms of evil. He deals with physical evil 'as the various natural calamities and the immense human suffering that follows in their wakefires, floods, tempests, tidal waves, volcanoes, earth-quakes, drought and famines...the vast numbers of diseases that
torment and ravage man. Disease such as leprosy, cancer, poliomyelities...the various physical deformities and defects such as misshapen limbo, blindness, deafness, dumbness, mental deficiency and insanity'. And he defines moral evil as '...simply immorality--evils such as selfishness, envy, greed, deceit, cruelty, callousness, cowardice and the larger scale evils such as wars and atrocities they involve.' But T.R.Henn, while writing on The Harvest of Tragedy, maintains the Christian statement of the philosophical position in "The Ethical Problem" to group his ideas under "Moral evils, which constitute the problem of sin and physical evils, which constitute the problem of suffering." The distinguished characteristic of evil, referred by H.N. Wieman, is a valuable contribution to the study of evil. He says:

Since intrinsic good is of two basic kinds, opposition to good is also of two kinds. The evil opposing created good is destructive; the evil opposing creative good is obstructive. Created good can be destroyed and always is being destroyed, but it can be obstructed and always is being destroyed in some measure; creative good cannot be destroyed, but it can be obstructed and always is to same degree.

He thinks of evil philosophically: 'Not all suffering under all conditions is good. It is good only when it enters as one essential ingredient in creativity. When it opposes the creative event, as it often does, it is evil.' To Richard J. Pendergast, a philosopher and theologian of science, 'The classical definition of evil is that it is the absence of
some good which "ought" to be presented in the being or situation which is evil. Evil as such, therefore, is not a being but a privation, a defect of a being which is fundamentally good." Paul Siwek, a Jesuit, in his philosophy of evil, demonstrates:

[Evil is] all that opposes the intrinsic finality of a being. Therefore it is all that hinders the beings full development, all that thwarts its tendencies, all that resists the drive from the depths of the being toward full expansion, toward that completion which it would attain to in its ideal type, the archetype of its own nature.

In analyzing the various definitions of evil one does notice that almost all the critics and scholars have seen evil through the lens of religion and philosophy. Broadly speaking, the critical definitions considered so far can be said to affirm evil as human activities done against God's moral law. But fathoming the problem of evil in the novels of Steinbeck, who has always been fascinated by the existence of evil in modern socio-cultural ethos, a fresh attempt at definition is made here.

Evil is destructive force that brings disorder in human life and sometimes even destroys it. But eventually it results in helping the good to emerge in human situations.

Apprehending the pragmatic and practical framework of the very definition, it appears to be more satisfactory than those which euhemerize evil in the context of sheer religion and philosophy.
The world contains a great deal of evil. There would not be even a single mind quite unknown to the problem of evil. From religion to philosophy and philosophy to literature, the presence of evil is constantly felt at every stage in the universe. Hence the problem of evil is not entirely new to world literature. The Ramayana, The Mahabharata, Aeneid, and Paradise Lost are the great works of world literature that make at heart an oblique reference to evil. Like a theologian, who esteems the presence of evil in biosphere evolved by the Almighty, the American literary minds also seem to be preoccupied with the existence of evil, when they see that human life is lingering before the sight of destructive forces that permeate American cultural complex. Their psyche is engrossed with the problem of evil, and their imagination, says Richard Chase, is "like the New England Puritan mind itself" and it seems to be interested "in the melodrama of the eternal struggle of good and evil" interested in disorder.32 Similarly, Steinbeck, who conceives of his art as an end, not as a means, ventures to portray American life lively. He speaks of his books: "They are as real as the wicked witch and the good fairy, as true and tested and edited as any other myth."33

Steinbeck's concern with the problem of evil is an aspect of reality in the complex of modern age. He mirrors it in his novels. His novels, redeemed with concrete
characters and situations, present different streaks of evil. The entire body of his work is a testimony to his consistent artistic development pattern revealing a distinct movement of his treatment of evil. He is one of the most significant American novelists who frankly asserts: "My book is about good and evil." He discovers the everlasting existence of good and evil in a kind of prose epic, East of Eden.

Worldlings, who deny the existence of evil, proudly look at length about the evils of the world and conceal themselves under the mask of hypocrisy to claim that evil must sometimes, somehow, be overruled by good. They refuse to face the ultimate reality of evil, and they cover their evasion by means of an euphonious pessimism about the present age. But Steinbeck, who so far accepts the all pervasive nature of good and evil, unveils reality before the telurians. He exposes them to the factuality of modern civilization for their betterment. It is just like a bold step taken by Steinbeck to peep into his Californian life critically. This is not enough for him because of the buccaneering spirit that tempts American mind and involves it in fruitless struggle that results in rein de tout but in wretched condition, finally to remind one that prize of one's life is more precious than any other thing in the universe. He awakens each and everybody from the nightmare
of evil or sin with a very strong, powerful and thoughtful dose of "free will". H.J. McCloskey is of the opinion that a universe of absolute evil men, possessing free will, is better than the one in which men are predestined to virtuous living. "It has to be contended that the value of free will itself is immense."\(^{35}\) Free will needs not involve the power to choose wrong. Mackie, in his writing on "Evil and omnipotence", argues that free will is compatible with absolute goodness.\(^ {36}\) It makes certain good possible. God bestows free will to man and ensures his absolute virtue. But ultimately it is an individualistic stance taken either to make or mar human life. It depends on personal choice. On this account, Steinbeck demonstrates that we should have positive approach to think of human life by thinking its worth.

The problem of Evil—"The issue is as old as the black snow of Anaxagoras, and as enigmatic as Rilke's image of black milk."\(^ {37}\) The foremost novelists and short story writers of America in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries have been particularly concerned with the problem of evil. The problem of evil is important in American literature for it enables the writers to deal with the hostile forces visible in the modern society eclipsed by the "power of blackness", violence and melodrama, seeming to predominate the nineteenth century American fiction. The power of
blackness is not employed merely for the sake of sensationalism. Great writers like Hawthorne, Melville, and Henry James as well as Faulkner and Hemingway fascinatingly present a true picture of life in America through violence and melodrama. These American novelists reveal a preoccupation with the dark raceses of the human heart. If the two chief romantics of the nineteenth century American literature were Emerson and Whitman, "...Hawthorne and Melville and Henry James are 'counter-romantics' because they recognize Oriental sin, because they show the conflict between good and evil."^38

There are no writers more consistently preoccupied with evil than Hawthorne and Melville in the great literary period of the nineteenth century. When the writers concentrate on "the smiling aspect of life" conditioning their response to its diabolic aspects, Hawthorne and Melville prove to be an antidote to the general clamour for optimistic platitudes.

Nathaniel Hawthorne is one of the earliest American authors to expose evil in the society. The concept of evil runs through all his writings wherein he attempts to find out the solution to his question, "What is the purpose of evil in the world?"^39 Evil, to be found wherever the individual's maladjustment to society culminates in tragedy, becomes the theme of his novels like The Scarlet Letter, The House of Seven Gables, and The Marble Faun. He has had his own vision
of evil and its power leaving a permanent traumatic effect on human beings. The interplay between the individual and the forces like feudalism, poverty and puritanism shows an awareness of the temper in the forms of economic, social as well as metaphysical evil at work in Hawthornian fiction.

The recognition of evil in the world is the centrality of Hawthorne's writings. Hawthorne views the evil propensity of homo in the traditionalistic Puritan sense. He concentrates on the development of science and technology, promising a greater independence and materialistic comforts to expose the culmination of pride and isolation that constitute evil. He manifests evil, springing from pride and isolation, in Ethan Brand, Rapaccini, as well as Aylmer. His Hepzibah in *The House of Seven Gables*, and Chillingworth in *The Scarlet Letter* reveal the evil of egoism—pride. His ripest work, *The Scarlet Letter*, is full of different seasons of evil. "All men are agents, destined to 'plant the germ of evil' or of good not by their will, but as an instrument in the hand of God." 40 In such an existence Hester, the female protagonist of *The Scarlet Letter*, completes the journey of her life encountering the cruelest winter of economic evil to the constructive spring of metaphysical evil. The paw of her poverty distorts her future by compelling her to marry a cold and old intellectual scientist, Roger Chillingworth who proves himself
unsatisfactory as husband because an emotional qualification required for getting married is dead in his spirit. His intellectual gift does not veil his physical deformity. Hester falls in love with another inhabitant of the earth and conceives a baby. But the frame of orthodoxical community is so tight that it cannot accommodate morally corrupted species. It has no any sight to perceive the worth of human life. It is a social evil strongly criticized by Hawthorne. It dislocates the world of Hester. She is confined to the hub of misfortune when her baby is born outcast of the infantile world. The puritan pride boycotts her for her adultery. Hawthorne points out it as the decadent aspect of puritanism.

Adultery, a bar of social evil that separates Hester and her baby from society, boosts her towards the wonderland of metaphysical evil. Many of Hawthorne's leading characters illustrate a thesis that might be called "Sinning as a means of grace." She knows that her deed has been evil. But she does not believe that it is evil. Suffering may itself provides solace to the injured soul therefore its result would be good. The fall of Hester likewise proves fortunate. Hester, boycotted for her adultery, rises to a greater hight that she could never have attained without her fall. She understands her own sin and shame, and sustains a selfless life which concerns itself not at all with personal profit
and enjoyment. Her service becomes her victory. Hawthorne confirms Melville's own tendency to look for the dark underside of appearance to cultivate an ambiguous and disquieting kind of symbolism to assert the reality of doom in the face of all optimistic expansiveness.

When Hawthorne observes the journey of life from nonmetaphysical to metaphysical evil, Melville perceives "pasteboard mask" of nature. Melville attempts to understand the vaulting desire of man to materialize the ultimate goal of absolute knowledge of truth. The monomaniac of a man like Ahab stands for the evil of pride. He constantly pursues the white whale which is evil in his eyes. It causes his dismemberment. Whatever may be the truth but Melville seems to be engaged in exposing the nature of abstruse thing in the universe. The nature of evil that Melville exposes in *Moby Dick* is metaphysical. Melville, who distrust scoffio-economic and political movements occupying so large place, believes: "...the seeds of good and evil are not inherent in a particular social organizations or creed but lie harboured in the human heart." Even before the completion of *Moby Dick*, Melville seeks to solve the eternal paradox of the providence of God who instills in man a desire for life and at the same time burdens him with the certainty of death. Coming across the fictional arcade of Melville, Jerome M. Loving remarks:
The works of Melville previous to *Moby Dick* include that he had read widely in an endeavour to resolve this eternal paradox, but had already concluded that man's plight was more or less hopeless, that evil would harass him until his death because it was the malevolent will of God.

If God is good why does he possess the very malevolent will of evil? Such metaphysical question shapes suspicion about the nature of the Almighty. Therefore, the protagonist of *Moby Dick* also openly questions the goodness of God. The very first question strikes the readers when Ahab finds evil hidden beneath the white layer of whale. If darkness stands for evil why does not whiteness stand for good in Melville's eclectic achievement, *Moby Dick*? Answers to all these quarries can be found in Ahab's way of looking at God manifested in white whale. Attempts of different critics to interpret *Moby Dick* end in different answers. Its reading can be endlessly fresh and revealing. Almost every preceptor can find an interpretation that suits his own line of thinking. A number of critics interpret it either on social level dealing with the struggle between individualism and social convention, or on economic level focusing on the conflict between Marxism and Capitalism. However, it is also possible to argue that the white whale stands for evil and Ahab as the archetype of Christ resists its power. Ahab hates the whale as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them,
till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung. He resolves to pit himself, all mutilated, against his antagonist. He grasps that all evil to carry him are visibly personified and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. He piles on "...the whale's white hump all the resentment and rage felt by his race from Adam down against the divinely permitted suffering in the world." Ahab perceives the suffering in human life through his own suffering caused by the whale in his first voyage. He surrenders his heart to his mind. His intense hatred ensues from deep-seated animosity of his brooding intellect. It capacitates him to fight against evil in white whale. He himself explains that his assault on Moby Dick is more than a mere assault on evil, for evil is but the effect and he is interested in the primary cause. When Ahab strikes at the symbol of all evil he does so in a mad desire for revenge on God, whom he holds responsible for its existence. Anyhow, the attack upon the originator of evil is not the right way to rid the world of it so far we live in the world of imperfections. But it is Ahab, one of Melville's nay-sayers, who refuses to accept evil as the part of God's so called benevolent plan. He is absolute blind to realize that human life is caught in the web of good and evil as an everlasting situation. When Starbuck sermonizes Ahab that "To be enraged with a dumb thing...seems blasphemous," Ahab replies: "Talk
not to me of blasphemy, man. I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. When Ahab further takes into his own hand the task of ridding the world of evil—the destruction of Moby Dick—he directly challenges the purposes and the power of the Almighty which ultimately destroy him, whereas Ishmael, who elevates his heart over intellect, is saved from his destruction. By refusing to accept mortal existence as a coalescence of good and evil, man only frustrates and damns himself. And there is nothing admirable in the futile quest of attacking evil in the world when it is clearly invulnerable. Despite the futility of his quest he, like some of Hawthorne's pardonable sinners, rejects the existence of evil in the world. Rather than compromising with evil, he pursues it until it consumes him. To delineate Ahab's futile quest, Ishmael recalls Shelley's image of the wind whose power Ahab would have welcomed in his struggle against evil. Thus Melville, at the most productive period in his life, reveals a remarkably full picture of metaphysical evil.

Henry James' view of evil occurs in his essay on Ivan Turgeneff. He writes: "Life is, in fact, a battle. On this point optimists and pessimists agree: Evil is insolvent and strong; beauty enchanting but rare; goodness very apt to be weak; folly very apt to be defiant; wickedness to carry the day; imbeciles to be in great places, people of sense in small, and mankind generally, unhappy." He presents evil
of crime, violence, manipulation, and invisible spirit. But the horror of evil is not much distinct in his entire work. He develops a "sense of evil" rather than an "idea of evil" or a "concept of evil" for it is obscure and indefinite to him. Prof. J.A. Ward, in his study of The Imagination of Disaster, writes of Henry James.

In his works the reaction to evil often strikes us as vague and unrelated to specific action or character, or we may feel, as does Yvor Winters toward some of his novels, that the sense of evil far outweighs what the presented facts merit. In addition, says: "In James fiction man is not in a condition of absolute depravity, but he possesses a latent capacity for evil that is dreadful even when unrealized." Perhaps central to Jamesian treatment of evil is this pervasive awareness of the strange and horrible existence of latent sin. James rarely treats this sense of potential personal evil in his fiction directly, but it lies at the center of many of his ghost stories, in which the ghosts are "manifestations of a darker power inherent in the order of things." For James evil resides primarily inside the human consciousness, except in the background of his early fiction and in the foreground of The Other House. But he believes that the literary artist should deal with the evil which exists deep in human consciousness. "Though James gives evil external form, it originates in the will or the intellect and reveals its force by causing suffering that is not physical
but emotional and mental."  

The concept of evil is distinctively discernible in the twentieth century American novels too for the manipulation of socio-economic system, the trauma of war, and economic depression not only fracture the socio-cultural ethos of modern age but also bring disillusion to the writers of its own time. They fictionalize its bestiality to unmask its evil genius. A group of writers like Hemingway and Faulkner presents the various facets of evil. Insofar as they are shaped and influenced by the tragedy of war and its aftermath on socio-cultural complex of the post war America, they portray evil discovered through the initiation of the characters such as Horace Benbow in *Sanctuary*, and Nick Adam in "The Killers".

The novelist like Hemingway declines to spare any facet of the dark side of human experience unexamined. He brings forth the evils of killing, violence, and brutality. For he, from the beginning of his literary career, has been much concerned with themes of violence, and with the relation between himself and a hostile universe in which suffering, pain, and death are the rules of the game. His treatment of evil looms large in the texture of his writings. His very first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* displays social evil of callous younger generation. He, having been outraged by the brutality of the battlefield and the bull-ring, embodies war
as monster bringing disease and death in its wake. In the preface to his war-anthology, *Men at War* he tells: "I have seen much war in my life time and I hate it profoundly." His disgust of war is quite explicit in *A Farewell to Arms*. Captain Ronaldi, being tired of war, says: "This war is killing me. I am very depressed by it." War is butchery in the case of Maria, the heroine of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Hemingway believes that life, as it is imposed on us, is full of pains, disillusionment and impossible task, and that there is no remedy for anything in life, we aim so high and yet miss the target; the world kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. He thinks of evil, killing and sin in his literary zone. He contemplates the problem of sin in the *Old Man and the Sea*. Santiago, in *limine*, feels that it is a sin to kill the fish, but he imminently convinces himself:

> You did not kill fish only to keep alive and to sell for food....You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman. You loved him when he was alive and you loved him after. If you love him, it is not a sin to kill him. Or is it more?" 

To quote Leo Gurko, "He [Hemingway] is essentially a moralist, drawing fine distinction between right and wrong response. The right response is invariably the heroic one: Jake living his second-best life up to the hilt, Jordan ignoring the doom hanging over his assignment yet executing the plan perfectly, the dying Cantwell acting s though he
were in perfect physical condition, Santiago determined to fish in the deepest part of the Gulf stream despite the odds against him." Hemingway strives to face ills with stoicism, loyalty, wide of honour and courage. But Earl Rovit says: "He does not possess a mature vision of evil to come to serious grips with the problems of the modern human condition." He further speaks:

Hemingway does lack a fashionable sense of evil, often considered today to be a "mature" world view. Offhand we can think of no Hemingway character who is an animation of Original sin; we can think of no Hemingway plot that could aptly be described as one of motiveless malignity. There are many instances of evil, or certainly unpleasant, happenings in Hemingway's fiction, and most of his characters would patently fail to qualify for sainthood; but evil as such does not play an important role in his work. And because there is this common deficiency, there is also a lack of concern with a torturing sense of guilt or a crazed need for redemption. This may explain why attempts to explicate his work in terms of Christological symbolism rarely prove illuminating in any way. And here, too, we may find a precedent in Emerson--himself very unfashionable in his indifference to evil. His famous exhortative approach to evil could almost be synonymous with what seem to have been Hemingway's: "God is positive. Evil is merely private, not absolute: it is like cold, which is the privation of heat. All evil is so much death or nonentity."

Faulkner discovers the horrifying presence of evil. His address made in the summer of 1959 to the graduating class of the Oxford highschool:

It is man himself, created in the image of God so that he shall have the power and the will to choose right from wrong and so be able to save himself because he is worth saving;--Man the individual,
men and women, who will always refuse to be tricked or frightened or bribed into surrendering, not just the right but the duty too, to choose between justice and injustice, courage and cowardice, sacrifice and greed, pity and self;—who will believe always not only in the right of man to be free of injustice and rapacity and deception, but the duty of man to see that justice and truth and pity and compassion are done.  

shows his awareness of evil in life. But his concept of evil is basically Christian because, says Cleanth Brooks: "Faulkner is a profoundly religious writer; that his characters come out of Christian environment, and represent, whatever their shortcomings and whatever their theological heresies, Christian concerns; and that they are finally to be understood only by reference to Christian premises." A few years ago Faulkner, in defining his notion of Christianity, calls: "It is every individual's individual code of behavior by means of which [man] makes himself a better human being than his nature wants to be, if he follows his nature only." Evil for Faulkner "...involves a violation of nature and runs counter to the natural appetites and affection...his men, at least, cannot be content merely with being natural. They cannot live merely by their instincts and natural appetites. They confront the fact of evil." He finds the roots of evil in social environment. The discovery of evil is a very important aspect of his early novels. Horace Benbow, a man of academic temper, discovers the horrifying presence of evil rooted in the nature of
things. He also manifests the evil of self-centred hypochondriac as well as of aggressive rationalism in *The Sound and the Fury* in the character of Mrs Compson and Jason who dissolve all family and community loyalties and attachment. Faulkner therefore argues that mere sanity is not enough. He posits: "The good man has to transcend his mere intellect with some overflow of generosity and love." No doubt, he affirms that man is capable of evil but he does profess that one can achieve goodness by struggle, discipline and effort.

The novels in American literature never feel the absence of evil. Its cadence is constantly flowing from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. And Steinbeck is no more exception to the very literary tradition. He, too, is deeply moved by horrifying presence of evil in his age. Evil is very much active principle in his novels. It can easily be cognized if we scan the entire body of his work. The ranch-owners, fruit growers in *The Grapes of Wrath* and *In Dubious Battle* characterize man made evil rubbing the salt in the wound of the workers. The gallery of his art is full of portraits like greedy doctor, self-centred pearl buyers or hypocritic priest in *The Pearl*. They are manifested by Steinbeck’s evil in the spirit of modern society crippled with materialism. The novels like *The Moon is Down* and *In Dubious Battle* expose the evil of radical political
organizations which generally generate violence and dehumanize collective ethos. The nature of metaphysical evil is brilliantly expressed with increasing attention through the dramatization of the three generations of Trask family in *East of Eden*. Steinbeck, in his treatment of evil, does not follow either his predecessors like Hawthorne and Melville and Henry James or his contemporaries like Faulkner and Hemingway. He perceives evil as a free active agent both within and without. All previous and contemporary writers smear evil with either religious philosophy as original sin or moral disintegrity and code of conduct dominated by pessimism. But Steinbeck casts almost all aspects of evil—economic, political, social, religious and metaphysical—with optimism. He is perhaps the first writer to offer something valuable or noteworthy and positive dimension of evil by accepting it as an inevitable reality of human beings. The marvelous mosaic of all of the strands of evil, in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries American fiction, appears in the novels of Steinbeck.
END-NOTES


5 The Nature of evil, p. 8.

6 The Encyclopedia of Religion, p. 205.

7 Ibid., p. 205.

8 Ibid., p. 206.

9 Ibid., p. 206.

10 The Nature of Evil, p. 9.

11 Ibid., p. 10.


13 Ibid., p. 28.

14 Ibid., p. 28.

15 Harper's Bible Dictionary, p. 287.

16 Quoted in The Nature of Evil, p. 29.


18 Ibid., p. 62.

19 Ibid., pp. 57-75.


26 Ibid., p. 65.


29 Ibid., p. 97.


34 Ibid., p. 439.

35 *God and Evil*, p. 78.

36 Ibid., p. 78.


39 Ibid., p. 82.


49 Ibid., p. 7


51 *The Imagination of Disaster*, p. 5.


57 Ibid., p. 104.


62 Ibid., p. 44.