CHAPTER-IV

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The publication of *Of Mice and Men* in January opened an impressive new horizon in the course of Steinbeck’s literary development and brought significant alterations in his personal situation. It made him, a national figure. It is another of his parables of earth, which shapes the soil into true patterns to understand. It is probably the only one of Steinbeck’s book which satisfies the whole. He attempted to write a novel that could be played and called the play novelette. He prepared his story for a complete dramatic presentation. He wrote *Of Mice and Men* concerning about social and economic problems in California. It is an imaginative interpretation of a contemporary farm strike and a study of the movement and the action of migrant drifters. He has written about people who were isolated in the society of their time, who belonged to a group that was fast disappearing from the American scene:

They came to a ranch an’ work up a stake and than they go inta town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they’re pound in’ their tail on some other ranch. They ain’t got nothing to look ahead to (OMM 13)

The beginning of the novel is set on a sandy bank of the Salinas River. The other parts take place in the several building on a ranch. It is a story of shattered dreams which touches Steinbeck’s private history more than the contemporary public history of his country. It is not about the alignment of massive economic forces but the story is interested in how modular groups of people, even two men together formulate effective myths of social cohesion. In *Of Mice and Men* Steinbeck is sympathetic towards migrants who are less fortunate. He goes out of his way to indicate the realization of the dreams they can salvage economically well within their
grasp. The story is about two traveling ranch workers, George and Lennie, trying to work up enough money to buy their own farm.

The novel begins, with a wooded enclosure near a pool, a few miles south of Solidad, California. The time is sunset. George and Lennie are greeted in the ranch bunkhouse by an old swamper who has lost his hand in an accident and has been relegated to housekeeping chores. They begin to make friends with the old man when Curley, the boss’s son, appears. The person reports about Curley and his wife who assumes a seductive pose. The workers return from the fields for lunch.

Steinbeck has two main motives to write the novel— the exposition of faults and failures as well as dreams and scheme for improvement. The novel is placed in a series of conflicts, confrontations and full of emotions. George and Lennie encounter troubles in their dealings with society. George describes the harshness and feels that people like them who work on ranches are the loneliest people in the world. They don’t have a family. They don’t have the sense of belongingness. There are positive and negative features to the way Steinbeck handles his people. He conveys a remarkably sincere and compelling compassion for the oppressed laborers and the half-witted, man-child Lennie, who has certain dreams to fulfill:

“Ok some day – we’re gonna get the jack together and we’re gonna have a little house and a couple of acres an’ a cow and some pigs and-” “good boy Lennie. When we get the couple acres, I can let you tend the rabbits”

(OMM 13-14).

The novel Of Mice and Men offers a serious temptation and pitfalls dealing with the lostness of the migrant drifters. Steinbeck points out the persistent dreams of George and Lennie
to get their own place and the mercy killing of Lennie by George, provides him with permanent escape from the world with which he can not cope up, into the dreams of the little house and a couple of acres and rabbits. It is different from the dropout kind of rebellion against society. It is sentimental because it arouses emotions for the simply drawn characters to sustain pretentions. It imposes upon a pair of ragged, marginal migrant drifters, the ineluctable struggle, their plight and a peculiarly contemporary example of the genre. Steinbeck’s ranch hands, communing in the bunkhouse or sweating in the field, look, sound, feel, smell like they are supposed to be. At Lennie’s urging, George recites the tale of their promised land, the little farm they will own someday. He relates this beautiful dream as it is a chant or orison. They strive for the same goal while destined by their natures to split apart and become lost.

The novel *Of Mice and Men* is relevant to current concerns, emotionally free from fear of recrimination while reserving the right to be tough minded about immutable realities. Powerful sympathy has revived for the migrant drifters, Lennie and George’s dream of a farm of their own. Salinas remains the scene of economic and social friction. Steinbeck’s *Something that Happened* the original title of *Of Mice and Men* bears some resemblance to Faulkner’s, *The Sound and Fury*. There is a level of social protest. Steinbeck the reformer cries out against the exploitation of the migrant workers, to the human condition. It arbitrates between an urgent need for freedom and control, personal needs that appertain to the universal history of artist of the mid 1930’s. Mr. Mark a critic says that man is a religious creature. Mankind may also be viewed biologically as a group-man and the non-teleological concept is that man lives without knowledge of the cause of his existence. The idea of Talismanic symbols is manifested in the land of *Of Mice and Men*. One prevalent form is the relationship between men and particular places. In the rugged tale of migrant drifters during the great depression, a sense of loneliness of American existence had
formed. There was, the separation between persons, and there was the lack of brotherhood, the incapacity to fructify the vast continent. With the warm blood of fellow feeling, suffering of the dumb ache of isolation, perpetual state of partial being, the two friends plan about the land but never get it. As the action develops the probability of fulfillment increases. The three homeless migrants who pool their salaries at the end of the current month want to quit and move their farm, to a place of abundance and a refuge from the hardships of life.

Steinbeck’s power as writer comes from his ability to bring the social conflict, the psychological forcefulness of infantile reactions. His creation of Lennie is a brilliant instance that the social conflict in this compact tale tends to dissolve into the dramatic urgencies of Lennie’s fate. It is a study of the dreams and pleasure of everyone in the world, the inarticulate and powerful yearning of all men and their earth longings for land of their own, innocent pleasure farms. There is a man like Candy who represents sweet hope. Crooks represents black despair, “Nobody never gets to heaven and nobody gets no land. It’s just in their head. They’re all the time talkin’ about it but it’s jus’ in their head” (OMM 27).

Crooks comment of nobody ever getting the land refers to the literal ownership and to the dream of contentment entertained by the simple workmen who come and go to the ranch. *Of Mice and Men* is the work which brought Steinbeck impressive national recognition and substantial reward and made him face to face with the problems of the man in the limelight. It is influenced by the Arthurian legend and it is his first big success:

The microcosm is rather difficult to handle and apparently I did not get it over”, he remarked when the book was in process--“the earth longings of
Lennie who was not to represent insanity at all but the inarticulate and powerful yearning of all men. (OMM 33)

The success of *Of Mice and Men* made possible Steinbeck’s first trip to Europe. He sailed on a Swedish ship. He had always been interested in the Scandinavian countries. He has written a series of articles on the migrant workers for the San Francisco News in October 1936, before of *Of Mice and Men* was published. He worked on the farms of his long valley language in his school vacations. The weeds and the willows and the tall waving grain of California’s sweet valleys, rabbits, mice, a woman’s soft hair, the hot slanting sun and the hungry desire of a pair of floaters to own a handful diet are the materials out of which this lovely new novel *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck is evoked. The antagonists appear and embody the warring Manichean principles of mind and body. George and Lennie are locked together in the same life process but irreconcilable with one compelled to slay other. They are ranch hands, working on the earth. They are migrants involved with a particular ploy of ground. Their dream of owning their own place has an omnipresent quality.

The story seems simple when accomplished by a superb craftsman. The desire and struggle of the migrant drifters till the soil for others to own a tiny plot of the earth for themselves against their primitive hunger but like the rising tide of a destructive river, the forces make their naïve aspiration impossible of attainment. The verities one has to live with are those thoughts which are born out of dreams. Of such verities does Steinbeck write, out of a warm and rich knowledge. With the genuine artist’s search for his materials and love of his craft, he puts away cheap prejudice, the distortion which comes from anger. His thought is to tell the little truths he had discovered with his eyes and calloused hands and intelligence, and if these truths
do not touch the social conscience, nothing can. It is an irony in this world that some have to suffer and some enjoy.

The cosmological element is highlighted by the fact that both George and Lennie are killers. George is conscious and calculating so he shoots Lennie but Lennie is spontaneous and irrational and so he kills mice, puppies, rabbits and Curley’s wife unintentionally. The prevailing atmosphere is half light shading towards darkness, suited to the Manichean setting and the agents of God always descending to do battle with the dark forces and forced to, be lost in the wilderness. Curley is the Manichean eve, the purely sexual temptress who brings troubles to the surrounding males. Curley himself is a creature of darkness, a vicious stunted figure seeking to compensate for his lack of sexual potency by training himself as a boxer, beating helpless men.

The unskilled migratory workers drift about the villages and ranches of that area picking up odd jobs or doing short term field work and than moving on to the next place of employment. Steinbeck focuses on two such laborers who dream of one day saving up enough money to buy a small farm of their own but man’s fate in a fallen world, is uncertain and which raises a question that is man destined to live alone, as solitary wanderer on the face of the earth? Or is it the fate of man to care for another man and to go his way in companionship with another? The question is of the human soul. The relationship between Lennie and George and others, react to their association. The two protagonists, their brotherly mutual concern and faithful companionship bring them together. They enjoy the beauty, joy, security and comfort which the two derive from their relationship. This sort of camaraderie is rare, different, and almost unique in the world, which the two inhabit. Other men are solitary souls without friends or companionship. The alternative to the George- Lennie relationship is lostness. The migrant drifter is the fulfillment of
the lord’s curse on Cain, “When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.” (OMM 43)

Steinbeck’s treatment of the relationship is entirely free from a sense of contrivance. The details of *Of Mice and Men* seem natural in the context and organically related to the whole. George and Lennie live as friends till the ground and derive no benefits from their labor. They suffer calamity of homelessness and economic futility and lostness because the psychological soul corruption is the consequence of solitary existence. Lennie and George affirm their fraternity openly without embarrassment, but somewhere George is more hesitant. “He’s my------ cousin, he tells the ranch boss. I told his lady I’d take care of him” (OMM 22). This is no betrayal on George’s part but a cover up is required by the circumstances. The boss is highly suspicious of the Lennie-George fellowship, “I never seen one guy to take so much trouble for another guy”. A short time later Curley also sounds the note of suspicion when George says, “we travel together” (OMM 24).

Steinbeck implies the general response of most men towards seeing two individual who buddy around together in a friendless world where isolation is the order of the day. Even the sympathetic and understanding Slim expresses some wonder at Lennie. “Ain’t many guys travels around together, I don’t know why may be ever’ body in the whole damned world is scared of each other”. (OMM 74)

Steinbeck was one of the many having lived through the frustration of the depression and the horrors of the war, hoping that the direction of the country might at last be entrusted to a quiet introspective, cautiously idealistic man with roots in a characteristically American agrarian community. He saw the human problems in irrelevant terms of clashes between exploiter and
victim, the ignoble and the noble. He failed to grasp that in an age when a potential threat of atomic destruction hangs over the whole world, man can annihilate himself the particular physical engagement that who wins can hardly be a burning issue. The novel was written as an experiment and the novel was meant to express the inevitable defeat and futility of all men’s plans. It tells how hard it is for the bindle stiffs to buy a land. It is a symbolic story of human soul.

The migrant drifters ranch hands, George and Lennie Small, dream of owning a small farm one. Their relationship is a paradigm of all the non-physical, non-sexual, emotions, concerns and aspirations in the world. It is their jobs and lives that are at stake. Their love for each other is found more deeply in the humanness of the impulse than in humanitarian disguises. They are ignorant workers of native stock. Their disorders of personality arouse pity rather than amusement. They have dreams of having their own land, to crop, of animals like dogs, cats, pigs, rabbits etc. for their farm lands to pet. They think to fix up the little place and to go there. They sit still bemused by the beauty of the things, mind popped into the future, when these lovely thing come out. All ranch hands have the dream to get their ranch to go, and their own house. They will not stay there longer. They go to get a house, chicken, fruit trees and a place hundred time prettier than this where dwells happiness and not lostness.

George is small sharp faced and quick dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp strong features, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose. He is fatally dependent, has a self defeating temperament which represents regrettable limitation of personal talent, big brain. He acts as a father figure to Lennie. He has the faculty of creating dream worlds that seem real. He can not sustain his story without Lennie. He is sober, chaste, and almost monastic in habits. He grumbles and is forever ragging Lennie about what a nuisance he is. Virtues nearly lead to
disaster. His feelings for Lennie, an intricate amalgam of brother, father and keeper forces him to slay his friend:

Rascoe says about George, “George has toward Lennie the tenderness and the protectiveness instinct which some of even the most hard bitten and most hard boiled have towards the helpless, the maimed, and the dependent. A lovely, itinerant, bindlestiff, a migratory ranch hand, barely bucker, mule skinner, fruit picker and a general handy man without a home. (OMM 67)

George is a good man, motivated to protect Lennie, a representation of humanity.
Lennie, a huge man, shapeless of face, large pal eyes, wide sloping shoulders, walks heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms does not swing at sides, but hang loosely. He is a victim of a pathological disease, a psycho physical abnormality with tiny brain. He is sensuous but his immense physical strength is a source of trouble. He is not always harmonious with George, but he assumes responsibility for his simple minded friend.

Lennie is a creature of darkness, touch in his focus of energies, but deadly, he doesn’t mean to kill. He draws no distinction between life and death. Life for him is complicated and dangerous. He loves puppies and mice but succeeds in killing them. He is oversized, mentally retarded, enormously strong, and prone to get into serious trouble. Lennie’s earth longing is not to represent insanity at all but the inarticulate and powerful yearning of all men.

George tells the story to every one about Lennie, to be his cousin. He promises his aunt Clara that he will take care of him. Lennie gets kicked in the head by the horse when he is a kid. George knows Lennie’s Aunt Clara, who had taken him when he was a baby and raised him up.
When she died he came along with George. They get used to each other after a little while.

George likes fun, plays jokes on him but he is too dumb even to understand this. George stops making fun, as one day, standing around Sacramento River, he says to Lennie to jump in. He jumps, but can not swim and drowns before they can get him.

Lennie loves to strike soft animals but his grip is suffocating but unintentionally strikes out in childlike defense and confusion. He crushes every bone in Curley’s hand in a bunkhouse fight and later he accidentally breaks the neck of Curley’s wife during the barn scene, the climax of the play. He strikes her hard, shakes her. Her body flops like a fish. She is still, for Lennie has broken her neck, goes back and looks at that girl.

Curley is a thin young man with a brown face and eyes and a head tightly with curled hair. He wears a work glove on his left hand, like the boss and high heeled boots. He is a boxer, small and aggressive especially with large men who make him feel inferior. He hates big guys, are mad at them because he is not a big guy. He is married, possessive, jealous, always doubting his wife and bossing over everybody.

Curley’s wife is very pretty, simple, sweet and young. Her rouge cheeks and red lips make her seem alive and sleeping. The curls like tiny little sausages spread on the hay behind her head. She represents a force that destroys men and at the same time invites men to destroy her. She finally offers herself as a temptation which Lennie can not resist. She sows the seeds that eventually disrupt the fellowship. Entering into the discussion in Crooks room, she insults him. Candy and Lennie, laugh at their dream farm and threaten to invent the kind of accusation that will get Crook lynched.
Slim is a tall man, having long, black, damp hair straight back. He wears blue jeans and short denim jacket. He is jerk line expert muleskinners, skillful working man, invested with superhuman qualities. He is a God, prince of the ranch capable of driving twenty mules with a single line to leader. He is curiously ineffectual commenting on events but is unable to control or channel them. There is gravity in his manner and a quiet profound that all talk stops when he speaks. His authority is so great that his word is taken on any subject be it politics or love. His hatchet face is ageless, hands large and lean, delicate in their action as of a temple dancer. He is wise, God like figure, who bridges the gap between George and Lennie and the rest of the ranch. He stands up as a referee to Curley, when Carlson urges him to kill his old dog. He gives a pup to Lennie to keep. He understands their hunger but knows the dream will fail and they will be surrounded by lostness.

Crooks is the Negro stable, the most powerful in the novel and is a proud aloof man. He keeps his distance and demands the other people to keep theirs. His body is bent over to the left by his crooked spine and eyes lay deep in his head, seem to glitter with intensity. His lean face is lined with deep black wrinkles, has thin pain-tightened lips lighter than his face. One of his intense statements conveys his lostness:

“A guys gets too lovely, he gets sick. I seen guys nearly crazy with loneliness for land, but ever’ time a whore house or a black jack game took what it takes. If you---guys would want a hand to work for nothing – just his keep, why I’d came an’ lend hand” (OMM 73).

Although he delivers a bitterly pessimistic speech predicting the average man’s inability to ever attain individual economic security the deeper problems inherent in the labor
management system that exploits migrant workers are never adequately explored. Lennie and George are fated by their nature to join in extraordinary intimacy and irreconcilable hostility. The loneliness and lostness represented by Lennie is just creative and potent as George’s light. They are indispensable to one another as Manichean darkness and light. The good and bad side of God and Satan, the ultimate triumph of one over another. Their friendship is placed as a creative defense against rank loveliness by the hostility and guardedness of bunkhouse life, the apparent advance of their dream towards realization. Lennie is small, a sub human animal and is child like without power to judge or master social fate.

Steinbeck has always been interested in Scandinavian countries. He sailed on a Swedish ship to Europe, after the success of *Of Mice and Men*. He knew the work, the people, the bitterness, felt in the marrow of his bones and had a deep affectionate sense of identification with the fruit pickers. He wrote to Elizabeth Otiss:

‘I must go over into the interior valleys, there are five thousand families staving to death, not just hungry. 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 suffering from small pox and two of the women are to have babies. I’ve tied into the things and see if I can do something to knock these murderers.’(25)

They are afraid, if these people are allowed to live in camps with proper sanitary facilities they organize. The states and countries will give them nothing because they are migrants, but the crops of any parts of this state could not be harvested without them. The death of children by
starvation in the valleys is staggering. The plan dream of fellowship on the farm remains active, real prospects for its fulfillment decline drastically. The plan dooms to failure from the beginning, for fraternal living can not survive long in a world dominated by lostness homelessness and economic futility.

George, solitary, mercifully ends with a pistol, shooting the life of his partner Lennie and pathetically spoils forever the dream, of owning their own small plot of land, complete with chickens, rabbits and vegetable garden. Certainly Steinbeck conveys a remarkably sincere and compelling compassion for the oppressed laborers and the half witted, man-child Lennie. George delivers a speech that dwells on the worst possible aftermath of Lennie’s misdeed and this is not the wrath of Curley or the immolation of Lennie or the loss of the farm but the prospect of George’s becoming a man alone, homeless. The outcome of the Lennie-George experiment in fellowship can be seen easily and the lostness of man’s essential nature. George says, “guys like us got no fambly. They make a little stake an’ than they blow in it. They ain’t got nobody in the worl’ that gives a hoot in hell about ‘em’ (OMM 99).

For Lennie, George kills him. He pulls the trigger. The crash of the shot rolls up and rolls down again. Lennie jars and then settles slowly forward to the sand, and he lies without quivering. They have their dream:

“An’ we could have a few pigs. I could build a smoke house like the one gran’pa had an’ when we kill a pig we can smoke the bacon and the hams, and make sausage an’ all like that. An’ when the salmon run up river we could catch a hundred of ‘em’ an’ salt ‘em down or smoke ‘em. We could have them for breakfast. They ain’t nothing so nice as smoked salmon.
When the fruit came in we could can it—tomatoes, they're easy to can.
Ever’ Sunday we’d kill a chicken or a rabbit. May be we’d have a cow or a
    goat and the cream is so god damn thick you got to cut it with a knife and
take it out with a spoon. Sure, we’d have a little house an’ a room to
ourself” (OMM 5).

As Candy cries overwhelmed with his picture:

   “Sure they all want it, everybody wants a little bit of land, not much. Jus’
    som’ thin’ that was his. Somethin’ he could live on and there couldn’t
nobody throw him off of it. I never had none. I planted crops for damn
    near ever’ body in this state, but they wasn’t my crops, and when I
harvested ‘em, it wasn’t none of my harvest. But we gonna, do it now, and
don’t make no mistake about that. George ain’t got the money in town.
That money’s in the bank. Me an’ Lennie an’ George. We gonna have a
    room to ourself. We’re gonna have a dog an’ rabbits an’ chickens. We’re
gonna have green corn an’ may be a cow or a goat”. (OMM 72)

Men like Candy, represents black despair, which probably is a more accurate appraisal of
the human condition, “nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land. It’s just in their
head. They’re all the time talkin’ about it, but it’s jus’ in their head” (OMM 70).

Crooks comment about nobody ever getting the land refers not to literal ownership, but to
the dream of contentment entertained by the simple workmen who come and go the ranch:

   “You guys is just kiddin’ yourself. You’ll talk about it a hell of a lot but,
you won’t get no land. You’ll be a swamper here till they take you out in a
box. Hell, I seen too many guys. Lennie here’ll quit an’ be on the road in two, three weeks. Seems like ever’ guy got land in his head” (OMM 72).

George and Lennie fail to attain their dream farm and it is a metaphor or image for heaven. The failure to achieve the dream farm is associated with the question of a failure to attain heaven. The best man can hope for, is a kind of insecure balance of power between two elements which is in fact the most of ranch hands accomplish, indulging their craving for sensual pleasure in a legal and common place manner on each pay day. Failing this, man must suppress absolutely the appetites which refuse to be controlled, as George does in the symbolic killing of Lennie. The dreamers are doomed to lostness.

Steinbeck equals the darkest moments of modernism in Hemingway and Faulkner when George driven into shooting Lennie, destroys his own dream and attains lostness. The novel exhausts the possibilities of modernist ironies. Although George and Lennie display the childlike innocence or Curley & his wife a childish thoughtlessness, it turns certainly nothing for children. There is the pathos of ineluctable struggle in the difficult relationship between George and Lennie. Their friendship is imposed on George by Lennie's aunts frequently irritates George as Lennie always leads him in trouble. The psychology of the friendship is presented with deft sufficient, George’s generosity of spirit and Lennie’s need for him. His obedience, leaves George under constant tension. Lennie always destroys what he loves, the mouse he pets. George makes him to behave and not ruin their chances to save money from the farm, for their own land.

The presentation of ranch life has once again the gleam of the living. The migrant drifterers are reduced to bareness to speech, thought and action, on the sidetracks of the main line of western culture. They exist in hard reality, are susceptible to dreams, are lost in a compensatory
dream image of themselves, are set fire by the wish dream of George and Lennie. All the dreams of some of the people are smashed. Lennie, whose intelligence is limited to enable him to recognize the realities stands up against the boss’s son, and when challenged crushes his hand in his iron grip. The law of the frontier overtake Lennie and destroy, the lynch mob, fellow workers under the boss’s direction, George’s last friendship is to kill Lennie to save him from the more cruel death, by the mob. He is a symbol of the power of the proletariat confidence in the working class and absurdity. Curley’s wife is attracted to Lennie. He loses control because he is not affected by her sexual attraction. She asks him to strike her hair, which is as soft as mouse’s head.

The tale of George and Lennie is the tale of many migrant drifters. It is also the story of human hopes and obligations. The antipathy towards the migrants is more powerfully created here, because of the tenderness with which Lennie and George share their dream, “Someday we’re gonna get the jack together and we’re gonna have a little house, and a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs” (OMM 13).

George and Lennie tragic or comic, are lost, who have the brightest dreams. It is disturbing to find, the heroes in spiritual defeat or meeting brutal death. The dominant cause of George and Lennie’s lostness is lack of home. Their dream is: “We’re gonna do it. Gonna get a little place an’ live on the fatta the lan’ (OMM, 66). The lives of men who compose the wandering mass of casual labor and called migrant drifters in America are all lost. They have no roots. They compete against each other for temporary jobs, a seldom realized hope of someday settling down on a piece of land of their own and at last their masters. It is a story not of man’s defeat at the hands of an implacable nature but of man’s painful conquest of this nature and his conscious rejection of his dreams of greatness and acceptance of his own lostness:
“An’ I ain’t so bright neither, or I wouldn’t be buckin’ barley for my fifty and found. If I was bright, I was even a little bit smart. I’d have my own little place, an’ I’d be bringin’ in my own crops, ‘stead of doin’ all the work and not getting what comes up outta the ground” (OMM 37).

There is a sense of lostness and temporariness, among all the migrant drifters and the needs of mankind for privacy as well as companionship. The hands who live in the bunkhouse long for a room of their own. George’s dream of a farm includes a room for him. As Candy enters a room for the first time, he says to Crooks, ‘Must be nice to have room to yourself’, Crooks replies, “Guys don’t come in a colored man’s room.” (OMM, 71). There is lostness in being a bunk inhabitant, in old age, in being homeless. There is a real impulsive hunger of the ranch hand for home, a grey home in the west or land where the tall corn grows.

Crooks understands and recognizes the hard work of the farm but his happiness is in belonging to the land, to the house upon the land. Crooks opinion proves correct for a ranch worker that a farm of his own is like heaven, but his condition makes him a hired and forever never a land owner:

“I seen hundreds of man come by on the road…… every damn one of ‘em is got a little piece of land in his head. And never a god damn one of ‘em gets it. Jus’ like heaven, nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land….. I seen guys nearly crazy with loneliness for land” (OMM 28).

The isolation of each character and the atmosphere of lostness on the ranch is not pitiful but tragic. Lenie explores the chances for a good life against a flawed human material but Lennie symbolizes the code of rough justice. He, a huge, powerful, semi-idiot is killed when he is
frightened and thoughtless. He is a reduction of humanity to the lowest common denominator. Curley, is the unsure husband opposed and fearful of his sluttish, unnamed wife. Slim, a minor God, is contrasted sharply with Curley’s hysterical inability to control his wife. Candy and Crooks, are men without love. Both are abused by Curley, his wife and the working crew. Carlson and Whit are strictly non human, an abstract instrument. Lennie is defenseless, is content to strike soft things, violent. He is the personification an exaggerated, allegorized instance of mind and body. He can hardly distinguish between a dead pup and a dead woman. George is a carefree lover but needs Lennie to provide a sense of family and to keep alive the dream of a place of their own and not loose his identity.

T.K. Whipple, a critic claims that Steinbeck places his people not to close nor to far. Their performances with greatest clarity and fullness can be seen. Another critic Norbert Brodine succeeds in visualizing the hill and fields of California, the actual farm work, the lives of the hands in the mess room and bunkhouse, conveying the migrant lostness and love of the land and providing a more extensive visual record of the agrarian. The novel benefits an archetypal folk quality in its dramatization of American lostness, self destructive innocence and the dream of a place of one’s own. Till today people still dream the same dream as Lennie and George.

The novel Of Mice and Men is the seventh book of John Steinbeck in which his friends Ed. Rickett plays a major role as a character. In this story his philosophy contributes to the enduring qualities that make the story of George and Lennie so memorable. His work is the empathy created by George and Lennie in their striving to overcome lostness. At the ranch, lostness is a part of all the workers. The hope of getting a little farm of their own is the sustaining dream. Steinbeck makes an observation on the conflicting desire of the id the body or mass man and the ego the mind or leader figure. The world of Of Mice and Men is a fallen world. Death
and violence are the lot of mice and men alike. The common use of word hand means a workman, specially on farms and ranches. The novel is an expression of Steinbeck’s outraged compassion for the victims of chaotic forces. The dream of the farm, a safe place as a symbol of happiness. It is a passion for social justice and concern for common man.

Lostness of the migrant drifters is recurrent in every part of the novel and so it touches the deepest feelings and emotions and enlarges understanding of the human condition with the power to arouse pity and terror in the art form. The story refers to naturalistic details and gives emphasis to the idea of the futility of the human endeavor and the vanity of human wishes. Robert Burns’s poem proves the grief and pain of the man in search of joy. The best laid schemes Of Mice and Men gang leaves with grief and pain for promised Joy.

Steinbeck establishes an important aspect of the ranch workers. They are busy with their off hours recreation, gambling, drinking, visiting the local brothels. They squander their wages, remain penniless, involve themselves in monotonous pattern of work. They search for pleasure which is transitory. They suffer, homelessness as they are migrants. They have to depend upon jobs governed by the bosses who are unaware of the basic needs of existence. The alternative to George – Lennie companionship is lostness, who till the ground and derive no benefits from their labor. Other than the calamity of homelessness and economic futility, Steinbeck adds the psychological soul corruption that is the consequence of solitary existence. The two simple mortals try to escape the homelessness, economic futility without friends or companions. He also stresses the lostness of Crooks and Curley’s wife who express a craving for company and want some one to talk to.
Crook’s comment about nobody ever getting lands refers to the dream of contentment entertained by the simple workmen who come and go on the ranch. Lennie represents the animal appetites craving to touch, feel and kill. *Of Mice and Men* is a realistic story including verbal ambiguity in place names and the people. The sources are Steinbeck’s own experience as a laborer in California. George is friendless and alone. After punishing Lennie, to let him die in full enjoyment of their common dream he is also left alone. It is the most disturbing impulse humans have. Their love for each other is founded more deeply in the humanness of the impulse than in its humanitarian disguises. It is one of Steinbeck’s most compressed and unified work. It achieves an artistic richness and it ranks among the best of his works. The items which distinguish the novel are the framing and foreshadowing, the development of Lennie and the bond of friendship and the nature of human dreams.

The two bindlestiff stand by, the deep green pool of the Salinas river in the evening, up the slopes of the Gabilan mountains and the hilltops rosy in the sun. The darkening mountains represent the mystery of death, sustained in the minor imagery of the heron seizing and eating the little water snakes. Each of the dreamers seems afflicted with the loneliness of non attainment. Curley’s wife dreams of being an actress of Hollywood. Crooks the out cast, has his dream of companionship, haunting loneliness. Candy, another social out cast, is captivated by the dream, “Sure they all want it. Everybody wants a little bit of land, not much. Jus’ som’ thin’ that was his. Som’ thin’ he could live on and there couldn’t nobody throw him off of it. I never had none”. (OMM 133)

Each dream is doomed. Curley, the flamboyant fighter, stands ever ready to goad someone into a fight. Lennie, strokes the dead girl’s hair. George senses the inevitable end. Lennie is
a social misfit. There is the ineluctable struggle for survival of the weaker member. *Of Mice and Men* is:

“A study of the dreams and pleasure of every one in the world”. The lonely bindlestiff dreams of owning land yet enjoying cards, women and whisky for George tied with Lennie has freedom to enjoy these pleasures is as much as dream as having a ranch. George recite among the willows by the river, “how long’s it gonna be till we get that little place an’ live on the fatta the lan’ an’ rabbits. I know a little place we can get cheap but they ain’t givin’ it away”. (OMM 53)

All sit still, all bemused by the beauty of the thing, each mind is popped into the future when this lovely thing should come about. “We’ll fix up that little old place an’ we’ll go live there”. (OMM, 57) George pulls the trigger. The crash of the shot rolled up the hills and down again. Lennie jarrs, and then settles slowly forward to the sand, and lies without shiverering. *Of Mice and Men* can be summarized by Peter Lisca, the simple story of two migrant worker’s dreams of a safe retreat, a clean well lighted place, becomes itself a pattern or archetype which exists on three levels.

Steinbeck tries to describe the lostness of migrant drifters as incessant and programmatic. Hence he seems to return time and again to same motifs, characters and landscape, which consistently attract a very broad popular audience(readers) who look for entertainment, inspiration, information. The end of the novel recapitulates almost verbatim the description of the beginning. The unassailable dispassion with which a water bird swallows a snake throws in starkest contrast. George’s agonized resignation to Lennie is also heart touching. The ending is
scary, painful and perplexing. The novel remains his most compelling tribute to the force behind those ravages, the most disturbing impulse human have. George delivers a speech, on the worst aftermath of Lennie’s misdeed, the prospect of George’s becoming a man alone, homeless. It represents the true climax of the novel, the outcome of Lennie- George’s lostness of man’s essential nature:

“God a’mighty, if I was alone I could live so easy. I could go get a job an’ work an’ no trouble. No mess at all, and when the end of the month come I could take my fifty bucks and go into town and get whatever I want. Why, I could stay in a cat house all night. I could eat any place I want, hotel or any place and order any damn think I could think of. An’ I could do all that every damn month. Get a gallon of whisky or set in a pool room and play cards or shoot pool----- an’ whatta I got, ---- I got you! You can’t keep a job you lose me ever’ job I get” (OMM 10).

The novel concludes as George walks to town to spend his money, abandoning his dream of buying a farm. In the beginning the green pool in the Salinas River promises serenity but in the final end it is the background for Lennie’s violent death. The objective image of the good life in the future, a little house and a couple of acres and a cow and some pigs, is sharply opposed to the sordid reality of the bunkhouse and the ranch.

George shoots Lennie to prevent a worse death at the hands of others. The climax pairs an exploration of the ambiguity of love in the rigid contrast between the different motives that activates Curley’s wife and George. The dependence of men on their shifting jobs, the explicit misery of their lostness due to homelessness and the exposure of their social and economic
weakness. A sensitive man dreams of escape into some kind of gentleness. George, Lennie and Candy agree to realize the dream of the little farm. The device of a divided hero, two man of opposite nature is used by Steinbeck.

The novel *Of Mice and Men* is simple and sentimental work, because of the lostness of the migrant drifters. Soledad, where the novel takes place, is an abbreviation for ‘our lady of the loneliness’ and thus refers to Mary, the mother of Christ, during the period from good Friday to the Resurrection on the Easter Sunday. The novel begins late on a Friday and ends the following Sunday.