CHAPTER III

APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Steinbeck's concern with the problem of evil is a concern with an aspect of reality. Though the fictional world of Steinbeck is multidimensional, rich in colour and tone, his basic concern with the problem of evil is clearly discerned. Steinbeck's novels provide an illuminating study of his imaginative faculty mostly preoccupied with the dualities and ambiguities of human existence. His novels gain greater coherence if examined from the point of view of the problem of evil. His concern with evil can be traced right from his earliest attempts at writing, to his last work in the sixties. From the first piece of writing, *Cup of Gold* (1926), Steinbeck shows a preoccupation with the complex dualism which inheres in creation. The climax of *Cup of Gold* is his first attempt to capture the tragic reality that lies behind man's futile struggle for hoarding wealth and property which originates not satisfaction but frustration. His entire fictional zone ranging from *Cup of Gold* to *The Winter of Our Discontent* reflects his examination of the twentieth century American society which apparently looks well organized and
civilized but remains corrupt and decadent at the deeper level.

In most of Steinbeck's novels, his heroes are young innocents who plunge into the world of experience only to learn that the world is full of evil and has no place for any innocence. And it is the way in which each of his heroes comes to grips with the world that endows his works a comprehensive vision of evil. His minute observation of modern American society, made during his clockwise journey around the states, never forgets the corrupting influence of civilization. And he is often stricken by the mechanization and sterility of contemporary American life. His non-teleological approach makes his world more subtle and convincing. And he treats diverse subjects such as imbalanced economy, labour strikes, migrant labourers in search of the promised land and livelihood, the dehumanization of workers by the growing classes, totalitarianism, social and political injustice. This diversity highlights various elements of evil associated with different aspects of human life entrapped in the holocaust of economic, political, social and religious corruption which has generated a specific evil related to each of these fears of American life. But these are not exclusive compartments. They mutually overlap and contribute to studying the problem of evil in his novels.
Money is "the root of evil". It disrupts the moral as well as the economic world. The gnarled branches of imbalanced economy flourish with the flowers of tragic sense, flaunting the fruits of economic evil which darkens the American life. Economic evil is an imp of economic mismanagement and maldistribution of property effectuated by a growing depression during the first quarter of the twentieth century America. The World War I does not only bring the culmination of the progressive era and intensify reaction that follows, but also provide in several important ways the soil in which the seed of the Great Depression germinates. The American economy of the 1920s is seriously out of balance, and workers as well as farm labourers suffer the grunts of the economic maladjustment. "The wall street crash of October 24, 1929 (Panic of 1929), [is] the forerunner of the deepest economic depression in the nation's history. It persists virtually to the outbreak in 1939 of The World War II in Europe."\(^1\) Overspeculation in the stock market, a farm depression reducing farm purchasing power, loss of foreign markets, and lack of purchasing power by the masses of the people are some of the factors which contribute to the economic collapse. The weakness of the international economy and contradictory American foreign economic policy
also unquestionably bring about the Great Depression. "The resultant depression [is] characterized by business bankruptcies, bank closings, factory shutdowns, farm foreclosures, low prices, hunger and huge unemployment." And the rich gets richer at a much more rapid rate than the poor becomes poorer. The business man's attitude during the crisis shows them to be even more heartless and selfish than their past shady dealings. While many poverty-stricken workers contribute a part of their meager wages to help unemployed, the wealthy people often refuse to make any sacrifice. Then in the mid-1930s the dry time comes and turns the soil into dust. With the first winds, the dust rises and blows across half of the eastern continent, some of it settles only when it reaches the Atlantic ocean. The storms are a menace to health and prove to be a dual catastrophe for agriculture. When the topsoil lifts, it destroys millions acres of marginal land: when it falls, it suffocates crops on well-tended acres and forces tenants to leave their places. In response, then, to a continuing series of conditions that produces unsatisfactory economic situation in the southern Great plain states, farmers who had clung to the land on a bare subsistence level pick up their belongings and get off their place. Thus the Great Depression of the 1930s strikes the United States a painful and bewildering blow and marks a dramatic change in the
course of American history. The onset of the Great Depression weakens the entire decade of the 1930s. If we consider these reasons, a reliable barometer of economic conditions communicates a gloomy story.

Economic problems are, of course, paramount in the 1930s. It is true to say that the dust bowl does witness large migration during the depression years. It accurately pinpoints the economic ills that make the unemployed people migrate to the promised land in search of security. A little land, and a happy home become their dreams. They march at the southern part of America. Most of them turn towards California. California faces economic chaos and financial ruin through the influx of thousands of families pauperized by the depression. The migrant families attempt to eke out an existence in agriculture and other wage earning labour. The plight of migrants in one direction seems to be more responsible for the tragedy in their lives. Walter J. Stein thinks: "Had they been distributed proportionally throughout the state's urban centres, even during the depression's dislocation, their coming would probably have gone unnoticed." Indeed, some people migrate to Los Angeles and the bay area, and these metropolitan centres absorb them in silence. The influx of these people is so large in number that it fractures wage structure. The migrants, who reach California during socio-economic upheaval, are vulnerable,
defenseless; and disoriented American Okies. Outside the
camps, they are a class of pariahs. The new arrivals and
penniless, being unable to receive state relief for a year,
accept any wage in the fields (cotton). Low wages and labour
surplus in California become the rule, and the ethnic
composition of the labour force enhances the ability of
growers to continue the exploitation of agricultural
migrants. The assumed inferiority of the migrant labourers
leaves growers free to exploit them. Had there been no
migrants influx, wages in California agriculture would have
risen. As events turn out, the size of influx encourages
grower to hold farm wages down. Therefore, California's
agricultural income suffers considerably during the initial
stages of the depression. In effect, California's growers
recover at the expense of the migrants who pick the
increasingly profitable crops in lower rates. Growers feel
very much happy with the labour oversupply and they take an
advantage of it. In late 1936, for example, the Associated
farmers officially reply to charges that they meet "Okies
with hatred." The groups of have and have nots come up.
The devil of economic mismanagement emerges out of the
socio-economic chaos. And the Great Depression of the 1930s
imbalances the standard of American society. The labourers,
moving with a hope of a little land and happy home in their
minds, are totally exploited, and consequently their lives
too are disordered. Their goals are shattered. They are crushed under the monopoly of the growers.

The Dust Bowl and the ensuing flood of displaced Okies, the national economic depression of the thirties, and the growing plight of the oppressed workers all converge powerfully in the thirties to affect and appeal the mind of southern writers of the 1930s. After a false start with historical romances, Steinbeck turns to the scenarios he knew best. Economic mismanagement which is visible in the society of the time of the Great Depression, forms the main stream of ideas to be concentrated, discussed and explored by the writers. And the Californian novelists' love for their motherland, Salinas is amounted to a passion. Steinbeck is no stranger to Californian agriculture or to its maladjustments. His surrounding also serves well to develop his inclinations, and to satisfy his needs. The Salinas valley provides a physical setting in which majesty and menace are mixed. Its alternate promises of fertility and threat of drought shake his sensitive, plastic mind and stir his alert intelligence. Though his logic is cool his temper is not so. His thought and art are full of voice to be raised against exploitation of migrants, mismanagement of growers, and economically imbalanced states of America. And the blaze of buffet against economic mismanagement does buck up in the shape of books like *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes*
of Wrath. His writings steam with "...indignation at injustice, with contempt for false piety, with scorn for the cunning and self-righteousness of an economic system that encourages exploitation, greed and brutality."

Of Mice and Men, the play novelette, is Steinbeck's second book about the plight of farm workers. He initially entitles it as "Something that happened" that is to say, he wanted to write a parable. He admits in his letter to Ben Abramson that this novella "...is a study of the dreams and pleasures of everyone in the world." It is recognized as a novel of decadent capitalism in a ranch house setting. It is highly appreciated as the ethics of the Depression. Like the novels of Sinclair Lewis; Dos Passos; Dreiser; and Farrell, Of Mice and Men reflects the vigorous protest of the Depression era. Steinbeck is certainly true to his time. He has seen men uprooted, degraded, and finally destroyed by the ruthless mechanistic operation of the economic system of the 1930s. And his portrait of brutal contemporary realities begins with Of Mice and Men. In Of Mice and Men, man is after the age old ambition of owning land of his own. Man's longing for land is probably his strongest motive for action. The cornerstone of Jeffersonian agrarianism is this land hunger. Man, being motivated by his instinct for landed property, is one of the basic aspects of Steinbeck's novels. The central theme of Of Mice and Men is the dream
jointly cherished by George and Lennie. They like to have a piece of land and rabbits. A dream of such a stature is undoubtedly noble, particularly in view of the fact that the dream is concerning a land of their own for the inseparable duo, George and Lennie. Further the potential of the dream is so inclusive that eventually it grows to accommodate the physical wreck like Candy, and the Negro stable-buck like Crook.

Everybody wants a little bit of land, a land of his own. George and Lennie are two migratory workers. They reach a ranch in search of work. Lennie is huge and powerful, but his mind is not fully developed. He is a good worker. He goes everywhere along with George. The way in which they move about, suggests their relationship to each other. As the novel begins, George; a small intent man, and Lennie; a huge awkward man emerge through the willows by the Salinas river bank near Soledad. They are on their way to a ranch so that George can make enough money to buy a piece of land where mentally retarded Lennie can have peace and safety. Both of them, being migrant labourers, are rootless and naturally alienated. They drift and fly in quest of the means which can help them in materializing their dreams. They combine physical and intellectual energy towards a long cherished dream—the dream to "have a little house and a couple of acres an' a cow, and some pigs." This dream is, in fact,
the dream of freedom, social security, and status to sustain their survival. They often talk of their dreams and love to hear each-other. It is a sort of rituals to be enjoyed together. But on account of the centralization of property in the hands of ranch owners, they cannot translate their dream into reality. The big sized farms, producing grain, employ the workers. The owner, who manages a ranch, engages workers on a permanent basis or for each season. The latter are migratory in nature. They prefer to move on, once the seasonable work is done. And employment opportunities, in a long scale, are still far away. When Lennie and George come to work on ranch, they are aliens amongst the farm labourers. They sail their labour to earn the means for the inception of their dream. Most of the time, they are devoted to the mental rehearsal of their dream. Even the socially deprived Crooks dreams of a piece of land. And he is right after all. George tells Candy about a real ten acre place available for six hundred dollars. Candy, having some balance, joins the group of George and Lennie. They also scrape together a considerable sum by the month end. The dream nears its realization as they count their dollars, and expected savings of money. The dream is so catching that even Crooks, in spite of his distrust, is affected by it. Crooks knows that all the bindle stiff have always dreamt of home but the dream has never come true. Yet he is drawn to
it, and he offers himself to work for them. Their friendship widens into a large circle in which even the casual acquaintances are included. The dream is most possible. But the whole thing falls like a house of cards. Steinbeck suggests that the land hunger of impoverished farm workers seldom comes true. Their is no realization of the dream of their independence. When it comes to the stage of execution, it is destroyed, as if by the invisible hand of fate. The tragic end of their dream is inevitable. Not because of any lack of the requisite qualities in the dreamers but because the dream is based on an agrarian point of view which no longer holds good. Whether Steinbeck responds here to a Jeffersonian agrarianism as Chester Eisinger points out on merely portraying the dream of wanderers, it is clear that he is aware of the futility of the dream. The idea of small holding counters the onset of large scale industrialization crept into agriculture too. It may be the ownership that grants an individual dignity, a responsibility, and makes him produce better. But large scale cultivation wipes out the petty owners. So, even if George and Lennie possess a piece of land, they would not outlast peacefully.

*Of mice and Men* tells about simple dreams of simple people like Lennie, George, Candy, and Crooks—the dream that makes us sympathize with the characters. The novella also brings into focus the larger forces that destroy their
dreams. Economic evil, springing out of socio-economic distortion, dislodges these poors. The skewed economy cripples their spirit of materializing their dreams. It is true to say that they are devoid of the means to materialize their dreams due to the lopsided economy. But mere possession of money is also not a sure and guaranteed way to fulfill their dream. Many other social forces may come in their way and destroy it. They need a piece of land and a small house where Lennie can be treated kindly and humanly in isolation. They have neither any idea of collective welfare of the society nor the radical ideas for land reform including development of the land and increase of agricultural produce. They determine to create an illusive Eden outside the existing social structure. Lennie represents Adamic innocence. George represents experience but imperfect experience because it fails to protect the innocence of Lennie. Both of them nurture the desire in their mind and thereby they gradually alienate and distance themselves from society. They are unable to become selfless and thereby become an integral part of the much larger entity, the society. They are bound to be rejected by the society and doomed to a tragic fate. In this respect, they present a contrast with Sam, who is not a landowner but a worker on the ranch. But he is one with the social order and, therefore, at peace with himself. The various troubles that
come to George and Lennie are symptomatic of their being rootless drifting migrants on their way to the vain realization of their dream. George who has some potentialities of reconciliation of the social order still holds his ground. But he is not fully free from ego and selfishness. So he has not only to face defeat in the end, but has to kill Lennie with his own hands also. This act symbolizes George's killing of his own dream in the form of Lennie. He kills Lennie compassionately rather than leave him to the sadistic mishandling of Curley's mob. Consequently the pattern of George's life is disordered. He has deliberately taken Lennie upon himself. After killing him, he understands that a part of his body is destroyed. It is mercifully short example of the class of muckraking novels that plead for "the economic reconstruction of society." It invites the attention of the readers to join Steinbeck's protest against an exploitative society which mistreats Lennie and then hunts him like an animal. He is defeated by his own weakness, but even more by the evil of misappropriation of land and wealth in the world.

Steinbeck's novels have always been guided by a single idea of the interplay of dream and reality. Frederick Carpenter says: "...his thought has followed the development of the American dream." The dream of success, of paradise on the earth, the dream of new settlement, the dream of a
small place—these are some of the dreams that Steinbeck contrasts with the sad reality of life. His writings of the thirties reflects the contemporary dream of collective action ushering in a socialistic state. The dreams are shattered by cruel fate on the one hand and man's inhumanity to man on the other. Coming at the end of the Great Depression, The Grapes of Wrath gathers up all these dreams into an epic utterance. It is, in many respects, a mechanistic history, a story of violence and exploitation. It completely belies the sense of peace and lassitude that seem to hover over rural California. It is a story of nearly seventy years' exploitation of minority, racial and other groups, by a powerful clique of landowners whose power is based upon an anachronistic system of landownership dating from the creation, during Spanish rule, a feudalistic patterns of ownership and control.

The exploitation of farm labourers in California, one of the ugliest chapters in the history of American industry, is as old as the composition of landownership. Steinbeck is deeply moved by the unhappy lot of migrants. Even before Of Mice and Men and The Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck has written a number of articles on the migrant labourers for the San Francisco News. No one is better suited for than Steinbeck because: "He knew the work, he knew the people. He knew the bitterness. He felt them in the marrow of his bones. He
also had a deep affectionate sense of identification with the fruit-pickers. Steinbeck feels the responsibility so much that he, in one of his letters to his agent, Elizabeth Otis, writes:

I must go over into the interior valleys... There are five thousand starving to death over there, not just hungry but actually starving. The government is trying to feed them and get medical attention to them, with the fascist group of utilities and banks and huge growers sabotaging the thing all along the line, and yelling for a balanced budget. In one tent there are twenty people quarantined for smallpox and two of the women are to have babies in that tent this week. I've tied into the thing from the first and I must get down there and see it and see if I can do something to knock these murderers on the heads.

All the while Steinbeck had been planning to write a novel on the problems of migrant labourers. His youth, ushered in the darkening shadows of the depression, lashes out unjust ownership which is an emblem of economic mismanagement. It can be treated as economic evil that exploits the migrants and originates socio-economic deviation and violence. It is vividly and graphically registered as a summation of national experience in The Grapes of Wrath.

Steinbeck begins his novel of violence, The Grapes of Wrath once more from the beginning, but breaks off after only a little work. He wants to do more firsthand research. On his cross country drive he has seen mile after mile of roadways along camped sideways by the destitute and the homeless. He gets in touch with Tom Collins to arrange a new tour of
migrant camps. For a time, Steinbeck plans to trace the route of migration all the way back to Oklahoma. His novel would be about "Okies", as the migrants are derisively so called. The term "Okies" is as hateful as "nigger" or "kike". He does not make the complete journey to Oklahoma, but he visits several camps and speaks with people struggling for survival at roadside. He takes it all in, seeking ways to turn the mass migration into the background of his book. He wants to focus upon the conflict between successful farmers and the migrants. He tries as much as he is able to share the migrants' fears and hopes. He creates character with aspects as grotesque animalistic as any he has ever created. He puts everything he has in The Grapes of Wrath. He would build his story to a stories of peaks and, after each one, insert an interchapter in which he speaks in more general term the human problems faced by the Joads representing the problems of the world.

The sympathisers of the suffering migrants and social underdogs, the hater of money and inequality in society, the glorifier of the struggle and sufferings of the oppressed and poor strikers turn to another cause in The Grapes of Wrath. It is one of America's greatest novels and the zenith of Steinbeck's career, and balanced statement of the major themes that dominates his life's work. Steinbeck's achievement, in this novel, is summed up in Malcolm Cowley's
Central to *The Grapes of Wrath* is Steinbeck's continued preoccupation with California, the ultimate symbol of the big corporations like the Shawane Land and Cattle Company uprooting and driving the tenant farmers. In the very novel the Great central valley of California becomes the microcosm of the new Garden. Once again, Californian valley is an ironic fallen Eden, and the old dream of Eden is rejected in favour of a new dream of commitment. A dazzling cornucopia, the central valley, lures the migrants westward from Oklahoma and the entire Dust Bowl region with the dream of the promised land--the same dream that drove their forebears across the Atlantic and across the continent. In the thirties, labour agitation in the west shifts from the mining and longing camps to the fields of California. The 1930s in America is the great decade of the proletarian novels which sought explicitly to document the oppression of the downtrodden masses. During this decade writers flirt heavily with the communist party and write fiction for the proletariat. Henry Roth, John Doss Passos, James T. Farrell, Tillie Olson, Daniel Fuchs, Robert Countwell, James Agee, Edmund Wilson, Josephine Hubst and many other writers, sympathetic to leftist causes and more particularly to the working masses, publish important books during this time.
However, none of them really achieves the enormous popular success of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. "It offers an education in the dynamics of the labouring class and demonstrates how capitalism, in its inherent quest for the profit that keeps the machinery going, will oppress and even destroy the laborer."\(^{13}\)

In the space of four incredible years, Steinbeck published his two finest novels: *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Each novel is a radically different kind of formal experiment and each focuses from a different perspectives upon the conditions surrounding migrant farm labourers in California. These novels evaluate Steinbeck's thinking about the problem of labour in his home country. While maintaining the nonteleological stance in the first novel, *Of Mice and Men*, Steinbeck shifts perspectives to examine closely and systematically an intimate friendship between two of the wandering workers. And *The Grapes of Wrath*, in its narrative chapters, moves yet closer to its subject in a compassionate picture of widespread suffering. *Of Mice and Men*, however, is sentimental and slight book. Three years later, in *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck is able to present a fuller exposition of his agrarian view. Though the novel, *The Grapes of Wrath* has already been studied through the different doctrines--"the transcendentalism of Emerson, the democracy of Whitman, and the pragmatic
instrumentalism of James and Dewey" -- the Jeffersonian agrarianism seems to be much more important than any other motifs. It also helps a lot to touch upon the problem of economic evil portrayed in the very novel. Eisinger says:

Jeffersonian agrarianism...is essentially democratic; it insisted on the widespread ownership of property, on political and economic independence, on individualism; it created a society in which every individual had status; it made the dignity of man something more than a political slogan.

Steinbeck's greatest value lies in his perceptions of the great tension in the twentieth century agriculture. He remembers with nostalgia the comfortable agricultural society of his boyhood and youth. He understands the commercial forces those transformed agriculture after World War I. He shares the lot of the migrant farmers who lost their independence and became migrants during the Great Depression. Drawing parallels between Thomas Jefferson's insistence upon a small farmer, the foundation of an ideal society and the philosophy of The Grapes of Wrath, Eisinger states: "Steinbeck was concerned with democracy, and looked upon agrarianism as a way of life that would enable us to realize the full potentialities of the creed." "As a matter of fact, agrarianism is closely associated with what was apparently one of the primary motives for writing the book, the desire to protest against the harsh inequities of the financial industrial system that had brought chaos to
After the great war, the triumph of American capitalism, the Great Depression, the machine age and American industrial strength hatch the egg of economic evil. Soon after the publication of In Dubious Battle, Steinbeck makes a tour to Hoovervilles, the itinerant workers' camp in the Salinas and San Joaquin valleys. He picks fruits and cotton beside the field labourers and reports his observation of their living and working conditions to the San Francisco News in a series of articles called, "The Harvest Gypsies" (October 1936), later published in pamphlet form as Their Blood is Strong (1938). Some of this material goes into the interchapters of The Grapes of Wrath. These chapters provide a multidimensional picture of the monster of American capitalistic economy. It brutally rapes agrarianism, the way of an ideal society. It manifests different forms of destructive forces like the bank, eating the interest on money; the machine, uprooting the sharecroppers; and California Agricultural Corporation, exploiting the migrants. These destructive forces are intended to be the vivid projections of economic evil portrayed in The Grapes of Wrath.

Dry years make farming more difficult. The land itself, impoverished, turns to dust due to the bad weather. The recalling of mortgages and draught dislodge small farmers of Oklahoma and adjacent states. The recurrent draught and
repeated failures of reaping harvest also force the Joads to rely upon the banks for loan to keep on going. The owners are convinced of the degrading position of tenants. There is no work left for tenants. Therefore, they are forced to get off the land. The deteriorating condition of the land as well as farmers absolutely dispossess them. At least a sense of humanity, had it in the heart of owners, would have definitely encouraged them to hold on the same place and till the land. But the mind, nourished by capitalism, does not help out the have-nots. It thinks of only its interest and profit without looking at the mass starving for indispensable needs. This tragedy flaunts the vandalism of growers. They turn a deaf ear to the cry of the soul of the wretched of the earth. The dehumanized desire for the personal benefit instigates growers to exploit socio-economic resources. The main antagonist to deform the lives of peasants is the Bank. "The system they (land owners) typify is the chief object of Steinbeck's ire. No more than London is willing to rail for long at the cosmic order; but, where man has intruded on the ability of other men to make a living from the land, his wrath is like that of an Old Testament prophet." 18 The farmers, depending on the bank for loans, rather universalize the plight of the farmers in the world. They are caught in a pattern of American expansion and settlement that is beyond their comprehension. The banks, like the tenants, aim simply
at survival; they must show a profit to survive, and to show a profit they must evict the small-acreage sharecroppers. Together, the system tears the heart of the land and makes it inhospitable to man.

The Jeffersonian idealism cannot sustain its drive in the complexity of the modern age. The land, left by the Joads due to the great dust storms and unpaid debts, is to be worked on a large scale by the bankers syndicate. It is the main target of Steinbeck's indignance towards imbalanced modern economy conceived as economic evil. He attacks the manipulating spirit of Americans through the fusion of myth and symbols. He affectively criticizes the man made monster, bank which bankrupts peasants and grabs a piece of their land as well as casts them to the winds. He presents the general conflict between small farmers and the banks by dramatizing the thought of a whole group of people facing innumerable problems of upset economy. The agents of the banking syndicate throw them out of their land. It is just like a debate which recurs over and over again with each unfortunate family. We are shown the farmers squatting on their heels while the owners sit in their cars and explain the peculiar inward nature of the institution which they represent. This institution is bank engineered but without steering-wheel. No system is introduced to operate it properly for the achievement of common goal. Steinbeck
therefore opines: "A bank isn't like a man....The bank is something more than a man,....It's the monster. Men made it, but they cannot control it." He regrets: "The bank is something else than men. It happens that every man in a bank hates what the bank does, and yet the bank does it." It is a kind of impersonal monster that does not survive like men on side-meat but on profits. It has to have profits and profits all the time, least it will die. It sucks the blood of the sharecroppers. The bank and companies chuck them out of their land, though they argue:

...it's our land. We measured it and broke it up. We are born on it, and we got killed on it,...died on it. Even if it is no good, it's still ours. That's what makes it ours--being born on it, working it, dying on it. That makes ownership, not a paper with numbers on it. 

Steinbeck's agrarian ideals apparently make him resent also the mechanization and industrialization of agriculture with its concomitant absentee ownership. Not only the banks, land companies, and profiteers exploit the Joads, but the machine economy also exploits them. Machine is oftenly introduced as the mark of economic evil. In The Grapes of Wrath, it destroys the close bond between man and nature, makes the tenant farmers redundant and forces him off the land so that they become a shiftless migrant workers. It is a framework of bourgeois to capitalize on farm labourers. The tractor that the bank sends is equally
monstrous. Steinbeck portrays it as "snub-nosed monster, raising the dust and sticking their snouts into it, straight down into the country, across the country, through fences, through door yards, in and out of gullies in straight lines." \(^{22}\)

Man is more selfish in modern age. He would rather like to be inhuman also. The man, driving the tractor in The Grapes of Wrath, is no longer a man. He looks like a part of the monster—"a robot in the seat."\(^{23}\) The capitalism seems to be an uterus originating all kinds of monstrosities in the socio-economic frame of the thirties America. The thirties America neither steers its flight heavenward nor restrains a monster of machine age engineered by the industrialists. Their land is a factory in the field. It moves across the land of Joads. A single hand on a tractor takes the place of twelve to fourteen families and makes them homeless to take the road. Their cry—"I lost my land, a single tractor took my land"\(^{24}\)—is the voice of their buskin and misfortune.

The Joads, despite their strong attachment to land, set out for California in an old car converted into a truck. While their grandparents die on the way, they take the bull by the horns and fly in California. But they are not received with open arms in California. The politico-economical chaos impels them to brazen out exploitation, abuse, hunger and nothing else. Their journey is undertaken
with the hope that they would reach a new Eden for Edenic bliss. They are not alone on the road, there are many others who also traverse with the same purpose on the highway. Their passage symptomizes the plight of the Israelites, a biblical parallel of Exodus. It characterizes not only the flight and difficulties of the Joads in the contemporary context of American Depression but also a timeless phenomenon of labouring class. When they reach California, the Eden of their dream, they are disillusioned. F.W. Watt says: "The truth grows to overwhelm them that the paradise in front of them is a fallen world, that the place they have reached is as filled with suffering as the place from which they have fled."\textsuperscript{25} Here the land is fertile but the system is diseased. The Joads are disesteemed and disdained as "Okies". The productive landscape is managed by impersonal companies. Labourers are hired at daily wages which are not too adequate to serve their purpose. They are beaten and ill-treated if they protest against their exploitation.

Steinbeck admires the beauty and fecundity of Californian valleys. He says: "The spring is beautiful in California. Valleys in which the fruit blossoms are fragrant pink and white waters in a shallow sea."\textsuperscript{26} But its abundance is a great flop. It is not faithful to cheer up workers. There is stagnation and rottenness at the heart of plenty.
Overflow of harvest hold down the prize. Richness of harvest cannot enrich the owners. They therefore dump and destroy the fruits. Profit is the main concern of the private enterprise. Food is expected to fill the coffers of the ranch owners and satisfy their insatiable hunger for gold at the cost of thousands of physically hungry labourers and their starving families. The Joads journey from nothing to nothing, as if they bring the germs of corruption and infection with them. Steinbeck strikingly describes the bleak socio-economic condition of the place:

The fields were beautiful, and starving man moved on the roads. The granaries were full and the children of the poor grew up rachitic, and pustules of pellagra swelled on their sides. The great companies did not know that the line between hunger and anger is a thin line.... On the highways the people, moved like ants and searched for work for food.

The suffering of the Joads and other migrant workers are not perceived by the rich landowners as if there is no any disentanglement to the economic evil. The perspective of the short-term employer to look at the Joads is worse than a perspective of man to look at the farm animals. It is connoted by Steinbeck in his own words.

Fella had a team of horses, had to use 'em to plow an' cultivate an' mow, wouldn' think a turnin' 'em out to starve when they wasn't workin' Them's horses--we're men.

- Like Jefferson and his nineteenth century followers, Steinbeck favours the widespread ownership of land holdings
and believes in the dignity and virtue of the independent farmer who can live by the fruits of his labour and is nobody's servant. But the complexity of modern age has multiplied the new problems in the fiscal phenomenon. Farming has become mechanized industry originating a tragedy in human life. On this account Steinbeck scolds the industrialization of farming.

The tractors which throw men out of work, the belt lines which carry loads, the machines which produce, all were increased; and more and more families scampered on the highways, looking for crumbs from the great holdings, lusting after the land beside the roads. The great owners formed associations for protection and they met to discuss ways to intimidate, to kill, to gas.

Certainly, Steinbeck makes it clear that the sharecroppers are victimized by an economic monster--personified by the enormous tractor raping the land--that tears at the roots of the agrarian life Thomas Jefferson so highly praised for Americans. The Okies are very aware of the evils brought about by the mechanization of land. The vast, rapid, mechanized movement of the industrial economy looks like the wall of darkness thrusting the Okies back nether world. They crawl across the country like ants, live like pigs, and fight amongst themselves like cats, mainly because they are forced into animalistic existence caused by the dragon of economic evil. The ranch owners are too malevolent to knock them down. The mechanization of agriculture, a result of the
centralization of property, razes the landless men to the ground. The hard-hit farmers are wrecked by a force beyond their comprehension. They carry hope in their hearts but disaster lies ahead during their journey to Eldorado. Even the promised land turns out to be a cursed land. The whole novel centres round the sufferings of the Joads, their adventures, and the force of evil they encounter.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck portrays almost all the elements of tragedy, "...the driving force, the swift rush or events, inevitability, mounting pity and horror, and clash violence. His characters react properly in the face of evil, and the foolish things they do are pieces of eternally human foolishness." The predicament of Okies is raised in Steinbeck's passion and anger. He voices his wrath blatantly against the money values of the period of the Great Depression. He takes a close look at only two forms of *hoi polloi*—those who starve of food like the Joads, and those who zoom in costly cars carrying:

...creams, ointments to grease themselves, coloring matters in phials—black, pink, red, white, green silver—to change the color of hair, eyes, lips, nails, brows, lashes, lids. Oils, seeds, and pills to make the bowels move. A bag of bottles, syringes, pills, powders, fluids, jellies to make their sexual intercourse safe, odorless and unproductive.

Steinbeck is angry at the people in power who are blind to the reality. It is a great problem to bury dead Gramma.
Legally, the local administrator must be informed of death which would mean forty dollars. Therefore, Tom Joad indignantly speaks: "The gov'ments got more interest in a dead man than alive one." The contretemps casts contretemps. Rose of Sharon delivers a still-born baby. Casy is killed and Connie deserts his wife. Tom leaves the camp. Noah also blindly steps in cryptonymic destination. And some of the Joads are retrogressed by the heavy rains. The Grapes of Wrath stands for symbolic event in man's eternal search for the promised land which is enclouded by complexity of modern age and consequently capitalism fracturing the 1930s socio-economic strata. It is a treatise against social injustice. It is endured as an American epic and culminating expression of the material forces of the Americans.
END-NOTES


2Ibid., p. 303.


4Ibid., p. 41.


11Ibid., p. 32.


novel, The Grapes of Wrath: the transcendentalism of Emerson, the Democracy of Walt Whitman, and the pragmatic instrumentalism of James and Dewey.

15 Ibid., p. 145.
16 Ibid., p. 144.
17 Ibid., p. 143.


20 Ibid., p. 45.
21 Ibid., p. 45.
22 Ibid., p. 47.
23 Ibid., p. 48.
24 Ibid., p. 206.


26 The Grapes of Wrath, p. 473.
27 Ibid., pp. 387-88.
28 Ibid., p. 592.
29 Ibid., p. 325.


31 The Grapes of Wrath, p. 211.
32 Ibid., p. 191.
Political evil is a tragic harvest of maladministration in the field of politics. In the novels of Steinbeck it results from the death of democratic thought and the rise of totalitarianism which contradict with individualistic stand of birth right to freedom, liberty. It constitutes the loss of humanity.

The influence of political power in socio-cultural frame of human life is one of the vital dimensions of the study of American fiction. It has jagged the psyche of the novelists since the nineteenth century. The study of the late 19th century American novelists—Edward Bellany, William Dean Howells, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, and Jack London—symptomatizes the mad exploitation of wage-labourers. It foretells an intolerable misery that provokes a man for struggling. Similarly, the novels of the post-war period stigmatizes the diplomacy of political power. It punctures the frame of sound economy and casts violence in socio-political ethos.

Scanning the area of the post-war writings, Fay M. Blake says: "To most of the novelists writing strike novels during the Thirties and the early Forties, and to most of the Marxist critics of the period the political implications of the novels were of greater importance than the literary."
In accordance with his view, it is unequivocal that the thirties and the forties of the twentieth century are full of politico-economic and social embroilment.

In the thirties, the best writers—Dos Passos, Hemingway, Lewis, Dreiser, Wolfe and Steinbeck—made use of politics. They write intensely political novels presenting an entire complex of politico-social issues. Nazism, Communism are major elements in the post-war America. Political voracity, bossism, and the excess of politicians become the focus of literary glamour. Steinbeck eloquently limns these issues as a black power in his novels, In Dubious Battle (1936), and The Moon is Down (1942) to cognize the political drive and its sequel in the post-war America.

Steinbeck was never a radical thinker, pamphleteer, agitator, Communist, or fellow traveller. As the analyst and critics of the sociability of his age he disapproves the bias against democratic way of life. The Grapes of Wrath states explicitly and by implication his dissatisfaction with the growing cynicism in American society. But his experience in Russia reflects far greater hope for the regenerative power of democratic process of government than for the arbitrary authority of any totalitarianism. His two most searching examinations of the politico-economic and social scene, The Grapes of Wrath, and In Dubious Battle clearly reveal:
...his ideas of what had gone wrong with the principles of democracy during the 1930s. He had seen men uprooted, degraded, and finally destroyed by the ruthlessly mechanistic operation of the economic system. He became deeply convinced that the rule of law and order is perverted into tyranny whenever democracy yields supinely to the demands of oligarchy.

He, being a fearless champion of democratic ideals, envisions better life only through the socio-economic and political democracy. In one of his dispatches of the series, published under the heading, Letter to Alicia, Steinbeck strikes a chord of optimism. "Something is germinating a change: an ideal of achieving the reforms and a better life through the democratic process."

Steinbeck, as an ardent admirer of freedom for individual, accosts the principles of democracy. It sustains philanthropism. On account of his enthusiastic approach to democracy, Adlai E. Stevenson always shared an enormous respect for Steinbeck. His loyal friendship with Stevenson proclaims his favour for democracy. His political creed formulated in East of Eden sums up the object of his life:

What must I fight for and what must I fight against?...Our species is the only creative species and it has only one creative instrument, the individual mind and spirit of a man. The preciousness lies in the lonely mind. And this I believe: that the free, exploring mind of the individual human is the most valuable thing in the world. And this I would fight for: the freedom of the mind to take direction it wishes, undirected. And this I would fight against any idea, religion, or government which limits or destroys the individual.
He therefore stands against the drive of all the powers and governments which gives no credence to birthright to individualistic freedom. In conformity with this impressions, the present section deals with the maladministrations totalitarian challenge of Communism and radical strikers characterized in *In Dubious Battle*, and the malformed politics of militaristic Nazism portrayed in *The Moon is Down*, as the substantiation of political evil ruling over the political demesne of the Second World War.

On the political horizon, the new force like totalitarianism has sought emergence in the wake of modern age. It is visible in the form of Communism. It casts the basic problem of political theory by sweeping away centuries of social progress in an orgy of blood and cruelty. Though it works in the interest of a man, it forbids him freedom of will. He must remain pathetically tied up to his group. In fact, the role of group-man is constitutional for the mortals in view of the Communism. But the leaders use its power for their selfish end. They are:

...steadfast almost to the point of fanaticism....They lie; they foment strife for the sake of their cause; they take advantage of every atrocity committed by their opponents, in order to inflame the hearts of their followers. They fight the devil with fire.

All the principles, and ideals fall apart. The monster of maladministration plays havoc with human life. The careerist
leadership, whose passions lead to poverty, often misdirects the group.

The modern age is full of exploitation. Man has to struggle if he wants to hope for the best in this wolfish world. But his individual spirit is not much competent for it. He requires help from outside. He invariably comes in the area of the group-man and goes along with its collective spirit to consummate his dreams by revolting against the exploitative setup in the society. But it is the irony of his life that the collective spirit of the group-man sometimes takes a vicious turn within its body. And the group-man strides from strikes to violence and disfigures the panorama of human life which is descriptively portrayed in In Dubious Battle. In Dubious Battle unfolds Steinbeck's bitter awareness of the social conflict, individual tragedies, and disappointments born of the socio-political turmoil of the Depression years. It is communicated through the embittered people in this novel. It also speaks about mystical romance of exotic people in far away places, but with the pressing contemporary problem in America.

The true protagonist of the novel is the group-man. The workers' unification efforms it under the force of Communist organizer, Mac who precipitates in the situation and discontent. He is fortified by Jim Nolan, a serious disenchanted young man to organize the fruit pickers against
the self-interested orchard owners. Jim Nolan is cut off his previous life. He joins the radical recruiter. In his first talk with Mac, he states his intention to join the party: "I feel dead....I thought I might get alive again." Shortly after joining the party, he comes to the valley with a seasoned agitator, Mac to organize a strike among apple pickers in a nearby Torgas valley. It is mostly apple orchards owned by a few selfish men. When the apples are ripe, the crop tramps come in and pick them. The few owners who own most of the Torgas valley wait until most of the crop are already there to drop the wage scale in direct proportion to an increase in number of accessible pickers. And the tramps, who are badly in need of wages, accept the work at any rate. This delicate manipulation attracts the revolutionary people like Mac and Jim. They influence a leader of the gang, London and trap the workers also. They ride the rail to the valley and in transit Mac tutors Jim for his new role of party organizer. He gives him a piece of advice to contact the workers and consciously attempt to gain their good will to make the best of every opportunity. Factually, prime precept of their move is to fill the bill for workers for long while. Mac enters into the spirit of coalition. He educates the poor pickers not to put in tune with temporary adjustment of owners. He aims at better perspectives for trampers. He says: "Hell, we don't want
only temporary pay rises, even though we're glad to see a few poor devils better off. We got to take the long view." He intends to realize the workers about their power, strength of working together for better future. He arrives at a make-shift campsite as a herald of hope amongst the workers. But this is a sheer unauthenticity of the plan of Mac. The tact of Mac falsely claiming medical experience and delivering a baby unfolds the crooked heart of communist organizers. Mac acts as a midwife not to alleviate suffering, but to get into the confidence of the strikers. He is not imbued with a sense of fraternity. He, having no skill of delivery, risks two lives not because it is desirable as a human gesture but because the young pregnant woman is daughter-in-law of a, if unofficial, leader of the group—a man whom he can exploit to contrive a strike in the valley. His talk with Jim defines the means and end of their agitation:

We've got to use whatever material comes to us. That was a lucky break. We simply had to take it. 'Course it was nice to help the girl, but hell, even if it killed her—we've got to use anything—we're out here...to teach them to fight in a bunch. Raising wages isn't all we're after.

Mac and Jim vehemently renounce their individuality to discover the true meaning of their lives in the proletarian adventure finding that the apple pickers are sufficiently angered at wage reduction, they ingeniously set up supporting
machinery to sustain an initial attempt at striking. They enlist the party sympathizers like Al Anderson, Joy, Dick, London and the fruit pickers. Dr. Burton also joins them to aid and abet the organized sanitary camp area. Almost all of them cast off their individualistic ethos to become one with the group-man and join the collective ethos under the common banner of Communistic agencies. It is this group-man that takes the attitude of strike—the architectonics of In Dubious Battle.

The group-man is essentially a complex entity. It is never anything but an animal. It does not think, only feel and act, and even then most of its acts are violent ones. The violent group is just like a giant animal. Mac elaborates this idea: "It is a big animal. It's different from the men in it. And it is stronger than all the men 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." Doc Burton acquaints us with the actual disposition of the group-man:

It might be like this....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 for democracy'; or he says, 'we will wipe out social injustice with communism.' But the group doesn't care about the Holy-land, or Democracy, or Communism. May be the group simply wants to move, to fight, and uses these words simply to reassure the brains of individual men....Yes it might be worth while to know more about group-man, to know his nature, his ends, his desires. They're not the same as ours. The pleasure we get in scratching an itch causes death
to a great number of cells. May be group-man gets pleasure when individual men are wiped out in a war. 10

Even the group, administered by London's leadership, seems to be coloured in their respective lives. They have nearly lost their personal identification. Their individual ideals are seized in the fist of London. He ensures Mac that his fellow workers are unvarying alacritous to execute his orders.

The essence of humanness is to enjoy its fundamental rights. And it is the democracy that can protract it. But the emergence of totalitarian communism and its barbarity--political evil--has brutally crushed it in modern complex milieu. The individuals, who like to exert their basic rights fearlessly, have got no business with violent agencies. They hold the party, fomenting strife and strike, at arms length. No doubt, strike is one of the workers' means to achieve their ends. But it is equally catastrophic also for it is deeply rooted in furious emotions which mobilize a repulsive and dangerous lack of moral direction. The party, reeling with saeva indignatio, doesn't care for the cast of individualistic mind. Therefore, the cramps hum and how to side with the strike to be launched by the volcanistic communist organizers. They exclaim: "Christ knows we ain't making much, but if we strike, we don't make nothing!" 11 They express their indignation also for strike:
"...well, I don't like it. I don't like no trouble if I can get out of it. Lot of men'll get hurt. I can't see no good in at all."  They do not even fully confide in the strike as the way to raise their wages for long. Jim persuades one of the old cramps, Dan to get into some charity and make the county look after him. But Dan does disgrace to get into any charity for his personal eudaemonics. He knows the by-product of getting involved in the mob psychology. He narrates his experience in the group:

I lived seventy-one years with dogs and men, and mostly I see'em try to steal the bone from each other. I never seen two dogs help each other break a bone; but I seen 'em chew hell out of each other trying to steal it.

Not only the fanatic communists' organization, but the fruit growers' association also seems to be governed by terrorism. The malevolent monopolies not only abuse and oppress working class, but also destroy its sympathizers like a generous and self-hearted dinner owner, Anderson. They don't have even democratic intuition to have a full view of the imbriglio of pickers and their fellow workers. Their extreme adversity ruinates the lunch wagon of Al Anderson. They usurp his free will which sympathize with the workers. The spirit of his freedom is played by their brutal pinch due to his involvement in the brutal mob. Now, he regrets for his involvement in the crunch of radicals. He is on the horn of dilemma. He pines for his estrangement from the group but
at the same time he sympathizes with its pathos.

The unamiability of Communism is manifested in ungenial mentality of Mac. His defiled approach to group-man is one of the fatalistic flaws in the federal process of beings. He scolds Dakin for his materialistic axiology. "he loved that truck better'n anything in the world." He intentionality to kick Dakin out of the camp is an attack on the free will favouring materialism. Despite the antipathy of mercineries to the ferocity of the group leader, they are forced to translate his noxious orders into action. He suspends the admonitions of his subordinates. The originality of their mind does not work in the fraudulent politics of the boss. His decision is an ultimatum of the party. London's scrowling at fractured Jim supports this stance: "'Don't get smart with me,'....'I'm the boss here. When you get to be boss, you tell me. I'm tellin' you, now'".

The group-man bends to believe in the violence only. The violent bias is against the stance of democratic spirit. It is one of the facets of political evil. It disrupts socio-political normalcy. The group therapy, formulated for the noble cause of the workers, takes destructive turn. The battle of the strikers for higher wages is just as helpless as that of Satan and his angels against the ranks of haven. The party as collective person plays the satanic role. The strike consists of the corybantic ventures of the
groupie. When a sniper bullet pierces the carcass of Joy, the chain of furore breaks out like a string of fire crackers, and continues to explode throughout the novel with equal brutality and senseless mayhem on either sides of strikers and owners. The mob psychic set of Mac, Jim, and London to beat up a school boy as a warning to his classmates to stay away from the strikers' camp is the mechanizations of the devil. The acrimonious beating of a schoolboy holds up the mirror to their wanton cruelty. Mac takes the shape of beast when he lambests a boy.

'I want a billboard,' said Mac, 'not a corpse. All right kid, I guess you're for it.' The boy tried to retreat. He bent down, trying to cower. Mac took him firmly by the shoulder. His right fist worked in quick, short hammer blows, one after another. The nose cracked flat...bruises formed on the cheeks. The boy jerked about wildly to escape the short, precise strokes.¹⁶

Doc frequently remarks on Mac's inhumanity, and points out that the strikers are compromising their cause by restoring to violence. He makes him believe: "But in my little experience the end is never different in its nature from the means .... You can only built a violent things with violence."¹⁷ Likewise, by the end of the novel Jim has been shot dead in a vigilante ambush. Thinking over the devilment of the leaders in the camp, Joseph Fontenrose perceives a version of Miltonic Satan in malevolent Mac. He says:

To his confederate angels Satan offered freedom, equality and power; to man he offered the knowledge
which the lord has denied him. The party is tempter of the workers, offering them a vision of social justice, cooperative democracy, and economic abundance.

Near the end of the novel, when it is clear that the strike is lost and the workers will be literally butchered if they attempt further violence, Mac, nevertheless, rallies them to bloodshed by a means of Jim's mangled body. Yet, he plans with London to sneak out of the camp. His selfish mechanism to decamp increasingly represents his insanity exploiting the collective force for party agitation. In such wise, the democratic ethos is marred by the totalitarian communistic force seized in the group-man. And the spirit of independency, freedom of individualistic will of the infrastructure of group-man, is prostrated unkindly by dictatorial psyche of Communism.

Steinbeck always comprehends with full consciousness that man's necessary individualistic stance is meaningless apart from its social context. In one of his editorial essay for *The Saturday Review*, he speaks:

I believe that man is a double thing—a group animal and at the same time an individual. And it occurs to me that he cannot successfully be the second until he has fulfilled the first.

Steinbeck's fictional corpus is full of paradox from the point of view of his treatment of individualism. For while, many of his novels are linked with men primarily as mystical, social, psychological, or biological unit-protagonost, rather
than individuals *per se*. But his thought as a whole disclaims the value of the group and asserts the primacy of the individual capable of initiating "...the new direction and departures which present the species from losing its 'survival quotient'." However, in some of his letters to his friends, he asserts: "...the individual soul [is] very precious. Unless we can preserve and foster the principle of the preciousness of the individual mind, the world of men will either disintegrate into a screaming chaos or will go into a gray slavery." This is the pith and marrow of the Steinbeckian democratic stand of life.

Steinbeck happens to catch the sight of the humanism fractured by the bombarding of the Second World War soon after the great upheaval of the Great Depression and the farmers' associations. Having been deeply affected by the trauma of war, Steinbeck concerns himself with *war writing*. Although his fictional datum of war time is frankly journalistic, he eagerly produces his second play-novelette, *The Moon is Down*. He highly appreciates this data as "...a kind of celebration of the durability of democracy." So far he does not specify time and place of juncture. Joseph Fontenrose interprets the novella as "a parable of democracy against tyranny." His war publication is deeply influenced by his friendship with militia man of higher rank--General, Colonel. Similarly, the *nouvelle* *The Moon is Down* also is
the conclusion of his several conversation with Colonel William J. Denovan. However, The Moon is Down has its roots in the control of power of the new Leviathan involving modes of conduct which is completely antithetical to the men of good will who hold it necessary for decadent human existence and welfare.

Nazism, a phase of amoral totalitarianism representing a triumph of abnoxious power and maliciousness of bad theory, is one of the manifestations of political evil in The Moon is Down. Its devotees degenerate the traditional ethics and paradoxically enough, their very logicality accelerate illogicality. Having been nurtured on determinism and materialism, they do not hesitate to go the whole hog by denying rational outlook of reality. They flaunt a code of unmitigated force and violence. Their imposing primitive and savage eccentricity debar the integrated values from the cultural compass of mankind. Thinking of this entourage, Martin J. Hillanbrand says: "The ideals of democracy, individual rights, the rule of law become rediculous." In The Moon is Down, Steinbeck verbalizes the very existence of Nazis through an oppressive dynamics of German invaders who ride roughshod over the democratic Norwegians.

Steinbeck supersedes the strike, causing devastation in In Dubious Battle by the war, perpetuating disorder and destruction in The Moon is Down to focalize "...the
resistance of the individual spirit to the oppression of group-man.\textsuperscript{26} The league of German invaders is the archetypal hero of Nazi. It thrives in the venomous arena of dictatorship, and inflicts its ill will upon the free will of men. The invaders of \textit{The Moon is Down}, like the pirates of \textit{Cup of Gold}; the early American settlers of \textit{The Grapes of Wrath}; and Pizaro of \textit{Sea of Cortez}, have energy and direction to violently assault the locale. Right at the out set of \textit{The Moon is Down} Steinbeck vividly projects their attack.

By ten-forty-five it was all over. The town was occupied, the defenseless defeated, and the war finished. The invader had prepared for his campaign as carefully as he had for larger ones.\textsuperscript{27}

It all happens just because of the tricks of encroachers. They bribe the local quisling, Mr. Corell. It is the political stant. They grease the palm of Corell and captures the habitants for executing their reckless functional design in the town. Even Corell makes his treacherous plot work on his country. He systemizes a shooting competition and tempts the local troops with a prize for it. He sends them out to enjoy it and blazes the trail for invasion. He moves as a traitor to materialize his over ambition of holding some power in his country. He wants to command the post of Mayor of the town. Hence, he joins hands with foes and turns against his friends. He violates the bond of fraternity. Doctor Winter taunts Mr. Corell:
...our friend, George Corell prepared this town for the invasion. Our benefactor, George Corell, sent our soldiers into the hills. Our dinner guest, George Corell, has made a list of every firearm in the town. Our friend, George Corell.

Steinbeck fictionalizes different types of groups controlled by different forces. These groups can generally be categorized into two sects—the democratic, and the despotic—distinctively manifested as migrant labourers and arbitrary land owners in *The Grapes of Wrath*, fruit pickers and party organizers as well as orchard owners in *In Dubious Battle*, migrants and ranch owners in *Of Mice and Men*, and the townsmen and the invaders in *The Moon is Down*. Like the natives of Panama in *Cup of Gold*; the workers in *The Grapes of Wrath*, *In Dubious Battle* and *Of Mice and Men*; and the Incas in *Sea of Cortez*, the invaded citizens in *The Moon is Down* exhibit the softness of moral fiber which makes them fall easy prey to the despotism of invaders.

The group of the invaded and the invaders in *The Moon is Down* differentiate the stand of survival. The group of townsmen adopts the stance of individualistic freedom. They are fearlessly free in the praxis of democracy. But the group of the invaders is not too free to conduct the freedom of its free will. The invaders do not have individualistic vision of life. It is forcibly crushed by the Hitlerism. Their personal ethos and pathos are locked in their hearts and minds due to their collective emotionalism. They are
restless under a double strain— the watch of invaded for their weakness, and the watch of their commander for their mistakes. Their vis vitalis is nearly handicapped. They are under the terrific spiritual siege. Their personal susceptibilities hold them to their nostalgia. Major Hunter too, grimly says: "I wonder when we will be relieved. I wonder when we will go home for a while...." But they are forced to exercise the orders hissed by their Commander. They cannot go against the devilous drive of the party. They lose the right to question their authority. They are entitled just to suit their action to the word of totalitarian logic.

In the cult of despotic Nazism, the ethos of the party is more significant than the ethos of its individuals. But in the school of democracy, the ethos of the party and the ethos of its individuals are the same. Political creed of democracy always values the fundamental rights of its citizens. It also credits their personal sensibilities. Steinbeck strikingly casts this democratic framework of life in the image of Mayor Orden. Mayor Orden affirms an essence of democracy:

Some people accept appointed leaders and obey them. But my people have elected. They made me and they can unmake me. Perhaps they will if they think I have gone over to you. I just don't know.30

The herd men are lack of self-determination whereas the
free men are self-determined and self-directing. The herd men are enslaved to comply with the faction organism. But free-acting people are empowered to stand by pros and cons in their lives. They are unfettered and sovereign to operate their will power. Mayor Orden speaks to Nazi Lieutenant a little proudly: "My people don't like to have others think for them. May be they are different from you people." Unlike dictatorship, democracy credits equality and favours liberalism. Mayor is not an entity of authoritarianism but of libertarianism. It is not the woolsack but the burgess is the authority, and power of the country.

Disorder and destruction are the pairs of the compass of Steinbeckian evil. He descrys disorder and destruction fudged together by the autarchic soldiery. He comprehends it as "the highest development of animal life." Its insanity gives the coup de grace to the garden variety of the country. It disposes friendly communication. Civilians pedestrinize sullenly due to the curfew. They speak in monosyllables and think of war. Blackness hangs over the town. They cannot engage in their diurnal affairs because of the patrolling. They exchange no good-day with one another. They just settle i a slow, silent, and waiting revenge. Slaughter and death hover in the air. Cold hatred grows deeper and deeper in their sight. The impending disorder deals a death blow to gentry. The invaders presume that the invaded will
not spare us, and they will kill all of us. As love begats love, hatred begates hatred. Colonel Lanser, a spokesman of Steinbeck's concept of war, says: "...war is treachery and hatred, the muddling of incompetent generals, until at last it is over nothing has changed except for new weariness and new hatreds."^33

Growing hostility and xenophobia instigate liberal psyche against the assaulters. The drive of order and command is not a right conduit to convey the venom of hard will to free will of the civilians. It sounds the death knell of humanism. The species, nurtured on the free politico-social belt, cannot bear the pressurized torture of assaulters. Captain Loft, one of the assaulters, does compel the invaded, Alexander Mordeen to sweat for their end. But Alexander abjures his order and strikes him with the pick-axe when he repeats the order. Captain Bentick is killed when he comes to interpose and to guard his friend, Captain Loft from the blow of axe. When Colonel Lanser hold a trial to execute Alexander for murdering Captain Bentick, Mayor Orden, the spirit of democracy, perceives: "...these tendencies and practices have been proven wrong in every single case since the beginning of the world."^34

The brutality of collective spirit always kills the individual spirit. Though Colonel Lanser respects Mayor and his office, he cannot exercise his ideas because of his
soldiery. The political pattern he works in, has certain invariable evil tendencies. He bitterly mocks:

I am individual man with certain memories, might agree with you, might even add that one of the tendencies of the military mind and pattern is an inability to learn, an inability to see beyond the killing which is its jobs. But I am not a man subject to memories.  

This is individualistic ethos slaughtered by the destructive ethos of totalitarianism. The ghost of destruction dances throughout the fictional phenomenon of The Moon is Down because of an everlasting battle between democratic dynamism and totalitarianism, a "war of treachery and murder." Mayor also is eventually hosted and punished. But he reminds Colonel Lanser with the message that "the flies" which conquer "the flypaper" will be destroyed and driven out because:

The people do not like to be conquered...and so they will not be. free men cannot start a war, but once it is started, they can fight on in defeat. Herd men, followers of a leader, cannot do that, and so it is always the herd men who win battles and the free men who win wars.  

This is how Steinbeck portrays political evil, perpetrated by the terroristic totalitarian forces like Communism and Nazism, that dislodge the democratic stand of life and invariably constitutes the loss of humanity.
END-NOTES


7 Ibid., p. 25.

8 Ibid., p. 46.

9 Ibid., p. 233.

10 Ibid., pp. 107-8.

11 Ibid., p. 68.

12 Ibid., p. 54.

13 Ibid., p. 136.

14 Ibid., p. 156.

15 Ibid., p. 201.

16 Ibid., p. 186.


22 John Steinbeck: An Introduction and Interpretation, p. 98.

23 Ibid., p. 99.


28 Ibid., p. 20.

29 Ibid., p. 79.


31 Ibid., p. 24.

32 Ibid., p. 30.

33 Ibid., p. 33.

34 Ibid., p. 64.

35 Ibid., p. 64.

36 Ibid., p. 106.

37 Ibid., p. 140.
"Every age has its representative writer, whose career follows its interest, whose voice is its voice. In him we can see the moods, if not the actual events of his time, most clearly reflected and its strongest drives most forcefully crystallized."¹ Steinbeck, too, is no exception to the very vox populi. He novelizes the socio-cultural marvalent of the period of his existence.

The problem of social evil is one of the most important and recurring themes in the novels of Steinbeck. His novels of the immediate post war period reveal a preoccupation with the problem of social evil. The basic impulses of the forties toward social consciousness find their sharpest expression in his writings. His writings show a shift in emphasis from the individual to the group, until in East of Eden the group idea is dropped. Steinbeck who celebrates democratic credo of life and advocates a credence of individualistic freedom, is now "willing to take a vote and do anything the majority...want to do."² He does not like to impose his will upon others. He attempts to have all the earmarks of others because every social creature nourishing petty illusions has to collide with the social norms invariably. He probes into the socio-economic, socio-cultural and psychic codification to conceptualize the place
and destiny of a man in the society. He concludes that the
destiny of man is dismantled by social evil manifested in
predatory civilization in *The Pearl* (1947); social bondages
in *The Wayward Bus* (1949); and masculine egoism—pride of
human species—in the circle of *Burning Bright* (1950).

Steinbeck is very much moralized due to the horror ethos
of the Second World War. He seems to converge to the view
that there is a perennial struggle between good and evil and
this struggle has to be resolved on the individual plane.
Steinbeck therefore concentrates on the predatoriness of the
post-war American commercial society and universalizes it as
an aeonian phenomenon in which the weak is trounced at every
turn by the strong.

*The Pearl* is a projection of social evil exposed by
Steinbeck in the external form of the commercial
civilization. This novella is just like an allegory of the
individual's struggle for sustaining survival drive against
fierce competition of the modern commercialism. According to
John H. Timmerman "...such reading is thoroughly consonant
with John Steinbeck's major theme throughout this period:
that civilization represents a destructive force over the
individual and his dream." At the time of writing *The Pearl*,
Steinbeck perceives no chance of the individual success. He
observes that an individual has to strive hard and fight
against the brutal forces like predation which launches
fierce competition and paralyses the proletarian spirit to make him outlast hopelessly. *The Pearl* is actually based on a parable, described to the author at the time of his Gulf Expedition, which also highlights the strain of predation:

An Indian boy by accident found a pearl of great size, an unbelievable pearl. He knew its value was so great that he need never work again. In his one pearl he had the ability to be drunk as long as he wished, to marry any one of a number of girls, and to make many more a little happy too. In his great pearl lay salvation, for he could in advance purchase masses sufficient to pop him out of Purgatory like a squeezed watermelon seed. In addition he could shift a number of dead realities a little nearer to Paradise. He went to La Paz with his pearl in his hand and his future clear into eternity in his heart. He took his pearl to a broker and was offered so little that he grew angry, for he knew he was cheated. Then he carried his pearl to another broker and was offered the same amount. After a few more visits he came to know that the brokers were only the many hands of one head and that he could not sell his pearl for more. He took it to the beach and hit it under a stone, and that night he was clubbed into unconsciousness and his clothing was searched. The next night he slept at the house of a friend and his friend and he were injured and bound and the whole house searched. Then he went inland to loose his pursuers and he was waylaid and tortured.

Out of this incident Steinbeck reads first and foremost tragic tale of an impoverished Mexican Fisherman, Kino. The publication of *The Pearl* only served to increase the controversy. It generated more contradictory criticism than any other work by Steinbeck. Despite the extreme reactions of the critics like Prof. Warren French who presents a thorough denunciation of the work and argues that Steinbeck's
allegory lacks both insight and intrinsic worth, Levant, an ardent defender of the novella, surprisingly praises Steinbeck's ability to drive "an apparent simple narrative into the darkest areas of human awareness." In Steinbeck's account, however, it is the story of the great pearl, and "...retold tales that are in the people's hearts, there are only good and bad things and black and white things and good and evil things...."

The Mexican fisherman, Kino typifying the beach group in The Pearl, is the protagonist seized in the antagonistic community in the town. His peaceful awakening is disrupted by the enemy who in the form of scorpion invades his hut and stings his baby, Coyotito. Juana, his wife, who attempts to inactivate poison in the body of her baby, further insists upon the medical treatment to be sought from the town. The town is the obvious enemy of a natural man. It parallels commercialized civilization representing a destructive force that shatters social panorama. Howard Levant perceives an authentic character of town hat represents modern civilization as an intelligent scorpion:

The news stirred up something infinitely black and evil in the town. The black distillate was like scorpion, or like hunger in the smell of food, or like loneliness when love is withhold. The poison sacs of the town began to manufacture venom and the town swelled and puffed with pressure of it.

After Coyotito is stung by the scorpion, Kino and Juana,
seeking help, proceed into town. Their movement symbolizes a small morsel of food staying into the jaws of a predator. "That is precisely the nature of civilization in Steinbeck's perception—it will devour all lesser objects." 8 The four churchyard beggars, knowing the approach of Kino and Juana to doctor, set on "...to see what the fat lazy doctor would do about an indignant baby with a scorpion bite." 9 Howard Levant understands their consciousness that suggests more effectively than direct information could. He says: "Kino and Juana have come into 'the world' in entering the town, in needing the town they expose their inner unity to the town's consciously destructive evil." 10 The town itself is presented in animalistic imagery:

A town is a thing like a colonial animal. A town has a nervous system and a head and shoulders and feet. A town is a thing separate from all other towns, so that there are no two towns like. And a town has a whole emotion. 11 It unfolds its inward brutal force that sucks the blood of outcast minority in order to feed and perpetuate itself.

Beyond the town, moreover, lies an ever-larger chain of predatory civilization empowering its worshiper to nullify the attempts fixed by Kino to fulfill himself. Kino, out of sheer need of purchasing medical care, refused by the doctor to his baby, sweats and seeks the great pearl which is beyond price. Procurement of the pearl offers him a vision of better life—responsibility through a marriage ceremony and better
clothes, improved earning power, and self protection through a harpoon and a rifle. He confides in an essentially stable world. He desires literacy for his child who "...will read and open the books...will write and will know writing...will make numbers, and these things will make us free because he will know...and through him we will know." He is entitled to the bright future his new wealth, pearl makes possible. His ambitions are reasonable and in character. But at every step the colonized town frustrates his attempts. The music of the pearl rises with each step in the upward spiral. But it also alters "a chorus of trumpets" into a "shrilling with triumph". The sound of the insects, "...scraping crickets and shrilling tree frogs and croaking toads seemed to be carrying the melody of evil." The merged images of dissonance and darkness subsist to preempt the bright music of Kino's family song. Yet Kino ventures to materialize his bright future. But the behavioral norm of mercantilistic society stands up to destroy it. In such wise, Steinbeck juxtaposes an individual dynamics of a natural man and mercantile mechanism of city to recount the co-eternal struggle of good and evil. Introspecting the co-eternal struggle of good and evil in The Pearl, Michale J. Meyer declares:

In the city the evil darkness intermingles with the good light. It cannot be extracted by folk cures, religion, or ancient spells because it runs rampant
among the so-called civilized people, whose avarice and jealousy destroy their potential for good. 14

The discovery of the pearl accumulates the forces of evil in the town. The town vibrates with the news. The priest, the shopkeepers, the doctor, the beggars, and the pearl buyers calculate the wealth of the pearl and their own interest. As a matter of fact, the pearl is a neutral object. It magnifies Kino's dream of social aspiration and achievements. But the parasitism, fully observed in the predatory culture complex of a huge biological chain, throws a wrench in the machinery of Kino to soil and water the plants of its inorganic needs at the cost of organic needs of a natural man. No woman would like to destroy a precious thing like pearl which can only be the key to her problems. But contemplating the monstrosity of predatory capital, Juana's focus is changed to look at the pearl not as a precious thing but an embodiment of evil. She pleads her husband: "Kino this pearl is evil. Let us destroy it before it destroys us. Let us crush it between the stones--Let us...throw it back in the sea where it belongs." 15

The news of Kino's great pearl goes through the length and breadth of the land. It puts a thoughtful look in the priest's eyes. He sharpens his memory of certain repairs necessary to the church. A priest also, as an integral part of the citified system, oppresses and exploits the smallest
unit of society without mercy. He wonders whether he has
baptized Kino's baby, and married him for that matter.
Criticizing the religious monopoly of a priest, Louis Ownes
says: "...the desire for marriage in a 'great church' is
simply a value foisted upon the Indian by the church of the
corrupt priest." 16

The doctor, being a part of the commercialistic
framework of the town, insinuates a germ of evil. The doctor
is essential to the cure of Coyotito suffering from a
scorpion bite. But he refutes to medicine poisoned baby
because the parents of baby are empty-handed. He thinks that
he will not be paid for his medical care. In denying
Coyotito's humanity, doctor foreshadows the violent, inhuman
response of the world to Kino's good fortune. However, it is
he who insists on making a house call and walks down the
ghetto of brush huts as soon as he comes to know that Kino
has found a pearl. The charm in the pearl lures him. He calls
upon Kino to treat his baby. He medicates poisoned baby but
erroneously and makes it sick in order to create an
artificial need for his treatment. The scorpion that stings
a baby is less inhuman than the doctors who treat a child
prejudicelly to gain fee. The scorpion is innocent of its evil
function, but man acts with reason and foreknowledge. Even
the doctor's prescription is questionable, as Kino cannot
help but wonder whether Coyotito's illness has been caused by
the doctor in order to gain the pearl for himself.

Doctor's visit to the Indian ghetto of brush huts itself metaphorizes the predacious cult in urban civilization:

Out in estuary a tight woven school of small fishes glittered and broke water to escape a school of great fishes that drove in to eat them. And in the house the people could hear the swish of the small ones and the bouncing splash of the great ones as the slaughter went on....And the night mice crept about on the ground and the little night hawks hunted them silently.  

Peter Lisca concentrates on the similar passages employed by Steinbeck in his work "to reveal the predatory drive which, beneath his civilized mask he shares with other living creatures." The greed of doctor parallels the values of the pearl buyers. And the doctor's mumbo and jumbo, when he appears, having heard of Kino's pearl, sounds our perception of the thorough corruption of the world by its echo of the faked competitive frame of the pearl buyers.

The pearl buyers as well take a stand of the exploiting emotivity of modern vying culture. It is wrapped up in its supposititious degree because the pearl buyers assume the guise of segregated and competing force. They are simply parasitic species without any concern for dignity, justice or life. They settle their mind to pocket the pearl by practising their tactical strategies. They offer Kino a meager amount with a view to defraud him and grab his precious pearl. Steinbeck, retracing the selfish madness
in modernity, observes:

...every man in the world functions to the best of his ability, and no one does less than his best, no matter what he may think about it. Quite apart from any reward they might get, from any word of praise, from any promotion, a pearl buyers was a pearl buyer, and the best and happiest pearl buyers was he who bought for the lowest prices.\textsuperscript{19}

The dealers try to trap him by their cunning business. Kino realizes: "...the creeping of fate, the circling of wolves, the hover of vultures. He felt the evil coagulating about him and he was helpless to protect himself. He heard in his ears the evil music."\textsuperscript{20} The functional design of the town, however, is made up of animal-like forces as of wolves and vultures to feed on the blood of weakers. They constitute the forces of hell on the earth that surround human soul wavering between the temporal and the timeless values of life. Peter Lisca therefore links "the doctor, the priest, and the pearl buyers to darkness."\textsuperscript{21}

All the demoniacal forces are let loose. Kino's hut is ransacked and burnt down. His canoe too is demolished. The destruction of the canoe reflects the destruction of Kino's life. For it is at once property and source of food for Kino. Kino is hold back by an avaricious commune. He had the vision of better life and courage and the whirl withal to pursue it, but the sordid boon of exploiters clips the wings of Kino. He has lost one world without gaining another. He plans to run away from the town to go out into the world.
The novella, *The Pearl* thus details the explosive conflict of the civilized world, as Steinbeck employs "civilized" in the Cannery Row trilogy to signify the aggressive structure of society over an uncivilized, outcast minority. Kino and his small clan on the beach are roughly equivalent to the small clan on Cannery Row encroached upon by the civilized world. Typifying beach group are family ties, poverty, dreams of a better life—qualities one observes in all Steinbeck's outcast minority groups. Prof. Timmerman says: "...the civilized world becomes a devourer a monstrous combine raking the lives of lesser creatures into its insatiable maw." From alpha to omega, Kino, like other Indians, is at the mercy of raptorial enterprise, and socio-economic hereditary which he cannot defeat. In his blindness, he courts the destruction of all he values most. His otiose tussle against the detrimental talent of the town to shield the pearl puts his nose out of joint. It conduces to the loss of his home, a spiritual estrangement from his wife, and the death of his son. He flings the arrows of his ventures to pierce an urban Satanic functionalism. But most of them go up like a rocket and come down like a stick.

Steinbeck re-examines the underlying assumptions of modern civilization and attacks its fictitious values as well as its self deception in his third book of the post war survivance, *The Wayward Bus*. "Though *The Wayward Bus* does
not make significant change in Steinbeck's views on evil in the post-war period...this is more bitter book than *The Pearl*, more intent in its dissection of evil." What Steinbeck observes much in the post-war America is unsatisfactory to him so far it is deeply dyed in the negative capability of modern civilization. As in *The Pearl*, Steinbeck protests against the modern civilization expanding commercial zone and renders the individualistic struggle to survive in the predatory flux, in *The Wayward Bus*, he examines the modern civilization of business world enmeshing the mediocre Americans in times of prosperity, and decides their pretentiousness and pharisaism. *The Wayward Bus* formalizes the sources of his earlier satire spreading over to what he observes of the upper echelons in American socio-stratum. After *The Grapes of Wrath*, he in a crescendo celebrates the creative power in human action. But, at bottom, his distaste for the contemporary life maintains its stability. In *The Wayward Bus*, Steinbeck therefore caricatures a variety of characters--drawn like Chaucer's Pilgrims from different social strata and individual idiosyncracies--to focus on the problem of social evil at multiple levels in the general climate of the post-war America. He unfolds their response to the alentours in which they find themselves determined by their particular station in society reminding them of their morale through their
uninhibited and spontaneous passions.

On account of understanding the problem of social evil in _The Wayward Bus_ in different ways, the three dimensional characterization—the damned; those in purgatory; and the saved or elect introduced by Peter Lisca in _The Wide World of John Steinbeck_, and Lester J. Marks in _The Thematic Design in the Novels of John Steinbeck_—genuinely needs a new and fresh approach in order to be exclusively recategorized into three angles: social, occupational, and matrimonial bondages. It is found that the late adolescents, Norma and Pimples Carson pertain to the social bondage group; Occupational bondage includes Mr. Elliot Pritchard and Camille Oaks; and Juan Chicoy vests in matrimonial bondage. The journey of everybody on the lonely bus, "Sweetheart", itself reflects the evil condition of her cargo passing through the valley.

The clouds piled in gray threat on threat and a blue darkness settled on the darker greens seemed black and the lighter green of grass, a chilling wet blue. "Sweetheart" come rolling heavily along the highway and the aluminum paint on her gleamed with evil of a gun.

The two adolescents, Pimples Carson, a mechanic; and Norma, a waitress of Rebel Corner, feed their ambitions excessively on commercial offers of success and beauty without making any sincere efforts. Their universe of discourse is governed by the illusions garnered from motion
pictures. Pimples desires a career of radar-engineering which springs from newspaper advertisement; moving pictures and the rest from the radio, while Norma entertains a quixotic ideal of becoming an actress herself merely on the stories of comfort enjoyed by the celebrities of the Hollywood. Their zealotism nettles them to disregard the frame of reference of their lives as workers for Juan. Their intellectuals are incessantly overladen by the magnanimity of commercialistic halo. Their intellectualization is unvaryingly consumed by the ideas of better and richer prospect. But they never make any attempt to expedite their affairs. Steinbeck bothers about such youngsters succumbing to hallucinations by becoming socially unconscious and helplessly managing to find merely the tin-gods of the movie-world. Pimples desires personal advancement but he lacks skill and conception required for men to be really successful. Norma, dreaming, wastes her time in writing long letters to her dream boy, Clark Gable who will someday discover her and rescue her from the ignominy of small town waitresshood. She keeps his picture on her dresser and at night wears a gold ring to visualize her wedding ceremony. The rest of her soul is concocted of cliches about personal appearance. She brushes her hair "ten strokes on one side and ten on the other. And when she brushed she raised and flexed the muscles of one leg and then the other to develop the calves."27 As she picks up
her contact with Camille Oaks on the bus, she, in her mind, decorates her house with big, thick curtains and a long coach to welcome and greet her friends. But she simply grapples with Pimples in the bus. The masks and faceds of Hollywood style daydreams break down. They are not conscious of their social strata as well as their careerism. The wing, with which they fly higher and higher into the sky, are crushed down by the evil shadow of aspiration. One might say that they are the victims of the world that Mr. Pritchard symbolizes "a world of business first that manufactures illusions for the ignorant and meek."\textsuperscript{28} They are extreme example of a generation of individuals seeking hopelessly for idols to emulate when old idols have been crushed.

Camille Oaks, the blond stripper; and Mr. Elliot Pritchard, a slight variation of Sinclair Lewis' businessman, also strain for better life. But they, too, cannot materialize their expectations since they are involved in the reckless functional design of their enterprise. It shapes their lives without manumitting them from its bondage. Therefore, the occupational bondage functions like the force of evil that crumples their career. Camille Oaks really likes the domesticated normalcy, "...a nice house in a nice town, two children, and a stairway to stand on. She would be nicely dressed and people would be coming to dinner."\textsuperscript{29} But she, being encircled by occupational
bondage, cannot come up to the mark of her goal of shaping domus. She is a beautiful blonde who makes a living by taking off her clothes and sitting in bowls of wine at men's club parties. Her overwhelming erotism makes a dent in men almost identical to that of the season of flowering and growth. She cannot help having this effect on men. For a time, she tries to counteract it by weaving severe clothes, but that does not help her much. After learning typing, she works in the office to meet her problems and needs, but offices go on pieces when she is hired. She cannot understand stags or what satisfaction the men get out of them. She differs from other girls, but does not know how. Men cannot keep their hands away from her. Everybody expects the same thing from her. She is a girl "who put out a strong ...feeling of sex."30 In her presence, even the sinister Louie feels: "...his throat was closing and rising pressure was in his heart."31 She, being disgusted with the glamour of stags, wants to fly from the world of sensual beauty to domestic drudgery. But her occupational therapy in the club casts her personality in such a frame that she cannot come out of it. Wherever she goes, her temporal beauty catches more and more fools. Likewise Pimples, a teenager, is emotionalized by her aphrodisia. We are told that when she speaks, "...a quick spasm kinked Pimples' stomach at the throaty tone."32 John Ditsky appropriately
labels Camille as "the Aphrodite of California." Howard Levant opines about her as:

a naturally provocative woman, surrounded by an uneasy awareness of her mysterious sexual power over men. Camille is forced to retreat constantly from the social implications of her role as a love goddess. She is unable to live a normal life in Modern American society. Her situation demonstrates that so-called civilized restraints have corrupted American life at its sexual core.

As her name underscores her important role as a goddess of natural sexuality, "...she remains personification of the potently sexual nature surrounding 'Sweetheart's passengers on their pilgrimage." She does not sense even an immortal touch of the hand of her husband because the advertising in the women's magazines from which her dreams come never include a man. Her dreams are designed with an everlasting autumnal hues. Her wonderland is a great fiasco.

Mr. Elliot Pritchard, en plus, wants to sustain his manhood he has lost in the sordid boon conducted by groups of men "who worked alike, thought alike, and even looked alike." But his commercialistic bias does not make him so free from the cliches of boosterism, service, ambition, corruption and materialistic advancement, as to exercise some amount of conscience to be pleased with the beauty of the world. The world is too much with him. He has far too long indulged in the commercial pharisaism to begin now to be honest with others or with himself. When, for a while, he
recaptures his cruelties and rapacity, the best he can do is recoil to blame upon his wife and rape her in the dirt of a cave. The trading ethicality enslaves him. It de-energizes him to rejoice in the disarming delicacy of his desideration. The evil, surfacing from the core of the hypocrisies of business ethics, deforms the vision of his lives.

Matrimonial bondage, too, sometimes manifests itself as an antithetic obligation to derail human life and to break the advancing journey of man. To state the fact, the bondage of matrimony is the essence of human life. It unites two souls together with an eye to enlighten human life to establish ideals of preferred life. Milton Rokeach, in his studies of The Nature of Human Values, observes: "...society socializes men and women to play their sex-roles very differently. Men, for example, are conditioned to place a higher value on achievement and intellectual pursuit; women are conditioned to place a higher value on love, affiliation and the family." Indeed it has its own demerits when it permits the dictatorial spouse to restrict their spontaneous, inner urge or action. Juan Chicoy, the driver of bus, 'Six-cylinder world', is the husband of Alice Chicoy. He loves her because nobody loves her. But she is a sexually frustrated adult. She frequently gives free rein to drinking and her husband cannot stand the smell of her drinks. She shares violent emotions and finds her outlet in hatred and
rage which makes Juan awfully unhappy and dejected. Juan likes "to see and judge and consider and enjoy" the things of various sizes and importance, whereas she "could only love, like, dislike, and hate." Her earnest and nervous mood leads quarrel between them and generates the heat of uncontrollable pressure. She treads on others' toes with a view to content her own hatred and uncertainty. She attempts to destroy other individuals who come into her contact. On account of her self-centred bias, she makes innocent person suffer unnecessarily. Her dictatorial demand of love and understanding constantly displeases her husband. A great weariness therefore houses in his mind. Disgusted with nagging and alcoholic wife, Juan Chicoy nourishes a desire to return to his native Mexico. He thinks about just heading for the hills like "a ferryboat captain in New York who just headed out to seas one day and they never hear from him again." In the course of the trip across the mountain, he purposefully ditches the bus in the mud and walks away. He abandons the bus and passengers, marooned on a bare hillside with caves for shelter and a crate of Mother Mohoney's Home Baked Pies for food, to consummate a dream of better life in Mexico. In abandoning the bus, he abandons his role as a responsible and proud individual. At the bottom of his desire he actually dreams of freedom from his unlovable wife. He therefore vows: "I will never go back to Alice, I
will take of my old life like a suit of underwear." However, his mind is crowded with the memories of Rebel corner: "Alice, looking out of the screen door. And he thought of the bedroom with its flowered curtains." It cripples his spirit and fetters his legs striding for "the sunny sharpness of Mexico and the little girls in blue rebozos." He is pulled down to follow the via media of humanistic set point.

The story line draws its inspiration from an emotional crisis Steinbeck suffered in 1948 when his second wife, Gwyn divorced him. Alice Chicoy's alcoholism also highlights the drinking habits of Gwyn whose drinking had become chronic. Like Alice's abusive shouting under the influence of alcohol, Gwyn shouted harsh and abusive statement belittling Steinbeck's accomplishment and abilities which forced him to leave New York and retreat to Monterey in search of mental peace as Juan Chicoy plans to leave his "Sweetheart" for Mexican life. Steinbeck, in the same manner, exposes his attitude towards matrimonial bondage that deprives a man of his strong urge to envision better life. It is therefore true to say that "...events in an author's life color his conception of reality and provide experience transmuted by art into his characters...."

Carroll Britch says: "A modernized version of Milton's Paradise Lost, In Dubious Battle is in turn updated through
the allusions Steinbeck makes to the cosmos of William Blake in shaping the plot of *Burning Bright*. In alluding to Milton and Blake, Steinbeck leads his audience to think upon the problem of good and evil, but through his treatment he narrows the problem to that of love and hate, to the passions which shape lives as they are humanly lived. Steinbeck is a promoter of universal fatherhood. He states that all life is holly and prefers the life of species to the individual life. He observes American Adam whose life is full of cruelty; violence; weakness; and wickedness and runs an experiment in the play-novelette form called *Burning Bright* to look down Joe Saul's empty and vainglorious masculine ego which can be treated as another instance of social evil shattering his life till he attains a vision of the needs of the whole human race, and realizes the real value and importance and immortality of the human species.

A lithe and stingy man of middle age, Joe Saul stars as a trapese artist in the show-business atmosphere of the circus. Opening of the novella presents him as a man who dabs his face with powder and other cosmetics to strengthen his will to express his inner anguish to father a child. Steinbeck signals that the family Joe inherits is a very orthodoxical one, a private unit, a tribal cell--not at all communal--whose main concern is and always has been its own welfare and survival. Joe Saul, being grown up under his
grand father's cannonical domestic influence, often craves for a lots of kids. It is most important for him to have a family line. He advocates: "A man can't scrap his blood line, can't snip the thread of his immortality....There is a trust imposed to hand my line over to another...." John M. Ditsky recognizes this as an "awareness of role, of destined pattern, that is responsible for the compulsion to have children, to keep the blood line going." Joe Saul's first wife, Cathy, died childless, and for three years he has been married to Mordeen. She as well fails to bear a child. He feels in his bones that he has to answer the call of duty of sustaining his blood line. Of course, it is an outgrowth of sterile Joe Saul. He thinks it is a bitter seed which keeps him in the darkness of his own secret cave like a mole. Yet he has respect for his blood line. In each act, he assents his lineage back to the dawn of man. It is out of this masculine ethos, he rejects a man like Victor. Because he is not an ancestral part of his blood. In proclaiming that "his blood is not my blood", Peter Lisca says: "Joe Saul reaches the hight of tragic hubris." Carroll Britch places him in the canon of primitive stage in the involutionary process which is also embodied by Steinbeck in his cave-like tent with walls stained brown and green and gray with mildew, with only "prickes of sun" to light the "black dobe of earth". The perpetuation of Joe Saul's biological identity
through children of his own recalls the desire of Richard Whiteside of *The Pasture of Heaven* for children of his own to ensure the continuance of the dynasty to found. But Joe Saul's anguish for children is more ego-centred than Richard's and does not possess a trace of concern beyond his personal need.

Mordeen, the second wife of Joe Saul, is aware of the fact of her husband's impotency. She finds her husband incessantly engrossed with the thought of ancestral immortality through his own blood and species. His nervous, flexing hands telegraph her the message of his cry for children. She cannot bear with the destiny of her family. And she commits adultery with Victor to present her husband with a child and to see him flushed with joy. Joe Saul's passion for children is sullied by a desire for the presentation of his biological identity through his children and so, when Mordeen conceives it, he pops up with joy as if his ultimate reason for being is rationalized. He exclaims with understandable pride: "I am not dead. My blood is not cut off. My immortality is preserved." With this sense of fulfillment is combined an expression of his personalistic egotism. He asserts to Victor (because Victor chides him for his impotency): "...you have not been learned your trade. You did not hang clinging to your father's forefingers. You have no blood in it". He shouts proudly:
'It's right there growing. It came from me--do you hear? It came from me. And it will be a piece of me, and more, of all I came from--the blood stream, the pattern of me,...like a shining filament of spider silk hanging down from the incredible ages'.

But he does not know that he is cherishing the bliss of his ignorance. He delights in self-glorification, in the idea that he has given his child the greatest gift of life. He goes crazy with power and joy. He calls upon the doctor in order to underscore his pride. And he compels doctor to glance the report of his sperm in the microscope. When he looks through the microscope of Dr. Zorn, he gets hold of his "...shrunken and crooked and dead, corpses of sperm--dead." The discovery of his sterility threatens his egoistic machismo. The illusion of his immortality is also shattered. He wails: "My line, my blood, all the procession of the ages is dead." The moment he becomes acquainted with the truth--sperms are dead--he feels lost. He tells, in rage, to Friend Ed: "...don't you understand? It's not my child. It can't be'." His personalistic ego and masculinity to perpetuate heir is set up in his heart just like a pinch of salt on the wound. It is nothing but, his egoistic ethos which diverts him from the road of humanity.

Joe Saul's mannishness sustainly seems to be heightened with ego. At first, when he is asked by Friend Ed, what is wrong, he misrepresents: "I have a bad heart--a bad heart. I
was sick once when I was a boy."\textsuperscript{55} Metaphorically, he has had bad heart all along and has indeed been sick with pride. His visit to the doctor also is made out of pride. He says: "I went. I went all by myself. No one asked me to go!"\textsuperscript{56} as if announcing to the world that he has finally arrived as a force to be reckoned with. He moans in misery: "My line, my blood, all the procession of the ages is dead. And I am waiting for a little while and then I die."\textsuperscript{57} His stand of personal immortalistic ethos is fractured when he learns that he is impotent and Mordeen's child is not his child. Friend Ed lashes at his egoism:

'It is your child. More than you can conceive in your sick soul.' She is giving you a child--yours--to be yours own. Her love for you is so great that she could do a thing that was strange and foul to her and yet not be dirtied by it. She ringed herself with love and beauty to give you love and beauty [but] you crush loveliness on the rocks of your stinking pride.\textsuperscript{58}

Friend Ed condemns his crowling, whinning ego. Although he puts a flea in Joe's ear to accept the child, Joe reckons that it is a new and an unknown road and he doubts if he can find it alone. He cannot break with the traditions that is in his bones and yet the greatest truth, embodied in the baby, lies burning in the blackness of consuetudinary paths and bypaths. He is inept like Blake, from whose poem the title of the novella is taken to perceive the mystery of creation. It is Steinbeckian crack to focus on the egoistic
manhood that does not brace up a man to reconcile his notion of manliness with the biological fact of his dead seed.

_Burning Bright_ represents a crisis in Steinbeck's artistic and private life also. Jackson Benson points out: "It was a very dramatic story for him because it was based on his own story." It springs from his unpleasant linkage with Gwyn who crawls like serpent into the Edenic garden of Adam and formulate the problem of metaphysical evil to be canvassed in Steinbeck's later novels like _East of Eden_, and _The Winter of Our Discontent_. 
END-NOTES


7 Ibid., pp. 23-24.

8 *John Steinbeck's Fiction: The Aesthetics of the Road Taken*, p. 198.

9 *The Pearl*, p. 10.


11 *The Pearl*, p. 22.


13 Ibid., p. 28.

15 The Pearl., p. 52.


17 The Pearl., p. 32.


19 The Pearl., p. 40.

20 Ibid., p. 47.


24 The Wide World of John Steinbeck, p. 240.


27 Ibid., p. 160.

28 Thematic Design in the Novels of John Steinbeck, p. 109.

29 The Wayward Bus, p. 110.

30 Ibid., p. 103.

31 Ibid., p. 114.

32 Ibid., p. 122.

35 John Steinbeck's Re-Vision of America, pp. 60-61.
36 The Wayward Bus, p. 39.
38 The Wayward Bus, p. 35.
39 Ibid., p. 36.
40 Ibid., p. 222.
41 Ibid., p. 242.
42 Ibid., p. 242.
49 Burning Bright, p. 55.
50 Ibid., p. 23.
51 Ibid., p. 25.
52 Ibid., p. 86.
53 Ibid., p. 86.
54 Ibid., p. 88.
55 Ibid., p. 83.
56 Ibid., p. 83.
57 Ibid., p. 86.
58 Ibid., p. 88.
4 METAPHYSICAL EVIL

It is not only the economic, political, and social evil but also metaphysical evil that comes within the range of the lenses of Steinbeck's fictional art. The complexity of modern age brings many challenging problems to man which he seeks to solve by constructing and reconstructing new designs of an ideal perfection. But since various destructive forces are abidingly at work to disfigure the beauty of his idealistic Eden, he inevitably fails to achieve his cherished ideal.

The concept of metaphysical evil comes from G.W. Leibniz, German philosopher, and historian of the seventeenth century. He says: "This type of evil results from the...mere finitude of created beings, i.e. from the absence of a perfection not required for the natural integrity of creatures."\(^1\) In his *The Theodicy* (1710), he distinguishes three modes of evil: physical evil, which consists of suffering; moral evil, the wickedness and sin of agents; and metaphysical evil, the imperfection of creatures. In 'The Problem of Evil' Robert W. Gleason asserts: "A certain amount of evil, namely, that due simply to the limitations of being, is inevitable, if we are to have variety and beauty in the universe. Moreover, a universe which is finite could not be without some limitations, and this form of evil--limitation--the
philosopher calls metaphysical evil."\(^2\) The Catholic Encyclopedia defines metaphysical evil as "the limitations by one another of the various component parts of the natural world. Through this mutual limitation natural objects are for the most part prevented from attaining to their full or ideal perfection [sic]"\(^3\) Metaphysical evil, according to David Parkin, is a force by which "disorder in the cosmos or in relations with divinity results from a conflict of principles or wills."\(^4\) These definitions of metaphysical evil sound like a synthesis of the struggle of natural objects for achieving ideal perfection, and the natural limitations that hinder the path of progress of beings by activating the conflict of will. It has expediently been vocalized that man can never materialize his idealized classic. He can never be globally gratified in his life since his life is crammed with innumerable aims and ambitions; dreams and desires. Advocating the very stand, Steinbeck speaks: "Humans are never satisfied, that you give them one thing and they want something more."\(^5\) Therefore, Lord Buddha, one of the world's most influential thinkers, forewarns men to avoid frustration by avoiding desires which cannot be fulfilled. He instructs: "Desire for what will not be attained ends in frustration; therefore, to avoid frustration; avoid desiring what will not be attained."\(^6\) However, man is invariably thirsty. And his unintermitting thirst for unsurmountable
objects in materialistic world drags him down the crap of disorder and destruction. Man is a highly ambitious creature. No sooner does he perceive his dreamland collapsing than he starts fabricating his new wonderland. He scuffles with different conflicting tempests to regain the paradise lost. He energetically confronts the various forces. Yet he is bankrupt in the fortunate outcome because of sempiternal struggle between good and evil and his inborn limitations. Because of this, the present study of metaphysical evil seeks to analyze the co-existence of an eternal conflict between good and evil that obstructs the growth of both as delineated by Steinbeck in his later major novels: *East of Eden* (1952), and *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961).

In the forties, Steinbeck clearly turns his principal interest from biology and sociology to individual ethics. He is one of the several writers whom "the Second World War and its aftermath made aware of the problem of evil." 7 In 1947, he starts working upon a book that he calls "Salinas Valley", which would be the story of Hamiltons, his mother's family. In the early draft he introduces a fictitious second family, the Trask, whose role expands to the point of taking over the novel; and in 1951 the title is changed to *East of Eden*. *East of Eden* is a lengthy treatment of man's capacity for both good and evil. In this massive work, Steinbeck
employs a primitive and pre-historic base for his study of evil. In *East of Eden*, he recaptures the biblical story of Cain and Abel. He exploits it as a metaphor for the dolour that humans cause one another. According to Lee, Chinese servant and philosopher, the story of Cain and Abel is important because it is a story of rejection, from which all evil flows. Justifying the very stand, Lee says: "...with rejection comes anger, and with anger some kind of crime in revenge for the rejection, and with the crime guilt—and there is the story of mankind." In fact, fourth part of the novel Steinbeck exclusively devotes to the exposing of the everlasting duel between good and evil. Steinbeck speaks that history has the same subject in every other story:

> I believe that there is one story in the world, and only one,.....Humans are caught—in their lives, in their thoughts, in their hungers and ambitions, in their avarice and cruelty, and in their kindness and generosity too—in a net of good and evil.

When Steinbeck decided to publish *East of Eden*, some problems were aroused by the editors. So out of *saeva indignatio* Steinbeck, in his letter to the editor, Pascal Covici, scribbles: "God damn it. This is my book....My book is about good and evil...Do you want to publish it or not?" This interrogative statement unfolds Steinbeck's mind engaged with the polarity of good and evil. In conformity with this dualistic phantom, he attempts to portray a symbolic
recreation of the Cain and Abel story to focus on the problem of metaphysical evil in *East of Eden*. It reflects the perpetuating struggle between good and evil manifested in the three generations of the Trask family members who are deprived of seeking idealized Canaan. Steinbeck sensibly presents it to italicize the permanence of the Cain and Abel myth by alternating the paraphernalia of C and A initials through the generations of the Trasks: Cyrus--Alice, Charles--Adam, Cathy--Adam, Caleb--Aron, and Caleb--Abra.

Steinbeck says that an idealized enrichment cannot be turned up due to the unending battle between good and evil as well as the natural limitations brought upon one another by opposing poles of good and evil in macrocosms. He allocates American Adam in the illusory promised land with an eye to perceive the nonaccomplishment of the myth of Eden in the totality of being. The battle between good and evil in the Trask family begins early. Adam suffers a violent childhood and troubled youth before coming to the Salinas Valley. He comes by the very first fatalistic attack of evil from his adamant father, Cyrus Trask. Cyrus is a military man. He inflicts his militaristic anality on his son, Adam and obscures his good instincts. The another cruel crunch comes from an incarnation of evil, Cathy when he loves and unites her in holy wedlock. Cathy is a dynamic of destruction. Nonetheless, Cathy enters the cosmos of Adam, she effectuates
her disastrous drive and plays havoc with his life. He is not aware of her monstrous capability for burning her parents to death or driving a young teacher to commit suicide without a second thought. He seems to be incompetent to see the cloven hoof of her realistic bias of life. He cannot differentiate good and evil because "the belly of every black and white thing is as white as snow." On account of his incompetency to penetrate evil as well as good, he becomes an easy prey to one who is truly evil, such as Cathy. Adam is bedazzled into marrying Cathy. She is a fusion of Eve and serpent. His wedlock proves to be an inlet for her demolitionary dynamism. She activates her monstrocity in less than no time. She gives him the very first unknown and sweet shock by carrying the seed of his brother in her womb. In an apparent ecstasy of badness, she drugs her husband and deceives him on their wedding night. She seduces Charles and conceives twins from him. Charles denudes Cathy morally. He also predicts the predicament of Adam and sways him to cast her out of his microcosm. But Adam turns a cold shoulder to his brother's moral suasion and takes his spouse to the Salinas Valley. "In tracing Adam's path from Connecticut to the Salinas Valley, Steinbeck traces the symbolic westward track of the American Adam toward the Eden which eludes him throughout the country's history." Intending to set up Eden, Adam settles with Cathy in the Salinas Valley. He sets his heart for the
paradisal perfection on the earth. He means to beautiful place in the world. He wills to found a dynasty and acquires fertile landscape that "straddled the river and tucked into the foothills on both sides." But he can not fashion the design of his Eden. It subsists just in his psyche like a pleasure dome of Kubla Khan because of his confrontation with demolishing drive of his vulpine wife. The landscape touching both the western and eastern mountains, too, reflects the conflict between good and evil as an emblem of the interaction between Adam and Cathy. It certainly prognosticates the destruction of the idealistic framework of Adam. Steinbeck consciously foresees the destruction of Edenic garden through the symbol of the river which runs in a powerful underground current and rises in the winter to rage destructively against the valley. Cathy's fatalistic trick pulverizes the dynastic dream of Adam. The diabolic force in her drive hurls him into the pit of terrible sufferings.

Steinbeck presents Cathy as a natural disordering force. She incessantly collides with good in Adam and perpetuates prostrations in his life. Adam loves the progeny as the elixir and interest of life but it becomes a burden for Cathy. And she attempts to lighten that burden by the short cut of abortion. But it does not work out. She looks like an animal during the moment of ritual joy in human life. The evil is deeply rooted in her blood. She does not like to
mother her kids. As soon as the twins are born she abandons them unfed and shoots her husband to make good her escape from his paradise. Her depravity and treachery are abysmal. There is no silverlining anywhere. She perpetrates villainy after villainy and uproots the land of heart's desire of Adam. He becomes the first Adam when he comes to west to form his Eden and eventually fails to fabricate it in the Salinas Valley. He loses his Eden—a happy life with Cathy and his children. The light goes out of his world. He makes a futile attempt to patch up his broken life undisturbed by evil. He cuts off himself as well as all that is good. "The Eden that Adam hopes to create is not Eden at all, but a dead, stultifying life." Adam, the good defeated by evil, succumbs to melancholia and survives like a dead soul whereas Cathy, the evil takes a favourable turn in her atrocities. Abandoning her husband and children, she stumbles upon the town near by Salinas. She makes her fortune as a strumpet in the town and luxuriates in her whoredom. She looks like the cat that swallowed the canary. Lee, a spokesman of Steinbeck, appropriately differentiates this battle as battle between good and evil. He says: "The good are destroyed while the evil survive and prosper." 

But how long can only evil succeed in its atrocities while struggling with good? In the battle between good and evil, evil as well cannot get on swimmingly as good cannot.
Steinbeck denies the possibility of evil gaining full or idealized perfection in the expanding universe. Cathy who is an absolute and unwavering evil in *East of Eden*, represents a serious contrasts to Adam's innate goodness. She has been battling with it since her entrance in the scene. She enjoys prosperity in her reprehensibility. She drugs her husband, and seduces Charles. She abandons her twins unfed for her futuristic selfish plans. She even shoots her husband in the shoulders and makes a quick exist to materialize her selfish gains of prostitutions. She takes to her heels from the sum of things of Adam and falls upon town nearby Salinas to have everything going her way. She gets on well as the mistress of an extraordinary bordello, a backwood's version of the decadent setting of Jean Genet's play, *The Balcony*. In the process of taking over, she poisons her owner, Faye and changes her ways as the Queen of pandering. She treads on air and falls in raptures. But the natural limitations check her malefaction. It takes upon her through interactions with her inmates. She finds herself surrounded by a forest of enemies, and two of them unknowingly cause her death. Tyrannophobia and photophobia assault her psycho. She rolls in ebriosity. Her reaction to alcohol stands for her fear to life. Her limitations--growing age, the onset of arthritis, the use of bromides, and windowless shelter she builds--threaten her
malfeasant mentality. She becomes a sport of nature, withering with arthritis and shrinking away from light. "She seeks a cave to hide in a dark burrow in the earth, a place where no eyes could stare at her." Nevertheless, these facts do not qualify her durable will to hunt vileness. She falls short to materialize tenderloin irretrievably in her life. As Adam falls shy to rejoice in the idealized Edenic garden infallibly, Cathy, too, falls short to indulge in her malignancy irrevocably. "Thus, Adam and Cathy represent the two halves of the illusory myth with its certainty of both evil and innocence, and neither is capable of functioning with any success in the real, good-and-evil world of fallen Eden."

Steinbeck reduplicates the basic story of Cain and Abel to resume the thread of his discourse of the eternal conflict between good and evil. He portrays Caleb and Aron, the twins born to Cathy, to carry the centrality of the problem of metaphysical evil to the end of the novel. He originates evil in Caleb, the ridiculous pupils, and prostitutes and good in Aron in order to expose a dialectic confrontation of good and evil in American consciousness. He justifies his stance of evil through its diabolic drive which traumatizes good and eventually uproots its wide world.

Aron, an immaculate boy, intends to enter the Episcopal ministry by academic pursuit. He joins the school and in a
short span of time gets a certain reputation for his smartness. His angelic beauty attracts everybody. He sets himself on the path of learning and sincerely follows it. He does not find interest in anything besides his path. Though he loves Abra, his passions gradually take a devout direction. He reaches a point of passionate purity. He therefore prefers a life of celibacy to Abra. He devotes his time to perform religious duties with clergyman, Mr. Rolf in the Episcopical Church. But suddenly he feels like a fish out of water when he happens to face the people chiding him as "Lettuce-heads" for the mistake of losing fortune made by his father. This is the first derogatory incident that inflicts his pious mind. Denying the factual way of life he finds himself in low water. He does not strive to go along with a realistic way of life—it is a cocktail of good and evil and every individual has to drink it at its own cost. He gets himself disturbed and plans to take to his heels perhaps never to comeback. Lee comforts him: "You’re growing up....Try to believe that things are neither so good nor so bad as they seem to you now." Aron, having been soothed by Lee, concentrates on his studies and vigorously prepares for the examination earlier towards the achievement of his goal. He paints the beautiful pictures of educational milieu with a fancy imitated "from the Dore illustrations of Dante’s Inferno with its massed and radiant angels." He enters the
golden threshold of University for higher studies in Stanford. There also he confronts evil visible in the form of ugly academic circle. Miseries pile on the agony because "what he had expected to find at the university had been vague." His portrait of scholastic robes "...had been of clean-eyed young men and immaculate girls." But he discerns the bleak pictures of university, "the great world of struggle and anger reenacted in the rise and fall of fraternities." He meets "...youth in dirty cordury trousers...learning the small vices of their fathers." These harsh realities set him into the hot water. As a result from this he fails to turn over a new leaf. He steps back to the pavilion without materializing his heart's desire. Abra, having been acquainted with Aron's limitations, doubts in his ability to accomplish his aims. She questions Caleb: "Do you think he'll be minister?" The limitations of Aron's inborn goodness cannot build his spirit to adjust with the noise, fuss, and horseplay of his colleagues. They puncture his figment of the imagination. And really Aron, an ambitious youth who attempts to join the ministry, makes his adieu to university without completing scholarly pursuit. On account of his frustration in learning, he thinks of thriving as a rancher. His ambition vacillates from intellectual attainment to domestic drudgery. He reminds his brother, Charles of Abra's love for
agronomical life. He engineers a new land of promise. But it is also bulldozed by the bash of evil from outside. Caleb makes a handsome offering of money to his father, Adam. His offering cannot please his father. Adam prefers Aron's scholastic achievement to Caleb's materialistic gains. He neglects the gift of Caleb. Negligence of gift adds fuel to the flame of hatred in Caleb. In a feat of jealousy and anger he exposes Aron to their meretricious mother, Kate. Aron fails to stand up to the veritable bias of his mother. This forced fall nips him in the bud. His sanctimony cannot help him to realize his dreams. On this stand, Louis Owens argues:

Aron, like Adam maintains an unwavering and dangerously vulnerable certainty of "goodness" or innocence, he cannot cope with experience and remains unfallen until forced to face the reality of his whore-mother Kate. This forced fall destroys Aron; he runs away to war and is killed.

Metaphysical evil, on a different ground, does call attention to the positive force in the power of blackness to revive an authentic disposition of human species. Human species is not an inborn evil species. It is the victim of circumstantial stress. Though John H. Timmerman identifies evil as an inward force that sucks all things into itself in order to feed an perpetuate itself, Joseph Fontenrose points out: "evil is the source of good and may even be necessary to good." Hence, it would be too wiser to thesis hereby the
very spirit of the novel, *East of Eden*. The wealth, Cyrus Trask hoards dishonestly, is inherited by an honest man, Adam Trask. Adam utilizes it to rear and educate his twins—Aron and Caleb. Charles who has satanic spirit, often fights with his god like brother, Aron. However, he invariably does his best to protect Adam from the fiendish boys. He shields him from his father's harshness also with lies and with blaming. He feels for his brother a kind of "the affection one has for helpless things, for blind puppies and new babies."  

It is he who once almost beats down Adam to death without ever being sorry, but at the same time he guards Adam against the sanguinary Cathy. We perceive an imperative youth as well in Charles when he attempts to deprive Adam of getting married with kill-crazy Cathy. His ingeniousness dictates an actual fatalistic inclination of Cathy and incites his brother to kick her out of his Eden.

No doubt, Cathy is a volcano of inhumanity. She *di grado in grado* fractures the heart of Adam. But even then she seems to be a creative spirit when a spark of grace flashes out and twinkles in her crooked heart. She sets off the glory in an apprehensive Adam. It is just his marriage with Cathy that inspires him to design a dream of dynasty. And out of his dynastic dream, he leaves his land for a search of the land of promise. The good species like that of Aron is developed in the pudenda of wicked Cathy. Though
she leaves Aron in his infancy, she leaves a legacy of her ill-gotten money in his name. Steinbeck, on this account, hesitates to identify Cathy as an inborn evil. Though he earlier picturizes her as an effigy of inborn evil, he later on denies it. Upholding a stance of circumstantial force that determines the temperament of beings, he says:

It is my belief that Cathy Ames was born with the tendencies, or lack of them, which drove and forced her all of her life. Some balance wheel was misweighted, some gear out of ratio. She was not like other people, never was from birth.29

Alleging in vindication of the defined crux of metaphysical evil, Lee avers: "Saints can spring from any soil."30 There is no a shadow of doubt to remember "The Reverend Billing" who was a thief and libertine, but his sermons benefited many people.

The task of writers is to capture the prevailing spirit of the age. Steinbeck, in one of his letters to Joseph Bryan III, scribbles that "a man must write about his time".31 From the mid-fifties until his death in 1968 he functions less as a story teller and more as philosopher perceiving an eccentric moral darkening of his age. In his last book *America and Americans* he expresses similar anxieties about his country and the people. Deploiring the death of morals in his country, he writes:

It is a creeping, evil thing that is invading every cranny of our political, our economic, our spiritual, and psychic life. I begin to think that
the evil thing is one thing, not many, that racial unrest, the emotional crazy guilt that drives our people in panic to the couches of the psychoanalysts, the fallout, dropout, copout insurgency of our children and young people, the rush to stimulants, as well as...the rise of narrow, ugly, vengeful cults of all kinds, the distrust and revolt against all authority,...and this in time of plenty such has never been known.\textsuperscript{32}

He, like a schooled pastor, probes a contemporary ailment and argues the way one should not go. He represents himself as a twentieth century Mallory creating new symbols to address the moral nature of his age. Focusing on Steinbeck's letters of the late fifties and early sixties, John H. Timmerman opines that Steinbeck perceives "a moral torpor and spiritual flabbiness in Americans."\textsuperscript{33} He boldly tears off the mask of American's insidious materialistic move. The insidious materialistic move of Americans builds a way to approach the problem of metaphysical evil in his valedictory novel, \textit{The Winter of Our Discontent}.

In \textit{The Winter of Our Discontent}, Steinbeck once again throws some light on his preoccupation with battle between good and evil. It brings together the crucial threads of Steinbeck's philosophy of the eternal co-existence of constructive and destructive forces in mortal flesh. Steinbeck dislikes not only the way of an absolute goodness which thwarts the ends of Adam and darts him to destruction, but also absolute badness which too disrupts his Edenic course of life. In the very novel Steinbeck presents the
most unpleasant variation of the eternal conflict between good and evil that touches upon the axis of metaphysical evil. It emerges out of a man struggling to survive in the duel of moralistic and materialistic desires of life.

Ethan is a descendent of the Puritans. He attempts to idealize his place in the corrupted society. But he consequently fails to secure his idealized place in it due to his limitations and his fascination for damnation. He, being a common man, is completely shorn of glory; status; or high position. After his University education, he holds the rank of an infantry Captain in military during the Second World War. And in the immediate future, he settles down with his family in the wasteland of microcosmic American Baytown. Having no interest in a glorious and luxurious life, he gladly breaks out as a clerk in a store he once owned and lost through mismanagement to a Sicilian immigrant, Alfio Marullo. He tries his level best to sustain his moralistic stance of life. He does not even think to enjoy the property of his wife, Mary. He domesticates his life style. However, he cannot hold on his individualistic moralism throughout his life. He comes across the various tempting and destructive forces in his social circle. Man, being a social animal, cannot fall out of society. His affairs interact with different drives and force him to follow the flux of life. He strives to sustain his puritanical ethos in the madness of
modernity. But he step by step runs short to do it. He cannot remain uninfluenced in a world of avarice. His high morals are flunked out in the ruling spirit of all things. The commercial ethos squeezes his puritanical ethos. His puritanic vision is strikingly disturbed by the pecuniary craze of modern humanity. Prosperous materialism blurs his domesticated puritanism.

Ethan works as a storekeeper for twelve years sincerely. The span of these twelve years exposes him to various streams of life. The sterling beauty of dollars leaves a deep impact on his heart in these twelve years. The commercialistic values deeply influence his turn of mind. He having been surrounded by the commercialization of modern world, succumbs to fiscal fascination. It compels him to recast his viewpoint of life. Finding everybody wallowing in wealth, he feels ashamed of his poverty and status quo. Everybody in his microcosms conspires also to make him discontented with his lot. They appeal to his pride by urging him to recover from his down state and to reestablish his socio-economic status in the community. His family complains about its plight. "The sinews of affair" disturbs his mental peace. He intends to resurrect his once prominent family name and fortune. To improve his living standard he follows the misconceived success ideology of Mr. Baker, Marullo, Biggers and Margie Young-Hunt. He deviates
from his idealistic stance and adopts corrupt ways of modern commercial world. To make the situation worse his wife, Mary ascribes certain qualities of which he is not capable. After listening to his heart's confession of his limitations, his wife tells him: "You are not. You're more like the manager keep the book and bank the money and order the goods." Like a bulldozer, her mind plows into the possibilities. She ignites the fire of ambitions. He initially refrains from corruptive ethos of the age. But the constant hammering of satanic temptations dislodges his framework. He moves from moral to immoral pole. His remembrance of his ancestry also makes him admit that his great ancestors would never feel proud to know that "they produced a goddam grocery clerk in goddam wop store in a town they used to own." Ideophobia confuses his morale. He goes to recess to sit and think like Buddha to realize the ultimate truth in human life. He questions "his moral scheme and wonders if morality is not relative in a Darwinian world." Thinking of perplexed Ethan, Peter Lisca speaks out:

Ethan finds in him unconscious the necessary survival drives, which had atrophied in his conscious genteel mind, and he becomes a transformed or "cured" personality no longer at the mercy of contradictory impulses, but in possession of a strong ego capable of mediating effectively between his conscious and the world in which he lives.

A storm of change shakes his view suddenly. He decides to
descend the narrow path of rectitude temporarily to reconstruct his utopia by shady means. His love for his family, Margie's prophecy, and Baker's stories dealing with bank robbery and crime harbour in his mind. He approves the lessons of Marullo's business ethics. He thinks "eaters" are not "more immoral than eaten" because "in the end all are eaten". He plans to possess the store at a low price from Marullo, and to acquire the desired site of the town's future airport from his boyhood friend, Danny Taylor. He also reflects on bank robbery. He seems to be fully tempted by the surreptitious glory of materialistic life. He does not care for even his friendship with Marullo and Danny. He deceives them. He joins in the chorus of inhumanity. Marullo, being a foreigner, faces some problems raised by immigration authorities. In his good faith he tells his friend, Ethan about his illegal entry. Ethan leaks this highly secret news to Joey, who, it is inferred, informs the respective authorities. And the moment Ethan learns that Marullo has been arrested, he does not lose the opportunity to offering money and buying the store at a low price. By chance, fate or design, he comes off to look into another inglorious enterprise. Although he calls himself Danny's brother and keeper he deceives him. He grabs his precious piece of land at an insignificant price of brandy and a meager sum of one thousand dollars, and drives him to the
brink of tragic death. He goes on heaping material burdens on his head. He defers to the lure of bucks. He does not even feel to stride from one crime to another crime for fashioning his Utopianism. But the power of his innate goodness voices against the reckless growth of his inhumanity. The ghost of evil disturbs him eventually. The dual between the growing evil and his innate goodness leads to the conflict of wills within Ethan. He intuits the approaching winter of discontent because:

When a condition or a problem becomes too great, humans have the protection of not thinking about it. But it goes inward and minces up with a lot of other things already there and what comes out is discontent and uneasiness.

He is baffled in the maze of his consciousness. His moral sting bites his conscience. Sense of depravity voices in his mind. He is appalled at his own scheming. The conceptualization of the peccancy of betraying his friend discomposes his conscience. He grunts:

Through the crooked glass I saw a man's figure....He was all misshaped by the distortion....I called, "Danny! Danny! Give me back the money. Please, Danny, give it to me. Don't take it. It's poisoned. I poisoned it!"

Ethan temporarily tracks a habit of conduct and attitude for comfort, material prosperity, dignity, and a cushion of security. He also descends into the hell of corruption to cherish his ideals. However, he runs short to materialize his Edenic idealism. The bickering between good and evil in
his conscience thwarts his Anschauung. He does not sustain either moralistic or materialistic universe of discourse. He has lost the old way without getting the new one. He introspects himself: "But my objective was limited and, once achieved, I could take back my habit of conduct." The quagmire of corruption and dishonesty bleaks his universe. He cannot locate the proper turning point to win his spurs. Moral darkness drinks his life. He awakes to the realization that he has lost his soul. He moans: "...my light is out....There is nothing blacker than a wick....It's so much darker when light goes out that it would have been if it had never shone."42

Good combats against evil not only within but also without. His son, Allen also imitates the contemporary way of the world. He commits an act of plagiarism in order to win an essay contest, "I Love America". It reflects the growth of evil in his universe. Ethan cannot bear the materialistic aptitude of his son. He is so muddled by his moral fall and its untoward effect on the animus of his son, that he seriously thinks of suicide. His success turns to ashes. His unending quest contrives the conflict between good and evil. It subverts his mettle and explodes the land of his enchantment. In proportion to his materialistic possessions and wealth, he is hallow within. What he gets is just like dead sea-fruit.


15 *East of Eden*, p. 564.
17 *John Steinbeck's Re-Vision of America*, p. 149.
18 *East of Eden*, p. 463.
27 *John Steinbeck: An Introduction and Interpretation*, p. 124.
28 *East of Eden*, p. 23.
33 *The Aesthetics of the Road Taken*, p. 255.


38 *The Winter of our Discontent*, p. 52.


