CHAPTER -I

INTRODUCTION : HISTORY OF AMERICAN NOVEL: LIFE & WORKS OF JOHN STEINBECK
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A Noble prize laureate & widely popular novelist John Steinbeck was among the most enduring American authors of the twentieth century. Born in 1902 Steinbeck was a novelist, short story writer, playwright, non-fiction writer, journalist & screen writer. He was always a man with a place and when he was a Californian. His writings never succeeded very well because he tried to walk in an alien soil. In a literal sense, he was a conservative, a man who values clung to old America. At a time when people were hungry and dispossessed and wandering, Steinbeck was one of their literate spokesman. Sympathetic to the plight of the impoverished and downtrodden, his depression era fiction offers poignant depiction of socio-economic conditions and human realities of the Americans during the 1930’s. Readers mistook his emotions for compassion, in the sense of tearfully expecting too much from life. Among Steinbeck’s finest fictional creations are his primitives or half wits and escapes or dropouts he insisted on responding to the problems of the 1960’s. With many of Steinbeck’s characters the attempt to express the tacit sense of relatedness is channeled into identification, which becomes a vehicle to help man feel his oneness with the whole and express the emotions.

Born in California’s Salinas valley, which serves as a backdrop for much of his works, John Steinbeck was one of the best known and widely read American writers. He achieved his success by working within limitations which were self imposed but seem on the whole were imposed by his temperament. He was acutely emotional and true and so he wrote with authenticity. His themes were the process of life at a certain place at a certain time. He had a generous indignation at the spectacle of human suffering. He was the celebrant of any kind of life
just because it is life. As a nonteological thinker, Steinbeck was neither mystic nor biologist, neither a humanist, naturalist, Christian or atheist. He was all of these multidinous aspects of Steinbeck’s genius made him great and so was called myriad mind. He stood apart from the contemporary naturalist and Steinbeck’s works have no creative character but his people are always on the verge of becoming human. All his moral serenity & sympathetic understanding of men under strain make a striking novel like *In Dubious Battle* so notable in the social fiction of the period. His moral advantage as a realist in the depression era was different. It was his famous versatility that earned him reputation. His great possession as a writer was not in craft or in an experimental spirit, but in an unusual disinterested simplicity, natural grace, tenderness and ease in his relation to his Californian world.

John Steinbeck’s understanding of the broad processes of human life gave him distinction among the depression realists. He had been primitive enough to call men back to their humanity that a culture is the total of the human qualities and that death can be captured easily by life if given a chance and help. He provided a panorama of California’s farm life, landscape, which is unique in literature. He knew to distinguish in works like *The Long Valley, In Dubious Battle* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, between the animal processes of life and social privation. His mind moves happily in realms—the denizens in *Tortilla Flat*, the ranch hands in *Of Mice And Men*, the okies in *The Grapes of Wrath*, the strikers in *In Dubious Battle*, the farmers in *The Long Valley*, the symbolic protagonists of democratic struggle and Nazi power in *The Moon Is Down*. He was able to invest the migration of the Joads with a genuinely tragic quality as he felt deeply for them and had seen the gap between their simple belief in life and degradation. He emphasized the natural bond between life and productive property, the need that man has a bit of earth to give him sustenance and dignity. Steinbeck professed sympathy and anger towards American society. An
active opponent of social exploitation, Puritanism and materialistic values he was noted for his sharp forceful writing style, humour, profound compassion for the poor, inarticulate and the politically maligned. Early in his career, his study of biology at Stanford University during 1920’s developed a biological view of humanity. Steinbeck was a realist, who seen things with great insight.

An innately modest man Steinbeck had been more modest as a writer. He might not have been destined to whipsaw himself between the pretensions & the trivial. It was his bad luck that he happened to be one of the last writers to dream. He got his ideas from Stevenson, Dumas, Scott, Bunyan, Shakespeare, Milton (Paradise Lost), The Bible especially myths, fairy tales and the Arthurian legends in Malory. He found subjects closer to homes, the lives of farmers, drifters, street people, migrant workers and the people of depressed America. His portraits of working people are the best of their kind. He knows to tell a story straight and true. He defines a novel as the extension and fulfillment of his dreams and vision as well as a reflection of the writer’s soul and his philosophy of life. The novelist affects his own unique voice but in the context of his culture, history and race. He involves himself in human condition. He writes of darkness and makes everyone feel it. His stories capture the loveliness and loneliness of long valleys, the hungers and heroics of little man. He loves to talk with people-all sorts of people. His major interest is the problem of the migratory laborers in California. He writes about them and for them. “They are getting some relief now but there must be more, nothing permanent can be done for them”, he says. He himself tramples out a bitter vintage of wrath-the enmity of the bewildered exiles and migrants from poverty and hunger. He produces pages of beauty and impact, followed by pages of sheer trash, the emptiness of the pseudo-grandeur or pseudo primitivism. He can juxtapose a penetrating analysis of human emotions especially of sense
impression. His work attracts especial attention and affection because he is a lover of life rather than a hater of life. His greatness comes not from his wound but from his wholeness.

John Steinbeck didn’t write for fame, although occasionally he enjoyed being famous. He didn’t write for money but because he loved to write. He was addicted to it, although there were times when he needed money. Even as a young child, Steinbeck had places of his own, tucked in among the wooded, brushy banks of nearby drainage ditches, places where he could sit and dream and watch the movements of the birds and small animals. He saw, heard and smelled in the early morning of a long day in late spring in the fields around Salinas, California, the hills near the Hamilton ranch or among the rocks that circled the tide pools below Steinbeck’s summer home at Pacific Grove. The Young Steinbeck seemed to develop a particular affinity for the seashore. In *Travelers with Charley* he describes his journey from ocean to ocean. Since the time he was born to the time he left to go to college, he spent part of nearly every summer at the beach in Pacific grove along the water and hills around Asilomer. In those years Salinas was a small town of twenty five hundred people. His home was two storey, Midwestern-Victorian frame house which was painted white.

Social order in Salinas town was usually very simple. To the founders those two or three of the early settlers who had made fortunes, achieved money and responsibility became the upper class. The bankers, the lawyers the doctors, the large store and factory owners and operators with the more affluent farmers and ranchers were the auxiliary members. He was concerned with religion and religious experience. His faith was with Christianity and its traditions form a major base for his fiction. The novels *The Grapes of Wrath* and *East of Eden* is a method of syncretic allegory. He hoped that by understanding the true progress, man will eventually be able to transcend the mistakes and misinterpretations of the past and move. He was reckoned among the
most sizeable novelist. He was not only continuing in an American tradition enacting an old American dream but also suggested that the dream itself had moved west and had settled in California which stimulated in its inhabitants the intoxicating sense of fresh beginning and untroubled potentialities once stimulated in Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman.

Steinbeck was one of the four children of Olive Hamilton, a teacher and John Ernst Steinbeck II, the treasurer of Monterey County. With a slightly higher than middle income, good number of children, a large comfortable house, he lived with his stern father but tender hearted, the lively strong minded mother with social ambitions and a manager who held the family together. The journey to California was made by both Steinbeck’s paternal and maternal grandparents. Much of Steinbeck’s fiction deals with the family relations between husband and wife, parents and children. It also deals with the transplanted family, who moved to California from the east and who confronted a nature awesome in its beauty, power and potential for wealth and disaster. Steinbeck reversed the Henry, James theme who confronted the sophistication of European society by bringing the American to the ultimate frontier, to a place almost incomprehensible to sensibilities formed in tamer surroundings. John Adolph Gross Steinbeck, Steinbeck’s paternal grand father was from an area near Dusseldorf, Germany. Few years earlier, his great grand father Dickson had decided to take his family, his wife, two sons and three daughters, one of whom, Almira, became Steinbeck’s grandmother to the wholly land from Leominster, Massachusetts, in order to convert the Jews to Christianity. The plan was simple but based more on religious zeal than on a practical knowledge of either the Jews or the holy land. He would acquire some land and through the application of scientific farming methods make the desert bloom. This would teach the Jews to raise their standard of living and in the euphoria of their new found wealth be converted to an appreciation of the new testament.
John Adolph Steinbeck was a wood carver and settled in New England, with wife Almira after the civil war and then moved to Florida. His Son and father, John Ernst who had the same name was born in Florida during the war. One of six boys, John Adolph escaped to the north. Almira and her children were allowed to go to New England. Nearly a decade, John Adolph made his way west to California, where he bought ten acres of land near Hollister, about thirty miles north east of Salinas. The family first went to dairy farming then raised fruits and finally established a flour mill. Steinbeck’s father grew up to become an accountant and manager in King City, then moved to Salinas to manage the Sperry flour mill. By this time the Steinbeck had found their place in the community. Although John Steinbeck lost his job with substantial bank account, great economic caution, he searched for a way to go into business for himself of feed store and get some experience of buying and selling grain. The failure of the store became devastating experience. Mrs. Steinbeck had acquired much the fear of debt from her parents. Senior Steinbeck got a job in the sugar refinery office as a bookkeeper but, the job was not large enough for his abilities. Pioda and other prominent friends arranged him to be appointed as a treasurer.

John would occasionally go to his father’s office and mind the store. Before his father died in 1936, sitting at his father’s desk, he would work at his fiction, use the margins and blank spaces in old magazines. He would sit down and write for three or four hours. He was a large gentleman, quiet and sensitive. He suffered for the people who were in trouble. He was organized, punctual, tidy with beautiful handwriting yet he was an out door man who really belonged to the farm. Steinbeck’s mother Olive is also reflected in his fiction and many of her best qualities, cheerful strength, socialibility, capable management are given to Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*. She is pictured more directly in *East of Eden*. Born in San Jose, his mother was
one of nine children, the youngest five daughters. She left the ranch to go to secondary school in Salinas to prepare for a teaching career, as Steinbeck suggests in *East of Eden*. She had no intention of becoming a rancher’s wife and yearned for town, it’s comfort, stability and social life. Olive had the family, the house, the position she had desired in the largest town in the long valley. She was a formidable woman with remarkable energy and determination. She was forceful, practical minded, a creature of society rather than of religion, outgoing, knowledgeable, firm, fun loving, often opinionated and always busy. She was proper, who could take charge and get things done. She belonged to number of clubs, arranged meetings, programs and banquets. She spent a good deal of time on strangers or external realities of a frustrating nature. She obliterated by refusing to believe in external realities of frustrating nature and when one resisted her disbelief she got angry.

Instead of stabilizing Steinbeck’s life, success confused him. He was unable to decide where to live or with whom. In 1938 he and his first wife, Carol, built a house in Los Gatos, eight miles from San Jose. With his second wife Gwyndolyn Canger, whom he married in 1943, he went to Manhattan town house. As he approached fifty Steinbeck and his third wife Elaine, moved to Sag Harbor, a resort and fishing village on the eastern and long island. None of the place or people seemed to fit the man then did the costume, black cap and broad brimmed hat. One reason for his failure with girls was a painful experience during his first year in high school. His mother coerced him into going to the dancing class. The girls laughed at him because he wore a pair of large clumsy boots. This experience became one of those nightmare moments of adolescence that haunted him through the rest of his life.

John Steinbeck has given the credit to his mother for supporting him in his desire to become a writer. She planted the seed with her bed time stories, encouraged her son to use his
imagination, to perceive the nature of things intuitively and poetically. She created a climate in her home, read books, sang songs, read aloud verse and prose and classical records played. They had a library at home. As a youngster, John was brash, stubborn and lazy. His misbehavior was some times so persistent that he left his parents shaking their heads in exasperation. Mrs. Steinbeck feared that he would either be a genius or amount to nothing. His friends thought that he had the reputation for a lover. He was quiet while all the kids would hang out in the vacant lot across the street from the Steinbeck house. He would never join them. John went through a primary school in Salinas. He was a boy who was always well dressed, uncomfortable. He was withdrawn. When he talked alone, he was fine, but in a group he was never comfortable. He was an introvert when others were around.

John Steinbeck’s teachers saw him exceptional. One was his composition teacher, Miss.Cupp, praised and encouraged him by reading his compositions to the class. Shortly after he made up his mind to become a writer he started writing stories on his own. He send them to magazines under a false name, never put a return address on them. He used to watch the magazine for a certain length of time to see his articles printed. They never did because they couldn’t get in touch with him. He was scared to get a rejection slip. His sister Esther recalled that John always had to write things. He used to gift his own created poems. When he gifted a poem to his mother, he exclaimed with happiness and thanked God for helping him to create poem. Few outsiders showed warmth towards him, notably Max Wagner’s mother and his teacher Miss.Hawkins.Despite conflicts with his parents, he maintained his affection for them but developed resentment for the community. It was in response to social failure and separation that he developed a rich inner life. He once said in a letter that half of his life, while growing up, was
composed of dreams and fantasies. Through adolescence he developed an ever growing passion for language—became entranced with the feel, sound, and look of words.

John Steinbeck was a solitaire because he was the chosen Knight on a solitaire quest in an enchanted land. They were part of his world and subject to his judgment. He endured battles with disappointment and self doubt, ship wreck of publishers’ bankruptcy and rejection of nearly every periodical in the country. A writer out of loneliness was trying to communicate like a distant star sending signals. He tried to establish a relationship of meaning of feeling, observing. He said that he was a lonesome animal, spending life trying to be less lonesome. He said: one of our ancient methods is to tell a story begging the listeners to say, to feel. “Yes, that’s the way it is, or at least that’s the way I feel it. You’re not as alone as you thought”. (True Adventures of John Steinbeck)

There was an acute farm labor shortage during the war years and the cadet program was a convenient way to organize the boys for work in the fields. All of Steinbeck’s farm work experienced during his time in high school came as a result of being drafted into the fields through the cadets. When the farmers needed help, cadets would be brought out in buses for picking fruit, to hoe beans, pull, vines out by hand and lay them in rows. For their work, they were paid thirty five cents an hour. Steinbeck’s interest in the Californian farm labor conflict was the result of both circumstances and accident. His background in Salinas and some of the jobs he took to pay his Stanford tuition helped him understand the issues. Different sociological and historical volumes tell of California’s powerful land monopolists who developed large empires such as Kern county land, the southern pacific rail, road and the Irvine Corporation, all of which ruthlessly and systematically exploited the small farmers and the migrant workers.
Steinbeck belongs to that popular group of contemporary novelists who diluted blend of Calvinism and Lutheranism refuting authentic Christianity. His sentimentality is a way of regarding humanity, the way of feeling rather than reason. He treats farmers, impoverished workers or vagabonds and presents life through their eyes and creates sympathy for them. He gives the problems and personage of the middle classes to an intense curiosity about the poor. They appear, possess of a mysterious strength are victimized by circumstances and therefore he weeps for them. They are caught in a common maelstrom of disaster. The novelist who presents the widest range of these fluctuations is Steinbeck. The wild vagabondage of *Tortilla Flat*, the violence of labor conflict in *In Dubious Battle*, he combines elements of national consciousness of economic depression in *Of Mice and Men* and *In Dubious Battle*. His career was to the usual development of the significant novelist and the mechanical stereotype of the professional craftsmanship of popular fiction. The novels *Tortilla Flat* and *Cannery Row* is his evidence of psychological reconversion after the strain of war.

Steinbeck was put to work with the brick masons. His job was to wrestle wheelbarrows full of mortar or cement to the levels at which the masons worked. He looked for a job with one of the city’s newspapers, magazines or publishing houses. He spent hours at his desk, forcing himself to write three or four thousand words a day. Each work session gave him the strength to approach the next day’s stint. He would not allow himself to become discouraged even when his words rang hollow or tiny. He drew one of humankinds oldest stories, the quest for Holy Grail. According to medieval legend, the grail was the cup used by Jesus Christ at the last supper. For him, like others, the grail became a powerful symbol of the search for life’s meaning for a time when he was distracted by work. After finishing *The Pot of Gold* (1928) which was about bitterness of loneliness of Henry Morgan, his life darkened by his abandonment of the magical
world of his youth. Childhood’s wonders were replaced by fame, wealth and power but all achievements were empty. He returned to Stanford to console Carlton Sheffield, whose wife had recently died. Sheffield was impressed with the manuscript of The Pot of Gold.

Steinbeck was introduced to Carol Henning, a pretty dark young woman who used to type his manuscripts at the rate of five cents, to be close to Steinbeck. Carol was from San Jose. She was very happy to be involved in such a grand project which was now called Cup of Gold. Their passion for each other was great. They wanted to share every minute. He loved to watch Carol but wanted to get married after he made a name. He could not work well when from away from her. He got married to Carol on January 14 in Glendale, California, with Carlton Sheffield as a witness. Most of his effort was directed at the novel and from time to time he made notes for a series of stories about the Salinas Valley. He sat with the goal of writing one book a year and meant to stick to his schedule. Steinbeck and Carol planned a pleasant summer at their eagle rock home. His ability to work with his hands had contributed scores of improvement in few weeks. Secretaries were not the only ones having trouble finding. Farm prices tumbled, business closed, mortgage payments were missed, and wages plummeted to only few cents or dollars a week. Many families found difficult to feed, clothe their families. People started living in the streets. President Herbert Hoover attempted to instill confidence in Americans, letting that the slums were no real crisis but a temporary depression. He was opposed to any legislation aimed at regulating the economy back towards health.

Steinbeck and Carol decided to return to Salinas. John Ernst and his son worked well together and set themselves some ambitions renovations and improvements. Carol accepted a secretarial position with the Monterey chamber of commerce, although she hoped to the more challenging world of advertising. Both managed to stretch the contents of their pantry, to feed
everyone. Steinbeck borrowed from his and Carol’s parents as well, but hated to do so. His frustrations sometimes sent him into bleak depression. His temper flored at the slightest provocation. He drank more and they fought occasionally. He did not let his mental depression keep him from his desk and allowed nothing to interrupt his work. Other than debts owed by his and Carol’s parents, he had dental bills to pay. Due to his carelessness, his teeth were in terrible shape. When he had money he was in the dentist’s room, where he met Ed. Ricketts, a marine biologist who lived in Monetary. In their first brief conversation, both of them realized that they had a great deal in common. In the University of Chicago in 1920, marine biology fascinated Ed. Ricketts. He was proud of the large, specialized and comprehensive library of marine references and journals. He became the best friend of Steinbeck. Steinbeck was a daily visitor to biological laboratories. He wanted to write about middle class citizens, so he wrote about the people of Monterey whom he knew so well. He also wrote about the colorful citizens of Cannery Row. The water front was populated by Portuguese descended fishermen by the cannery workers, prostitutes, barkeeps who made their living simple. From Ricketts he heard of the community of denizens, from Monterey, spoke Spanish, American Indian, Portuguese and Italian. He absorbed Rickett’s ecological approach to nature and the placed of human in it. In the self contained universe of the pool he reflected all the struggle for life on earth.

John Steinbeck was twenty nine years old and still dependent upon his parents for financial support and roof over his head. His hesitation proved more nervous wrecking than his fears. He went deeper into debt every month. The great depression was deepened. He began a complete revision of to an unknown God. His central character was Joseph Wayne, a Vermont farmer who had joined the westward movement and had settled in central California. Steinbeck brought both Joseph and his Californian homestead to life. His love of his land was at once
practical, religious and sexual. As he looked into the valley, he felt his body flushing with a hot fluid of love for nature. His eyes sparkled with tears and his brain filled with wonder. When he saw nature and its eternal beauty, there was pity for the grass and the flowers and he felt that the trees was his child. For a moment he floated high in the air and looked down upon it. He decided to take care of nature. The split between Joseph Wayne’s profound worship of the natural world and the difficulty of keeping that worship alive in the midst of destructive civilization gave him a strong story. He played with ideas, looked for ways to incorporate his reading and reflection in his work. Steinbeck and Carol traveled south, returning to Los Angles, where they saw more serious problems of the homeless, communities of the dispossessed. People were living in ragged shanties impoverished out of cardboards, twigs, papers and tins.

In March Steinbeck and Carol were called back to Salinas. Olive’s health was failing. He sat for weeks near her but she got disturbed by the sound of pencil on paper. She got paralyzed. She had ceased to function as an individual. He began to think of individuals as cells. No individual could exist separate from the group that was composed of all individuals yet the groups continued to exist despite the death. Groups possessed an unspoken consciousness. In human groups mind could produce a lynch mob capable of actions, no individual would pursue. Eg. Roman legions on going for battle formed a unit called a Phalanx. All of the legionnaire were drawn closely together. A Phalanx moved and fought as one entity, capable of greater destruction than its individual soldiers could wreck. Like the human body, it was composed of individual cells made more than a simple aggregation or collection.

Hooverville, outside Salinas was called little Oklahoma after its citizens. Small farmers were driven out from their land by the failed economy and fierce windstorm, and impenetrable clouds of dust. The Dust Bowl, as Oklahoma was called spread swift area. Thousands of farm
families loaded their belongings on vehicles and set out for California in hopes of finding work as migrant laborers. They provided California’s farmers with inexhaustible pool of people who could be hired at wages. Whole families worked long hours in the lettuce fields and apple orchards for pennies a day. Roosevelt, rallied the country with the example of courage and fearlessness, could not provide a quick solution for the dispossessed and exploited. The government failed, other organizations stepped in, the communist party whose representatives urged the migrants to organize into labor unions.

The collective strength of a union could stand up to the exploitation of the migrants. A union struck for wages. Violence erupted frequently between the farmers and the labor organizers. Steinbeck considered writing about them to provide a perfect format, to explore his thoughts and theories about group consciousness. *Tortilla Flat* reflected Steinbeck’s thinking, for the denizens it became a world. He began researching labor unions. He went on expeditions in search of firsthand information about migrant workers, communists, labor organizers and farmers. His sheaf of notes grew thick with observations, reflections, dialogues and local color. The government was active in gathering the migrants into communities. Fearful might sparked a revolution, federal camps and compounds were started for migrants and strikers. The government reasoned, hungry and homeless should be fed and given shelter in such camps. Thousands of migrants crowded together, began to develop a distinctive group consciousness. Many of the migrants built squatter communities on the banks of irrigation ditches, fashioning their shelter with the scrap they could scrounge. The squatters camps been mistaken for trash dumps, were rented with no running water or electricity, no beds or beddings. The streets were patrolled by farmed deputies with arms to use their guns against organizers. Migrants purchased water and food from the farmers, wages were few cents an hour. Nobody dared to speak against these
conditions. They were plenty of other homeless families to take the places of trouble makers and were kicked out.

Steinbeck was profoundly shacked by what he saw and heard. He became friend with Thomas Collin, a government administrator in Bakerfield, California. He was also fascinated by group psychology and passed many hours discussing the roots of mob violence. He had worked hard on the harvest gypsies, creating an accurate portrait of the degradation and misery migrants suffered. Even in the most dehumanizing conditions, the migrants struggled to retain their dignity and compassion, they could. Steinbeck wanted to give some shape to his experiences among the migrants because he was an emotional man. Hence all his novels are manifestations of depth of emotions.

The middle class abandons its versatility and its values are atrophied into a sluggish desire for comfort and security. Steinbeck’s heroes retain the ability to take care of themselves and the self assurance that goes with it. Slim, the jerkline skinner in *Of Mice and Men* knows he is good and he accepts the deferential graciousness. Men are kept alert, strong and self reliant by a benevolently hostile environment. Ma Joad’s will to survive is strong not only for herself but for all the families. She has humor, generosity and tolerance. The Dust Bowl migrants are made tough and resourceful by adversity. They struggle ahead despite temporary setbacks carrying the seeds of all that is good in man, as the turtle unwittingly bears the barley seed on his shells. Mack in *Cannery Row* is a natural leader, competent and versatile. His real strength comes from renunciation. His economy is simple. He wants what he wants and he always considers whether or not it’s costs is excessive. He has no puritanical objection to high living but most of the things valued by the middle class- mechanical gadgets, security, cleanliness, prestige, comfort-he finds too expensive.
John Steinbeck was a novelist of people. His best books are about ordinary men and women, simple souls who battle against dehumanizing social forces or struggle against their own humane tendencies and attempt sometimes successfully sometimes not, to forgive lives of meaning and worth. Steinbeck contained within himself the perennial American contradictions of solitude and society, of success and corruptions, recognition, rejected home Country and not so accepting chosen place. He was a product of Central California valley inland and coast. As a novelist he found his theme only when he ran into those lost and rootless Americans, the Dust Bowl migrants making their way to California’s orchards and lettuce farms. After his controversial Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), Steinbeck was considered among the most significant American novelists of the twentieth century. When he was honored in 1962 with the Nobel Prize in literature, the award committee cited Steinbeck’s, Sympathetic humor and sociological perception, instinct for what is genuinely American, be it good or bad. In his fiction, he professed both sympathy and anger towards American society. An active opponent of social exploitation, Puritanism and materialistic values, he was noted for his sharp, forceful writing style, humor, compassion for the poor. He insisted that such evolutionary concepts as adaptation and natural selection apply to human society and profound observations gleaned from examining people in groups than as individuals.

Many of Steinbeck’s novels and stories are set in and around Salinas Valley in California, where he was born and did variety of jobs, prior to his writing career. The novel *Tortilla Flat*, (1935), his fourth novel is a colorful and sentimental treatment of the idle, antimaterialistic existence of a group of denizens-Californian natives of mixed Spanish, Indian and White descent- in Monterey California. He asserted that the denizens lacked the material selfishness necessary to modern survival. They were artists in living. They had the repose of healthy animals
of primitive men. Steinbeck’s picture of fishing Indians of the Gulf of California stresses their superstitions and sufferings. In *In Dubious Battle* (1936), he depicts a strike of migrant fruit pickers and the conflict which results between union organizers and California’s apple growers. His examination of political and social concern in *In Dubious Battle* prompted critical reassessment of his reputation as an author of light social commentary. This novel is notable in the social fiction of the period’s people who were always on the verge of becoming human, but never do. It was his famous versatility that first earned him his reputation. His great possession as a writer was not an interest in craft or an experimental spirit. It was an unusual disinterested simplicity, a natural grace, tenderness and ease in his relation to his Californian World. The depression naturalists saw life as one vast Chicago slaughterhouse, a guerilla war, a perpetual bombing raid.

John Steinbeck achieved national recognition with *Of Mice and Men* (1937), a pastoral novel which addresses the conflict between idealism, reality and the loveliness that divides people of all classes. This work centers on two itinerant ranch hands – Lennie, a strong retarded man and George who looks after him and dreams of owning a small farm of their own. Lennie accidentally kills the conniving wife of his employer’s son. George mercifully kills Lennie to spare him from a cruel death by a lynch mob. Stark Young is described as an, Absorbing work of theatre art , Brooks Atkinson as a Masterpiece , John Mason as, One of the finest, pungent and poignant realistic productions.

From 1937–39, Steinbeck studied the problems of large group of migrant workers during their trek from Oklahoma to California. The novel *The Grapes of Wrath* is his attempt to understand and authenticate his experience. The novel presents the biological and political view of the role played by economic conditions in upsetting the delicate balance between humanity
and nature. The inability of farmers to seasonally rotate their crops due to market demands, together with drought and depressed American economy culminate in *The Grapes of Wrath*, in which the loss of once productive farms and the displacement of many rural Oklahoma families is explained. One such family, the Joads, is lured to California by promises of high paying jobs from large landowners, who seek to ensure cheap labor by creating a massive supply of jobless people competing for a limited number of employment opportunities. The Joads discover brutal systematized migrants labor camps where low wages and the threat of starvation make the workers increasingly dependant upon their employers. The hopeful westward migration of the Joads is ironically compared to that of the original western settlers and the family’s dreams of a land of milk and honey. Community, agricultural and political interest groups charged Steinbeck with exaggerating conditions in Oklahoma and California. Daniel Aaron, Spokesman for the association farmers accused Steinbeck of writing a brief for communism. The novel won international acclaim as a powerful depiction of the common person’s vulnerability to social and natural forces. Peter Lisca summarized the novel’s importance. *The Grapes of Wrath* was a phenomenon on the scale of a national event. It was publicly banned and burned by citizens. It was debated on national radio hookups but above all it was read.

The novel *Cannery Row* (1945), centers upon a group of indolent Monterey vagrants and their bumbling adventures with a sympathetic biologist. According to F.W. Watt, John Steinbeck satirizes, contemporary American life with its commercialized values, its ruthless creed of property and status and it’s relentlessly accelerated pace. In *Sweet Thursday* (1954), a sequel to *Cannery Row*, Steinbeck bids farewell to the disappearing way of life of carefree American vagabonds.
The novel *East of Eden* (1952), written as a family epic ranging from the civil war to World War I, is a parable of the fall of man focusing on the Trask family. Story of Cain and Abel, three generations of brothers resolve disputes between one another and in each conflict, evil results come out from the inexplicable rejection of one child’s gift to his father. Steinbeck maintains:

The greatest terror a child can have is that he is not loved ……and with rejection comes anger and with anger some kind of revenge for rejection, and with the crime, guilt-and there is the story of mankind. (EOE 268)

The novel centers on Adam, who attempts to create his Eden in the Salinas Valley with Cathy, his beautiful but remote wife. She is involved sexually with Adam’s brother, Charles who is a figure of evil and destruction reminiscent of the biblical serpent. She gives birth to the twins Caleb & Aaron before deserting Adam to assume a new identity as Kate, a vicious and sadistic prostitute. Caleb, the son whose gift Adam rejects, believes his desires for revenge to be preordained and he exposes Aaron to the truth about their mother. Caleb is offered the possibility of salvation through understanding the meaning of timshel (Hebrew word), indicating humanity’s power to choose between good and evil. *East of Eden*’s overt symbolism and allegorical structure is resulted in critical controversy.

Steinbeck’s last attempt *The Pearl* (1947) a short fiction is a lyrical parable about a poor Mexican fisherman’s discovery of a giant pearl which brings evil to his household and life. In *The Pearl*, Kino is identified with low animal order. He is a primitive who comes from a society which in the dark intellectually, politically, theologically, scioologically.He has heard the cock of progress crow He is everyman, awakes in the dark, one of the spirit. The allegorical journey,
called the way into the dark night of the soul, stands for despair and hopelessness. Kino and his people never knew the life other than they lead, neither they are in hopelessness for they never knew any thing for which to hope. The darkness is injustice and hopelessness concerns the opacity of the moral substance in men.

John Steinbeck is best known for his realistic portrayal of the hardships of the great depression in *The Grapes of Wrath*, which depicts a group of share croppers on rout to California. While exposing the ordeal of their poverty he also seeks to affirm the sanctity of life and the unifying, clarifying forces inherent in human sufferings. It is a symbol of his tendency to present human life in animal term. The subject of *The Grapes of Wrath* which deals with human society is the same as the subject of *The Red Pony*, which deals with horses. The old pioneer of the leader of the people describes a westward migration. A whole bunch of people make into one big crawling beast every man wanted something for himself but the big beast that is all of them want only westering Steinbeck.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck has summoned all his resources to feel his human relationship with the family of dispossessed farmers. Many parts of the World today are being flooded with migrants like the Joads, deprived of the dignity of a human society forbidden the dignity of human work and made to flee from their houses like prairie dogs driven before a prairie fire. He has provided a panorama of California farm life and landscape which is unique in literature.

Steinbeck, standing apart from both the contemporary naturalist and the new novel of sensibility one finds in Faulkner and Wolfe, brought a fresh note into contemporary fiction because he promised realism less terror ridden than the depression novel, yet a consciously
responsible to society. All his moral serenity, the sympathetic understanding of men under strain makes a striking novel like *In Dubious Battle* so notable. He knew to distinguish in works like *The Long Valley*, *In Dubious Battle* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, between the animal processes of life and social privation. Out of his slow curiosity, the strength of the agrarian tradition in him he was able to invest the migration of the Joads, with a genuinely tragic quality precisely because he felt so deeply for them and had seen the gap between their simple belief in life and degradation. Steinbeck out of the simplicity of his indignation had been primitive enough to call men back to their humanity, to remind depression America that a culture is only the sum total of the human qualities that make it up and Life can give a periodical beating to death any time if given a chance and some help.

The tonic sanity in a bad time, its understanding of the broad processes of human life that gave John Steinbeck distinction among the depression realist. He is a simple writer who has acquired facility, though he is restive in his simplicity, his imagination can not rise above. When both working together, a tameness of imagination operating stickly that give his work its surface paradox of simplicity and manifests depth of emotions and endless contrivance of means. Steinbeck had written about communism and had hit at reactionary red-baiters, had clearly demonstrated his critical awareness of the bad features of the communist mentality and methods in the novel *In Dubious battle*, dealing with an abortive strike by migrant fruit pickers of monolithically organized owners who would take pitiless advantage. Doc, debunks the legend of the communist altruistic humanitarianism and the party’s cold blooded exploitation of misery, its callous use of the most despicable means of its power seeking ends. Steinbeck rejected communism because it trotted life. Thousands of Americans were been cruelly victimized and heinously degraded by a system, crazily inept which destroyed masses of ordinary people for the
inordinate and socially unjust and detrimental enrichment of remote imprisonal corporations. Aroused over the trampling of human life, he puts this strongly in accent of burning anger and disgust because he felt that communism and Nazism have in common a commitment to collectivism. Steinbeck emphasizes the natural bond between life and productive property, the need that man has a bit of earth to give him sustenance and dignity in *The Grapes of Wrath*. He seems to approve and recommend collectivisms which would foster rather than crush life. The okies have their ramshackle but cherished homes and small patch of earth snatched away by the insatiable behemoth of big scale agriculture. His concept of life, its fullness is found in groups and never in the individual. He believes ardently in primacy of the collectivity. In *In Dubious Battle*, Dock tells Mac that he might be an expression of group man, a cell endowed with a special function, like an eye cell, drawing his force from group man.

In *The Grapes of Wrath* Tom Joad declares:

> Says one time he went out into the wilderness to find his own soul and he foun’ he didn’ have no soul that was his ‘n. Says he foun’ he jus’ got a little piece of a great big soul. Says a wilderness ain’t no good, ‘cause his little piece of soul wasn’t no good, ‘less it was with the rest, an’ was whole. (TGOW 124-125).

He incessantly presents a creature with indeed a captive of instincts and appetites, desiring and striving not reasoning, judging, choosing but automatically responding to impulses and attractions. As for man’s being moral Doc (Steinbeck’s Spokesman) says that his senses aren’t above reproach, but they’re all he has. He doesn’t want to put on the blinders of good and bad and limit his vision.
In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Casy says, “May be it ain’t a sin, may be its just the way folks are …..there ain’t no sin and there ain’t no virtues. There’s just stuff people do. It’s all part of the same thing”. (TGOW 135)

Pa Joad echoes this with, “A fella got to do what he got to do”. Ma Joad says, “What person does is right to do”. (TGOW 136)

The denizens in *Tortilla Flat* are artists in living, stressing their superstitions and sufferings. *Cannery Row* is a kind of literary cream puff, poisoned cream puff, which would seem to be the implicit attack on middle class values, found in all the novels. The outright criticism of an economic system to be found in *The Grapes of Wrath*. In *In Dubious Battle* may sting certain chambers of commerce into outraged apologetics. Many of the readers may gulp the cream puff without indigestion, the virus remains latent-a glorification of the biological virtues and an implicit attack on most of the things dear to the hearts of the respectable.

John Steinbeck is a novelist was interested in social reform. He shows a distinct tendency to shift his apparent interests with the times he is a complete naturalist, accepts the scientists representation of life. He emphasizes the values of human acts and attitudes in his novels. Since humanity is a product of natural forces and the profound biological urge is the urge for life, for survival and reproduction than virtues consisting in these ends. He loves natural and is sensitive to its emotional values. He loves human beings, living natural lives – the Joads, the denizens.

The weeds and the willows, the tall waving grain of California’s sweet valleys, rabbits, mice and women’s soft hair, the hot slanting sun and the hungry desire of a pair of floaters to own a handful of dirt are from which *Of Mice and Men* is evoked. The men, sent down to the ranch, Lennie, whose powerful fingers kill little animals; George, struggling to become human.
In *Of Mice and Men* there are the two indignant members of the strange tribe of casual workers who are destroyed by the simple mystery of loyalty, whom fate has crushed before birth, whose lives mean no more to nature than robins caught up by hawks. The story is a desire and an ineluctable struggle of those who till the soil for others to own a tiny plot of the earth for themselves against the primitive hunger like the rising tide of a destructive river is played by the forces which make a naïve aspiration impossible of attainment, the fleeting tragedy of two men George and Lennie. If the government in Washington gave every crop floater, lettuce picker, wheat sacker, a little farm in Salinas valley, Lennie’s tragedy might have been avoided. The verities man lives are those thoughts born out of dreams. *Of Mice and Men* is a truth made into a moving and profoundly beautiful book full of singing prose and enchantment. His creations of these ignorant American laborers are idealization, his essential humanity, and artistry and the highest compliments.

The best of Steinbeck’s novels, *East of Eden* is a long, epic with its sweetness. Its dramatic centre is a narrow story of social horror that there are monsters born in the world to human parents. This story of prostitution of fantasia of history and myth is a strange original work of art. It is more emorphous, less intent of theme and effect. The novelist reconstructs the history of his maternal grandfather, Samuel Hamilton, who come to Salinas valley in 1870 with his wife and produce a brood of children. It is a story of economic failure, a sunny and exhilarating account of a rich and various family life set, the rigorous background of a recalcitrant land and then there is, the dark and violent story of Adam Trask. In about 1900, The Trasks arrive in Salinas with a strange pretty wife. He finds a girl, Cathy beaten nearly to death on his doorstep. He nurses her to health and takes to the west. Through Samuel Hamilton, the social history of Salinas country is explained. Hamilton, an eloquent Irishman and his friend Lee
and eloquent Chinese servant are the most moving characterization in the novel. The core incredible story of Adam Trask’s wife the monster Cathy Ames is most vicious female in literature and is the abstract fiction of the social threat, of a witch beyond women.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Casy represents an adaptation of Christ image. He has considered wide range of Christian and neo Christian ideas. Christian symbolism is common suggesting the glory of the coming of the lord. Major characters speak a language associated with debased piedmont culture, of the King James Bible. Like the Israelites, the Joads are homeless, persecuted people, flee from oppression, wander through a wilderness of hardships, seeking their own promised land but never find it. Like Jesus, Jim Casy has rejected an old religion replacing it with new gospel, innocent of Paulism, Catholicism and Puritanism. He feels compulsion to minister, to serve. He tells the police that he is guilty but not Tom. He has taken upon the sins of others.

Casy’s death occurs in the middle of a stream representing the crossing over Jordan. Casy’s last words directed to the man who murders him, “Listen, you fellas don’t know what you’re doin’.” tells that the fellows don’t know why they are doing is just like Jesus said, when was crucified, “Father forgive them, they know not what they do.” (46) The author’s intention of creating in Jim Casy who would be understood in terms of the Christ symbol. The conclusion of *The Grapes of Wrath* is extreme, sensational, overwrought. The Joads have reached to utter desolation. Rosasharn is rain drenched, weak. Her breasts are heavy with milk, baby born dead, starving old man, and look weak to eat the bread. In terms of Christian symbolism, commemorated by protestants in the communion, Catholics in the mass. Rosasharn, the life giver, symbolizes the resurrective aspect of Christ ‘multifoliate rose’ (Mr. Eliot) in which life triumphs over death. The principal of reverence for life, ‘all that lives is holy’, has been believed.
Realism as a technique requires two basic elements—credible people and situations on the one hand and recognizable evocation of the world of nature and things on the other. Steinbeck was a master for realistic details, trained by his long productive journey. His description of the natural world is so handled in enrichment of both symbolism and allegory. In *The Pearl*, the social element is developed through Coyotito’s scorpion bite and the doctor’s refusal to treat the child whose father can not pay substantial fee. Kino’s helplessness is conveyed by the fist he crushes into a split and bleeding mass against the doctor’s gate. The theme reaches its peak in the pearl’s selling attempt. All the three buyers set a price amongst themselves, Juan Thomas, Kino’s brother answers that if that is so them all of them have been cheated all their lives. Of course they have been. Kino is in the dark. As his misfortunes develops he descends deeper and deeper into the dark night of the soul. The journey, the soul and the living Kino is in terms of good and evil that invest the oppression and freedom that comes to other provides the allegorical statement of the novel.

Steinbeck’s source is the Mexican peasant, the discovered pearl, the belief that the pearl will make the finder free, the corrupt brokers, the attacks, the flight, the return and the disposal of the pearl. Symbol, allegory, realistic details are woven together. Predatory animals are the snares that beset the journey of the soul and the hungering body. The large fish, hawks symbolizes the doctor, the priests, brokers, the man behind them, enemies of the village people from time to prehistoric. Kino’s flight is a double journey, one half spiritual— the route to salvation of the soul, half physical— the way to freedom from bodily want. The Indian boy of the germ story holds falsely and identifies his hold on the pearl with a firm grasp on salvation assured while he still goes about to envelope in flesh and morality. Kino also holds the pearl in his hand for freedom from damnation, because he thinks that he gives up then he will loose his
soul. He has mistaken the pearl, his soul is in danger of sin. The Indian boy becomes free only when he throws the pearl. He is again with his soul in danger and his food and shelter insecure.

Every man can win his way to salvation with his actual death. Kino is not defeated. He triumphs over his enemy, the chief of the buyers of the pearl. He gets rid of his pursuers, cheated but he gets more opportunity to escape his destiny as a hut dwelling peasant on the edge of la-paz. He proves the heights, gains and rises the depths, slips back and gains the immense knowledge about good and evil. Coyotito is identified with Kino’s pearl of great value. For the doctor, the child is a pearl. With the death of Coyotito, the pearl no longer has any significance. Kino and his wife Juana become free, return to the village, throw the pearl back into the sea. The soul act that has altered Kino’s determination to keep the pearl which becomes his soul is the death of his child.

The novel *The Grapes of Wrath* represents comprehensive thesis, that all life is one and holy and that every man, has got a little piece of a great big soul. The novel has thirty chapters; fourteen carries the Joads story, the other sixteen sketches the typical situations in the great migration, the social, economical, historical background, telling the story of the migrant. Steinbeck uses variety of prose, endeavoring in each to evoke a vivid picture of something that happened with a feeling tone.

Story of Joad is a true story. The Joads, a whole progress and concern for family interests to a broader vision of cooperation with all oppressed people. As their fortunes decline, the family morale declines. It looses its member and is threatened with dissolution. As the family grows weaker, the communal unit of united workers who came to birth in the roadside camps on the westward trek, grows stronger, accompanied by the growth of Casy and Tom Joad in
understanding of the forces at work. Joad family is a democratic, cooperative organism, a cohesive group but no member looses his individual character in the group.

As Doc Burton says in *In Dubious Battle*, the end of a group may be entirely different from the ends of its individual members. The monster is the sort of organism that absorbs its members, drains them of their individualities and makes them into organization men. The agricultural corporations and big growers need pickers in great numbers to harvest their crop. They advertise everywhere for pickers with the object of bringing in more job seekers then they needed, with lower wages and increase profits. When one crop is picked, the workers hurry for another. They never stay long in one country, so the growers save higher taxes. When the time for the next harvest approach, they advertise again for pickers but there are flies in ointment. Labor leaders, agitators, socialists make the pickers dissatisfied with wages and working conditions, organize them in unions, promote strikes and are cordially hated by the growers.

In *The Grapes of Wrath* family unit, workers commune are meant real organisms. The Joad meet men on the road west, who are going back to Oklahoma from California. They reported that California was a lovely and rich country, the residents were hostile to the migrant workers, treated them badly. The land is a land that eat up the inhabitants there of, and the natives were giants who looked upon the Hebrews or locusts. The Joads are determined to enter the land. The meanness of California officers at the border, the efforts to turn back indigent migrants, the refusal of cities and towns to let migrant workers enter, except when their labor is needed- the efforts of the Edo mites, Moabites and Amorites keep the Israelites from entering their countries.
In spite of the Canaanites hostility the Israelites persist and take over the promised land. *The Grapes of Wrath* ends at a low point in the fortunes of the Joads. The migrant okies meet defeat because they do not learn to give-up selfish desires for money and possessions, too many want to undercut the pay of fellow workers and have no feeling of a common cause. They will not accomplish, if they did not stand together. If the migrants realize their strength in union, Casy, Tom, Pa Joad predict a change, a better time for people when they will take matters in their hands and set them right. “Every little means, every violence, every raid on a Homerville, every deputy swaggering through a ragged camp put off the day a little and cemented inevitability of the day.

The novel *East of Eden* is the fictional biography of Adam Trask from his birth in the second year of the civil war, until his death in the last year of World War I. The historical and moral contexts of the Trask and Hamilton stories are story of their family and country. Steinbeck established the organismic theme in earlier novels, the concept of group in hostile to ‘the free, exploring minds of the individuals’, which is the only ‘creative instrument’, the group never creates anything. It does not deal with groups aside from families. The irony of father in *East of Eden* is, neither Adam nor Aaron love his father. Charles loves Cyrus and Cal loves Adam and each try to please his father. Steinbeck introduces rivalry over a woman into both generations of brothers. Since Charles dislikes Cathy but he does not admit her to his bed and leaves half of his fortune when he dies. In the next generation Abra, Aaron’s boyhood sweetheart transfer her love to Cal after Aaron’s enlistment. Steinbeck read a good deal about genesis while writing *East of Eden* and came upon a later Jewish legend.

Cain and Abel have a twin sister, each intend to become her twin’s wife and so ensure the survival of mankind. Abel’s twin sister is beautiful that Cain wants her, he picks a quarrel with
Abel, kills him and marries Abel’s twin, mysterious wife of Cain who bears his son Enoch in the land of Nod. Cathy is a fusion of Eve, the Eden serpent and Cain’s wife – the beating which the whoremaster gives her leaves a scar on her forehead. Steinbeck emphasizes her serpent nature by giving her a heart shaped face, and abnormally small mouth, a little pointed tongue, flicked around her lips, small sharp teeth with the canine teeth longer and more pointed her head, tiny ears pressed closed her head, unblinking eyes narrow lips. She likes the dark shunned light. Steinbeck accepts the Christian identification of the eden snake with Satan. he also represents Cathy as a devil:

“There was a time when girl like Cathy would have been called possessed by the devil”. The story of Cain and Abel is the symbol story of human soul, “The best known story in the world because it is everybody’s story” (EOE 122).

The novel *East of Eden* is always sordid, joyless, depraved or mercenary. The good married couples produce children with no love life. There is a hint of passion between Cal and Abra. Steinbeck decries human sexuality, what freedom man could have without it, they would no longer be human. He shows rages generally follow from rejected love, parental coldness or aloofness breeds violence in youthful hearts, he would also accept sexuality as a vulnerable condition, a blind helplessness by which men and women may be, tricked and trapped and enslaved and tortured, but without which they would not be human. It deals with a wealth of diverse materials through elusive and challenging forms of romance.

Adam is honest and kind, but these are negative virtues in him. He was passive, inert, non resistant, selfish, inconsiderate, unloving. He neglects his boys for years, never loves anybody
except Cathy blindly. He is too good, a man needs a little, bad. *East of Eden* is a skillful narrative but Steinbeck’s joy in myth and legend does not adequately interpret the narrated events.

The novel *Of Mice and Men* is a short novel, setting is the Salinas valley in California, most of the characters are unskilled migratory workers who drift about the villages and ranches, picking up odd jobs or short term field work, moving on to next place for employment. Steinbeck focuses on two such laborers who dream one day saving up enough money to buy a small farm of their own. The story refers to naturalistic details within the texture of the novella. Its establishes Lennie’s fatal weakness for stroking soft things and invariably kills the mice he is petting. It foreshadows his deadly encounter with Curley’s wife. It is a story about the nature of man’s fate in a fallen world, that man destined to live alone, a solitary wanderer on the earth. It is a fate of man to care for man, to go his way in companionship with another.

Steinbeck establishes the two ideas; the first is the affectionate symbiosis of the two protagonists, their brotherly mutual concern and faithful companionship. He stresses the beauty; joy and comfort the two derive from the relationship. The second idea is given equal emphasis, the fact that this sort of camaraderie is rare, different, and almost unique in the world of George and Lennie. The alternative to George Lennie companionship is aloneness. All the details in *Of Mice and Men* seem natural in the context and organically related to the whole, in addition to presenting them as men who till the ground and derive no benefits from their labor. The migratory ranch worker 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 65)
Steinbeck’s novella advances and develops around the basic image of Lennie George relationship. All the characters react to it in one way or another as the successive scenes unfold. Despite the discouraging opinions of the outsiders in the first three scenes the companionship remains intact and unthreatened. The partnership undergoes augmentation when Candy is admitted into the scheme to buy the little farm. Crooks offers himself as another candidate for the fellowship of soul brothers and dreamers. The dreams of fellowship on the farm remains active the real prospects for its fulfillment decline drastically. Through Lennie George we know the aloneness of man’s essential nature, their dream farm and the failure of the dream.

The novel *Tortilla Flat* introduces Steinbeck’s treatment of the drop out. These Mexican-American paisanos find themselves initially in a poor position to compete in modern society. The ‘drop out is no longer a shy, retiring, solitary but an active, gregarious member of a whole community. They have in common with their prototype, disclination towards industrious labor and a disrespect for material property, for through loss of possession comes sorrow. “It is much better never to have had them”. They also share a love of the contemplative life. In 1935, stretching over six years of the great depression, Steinbeck’s demonstrates a serious and sympathetic interest in the theme of escape from society. T.F. Denney tires of the chivalric life and reverts to the sweet violence, is the joys of boyish rebellion, delight in pulling the house down on one’s own and other people’s head. Danny does when the friendship dream proves in substantial, he pays with his life and friends helps with his house- for the pleasure destroying it.

In *In Dubious Battle* Steinbeck demonstrates his detailed quite professional knowledge of communist labor organization tactics in the field through central characters who are totally committed in bringing about substantial changes in American society. There is the master apostle
relationship of the two organizers, their own sense of sacrifice for mankind, commitment through
Jim Nolan, over and over he tells Mac, his mentor, I want to get into it, I want you to use me.

Steinbeck published *Cannery Row* (1944) once more to the theme of escape on the level of an entire community of drop out. He calls Mac and the boys, “saints and angels and martyrs and holy men”. It is a “sentimental glorification of weakness of mind and degeneration of character”. The wonderful whorehouse of *Cannery Row* becomes a school for brats. Steinbeck’s original suspicions of such a definition were intensified by his experiences in the last years of the depression and the war.

Manichaeism generates the contending principles of good and evil, God and Satan, light and darkness, soul and body are so evenly matched. Darkness is triumphant over light. In Christianity the rebellious angels rise up but are easily defeated in battle and contemptuously cast down into hell. In Manichaeism Satan is a threat and it prevails. When God sends his agent, primal man to put down darkness, he is defeated in battle and taken prisoner. The emphasis of Manichaeism on the power of fertility of darkness seemed closer to the facts of human experience than the more cheerful, complacent mythology of other creeds. This element is visible in Steinbeck’s work and becomes paramount. In *In Dubious Battle* and *The Grapes of Wrath* Steinbeck is revealed in his Manichaeism aspect. The antagonists appear and embody the warring Manichean principles of mind and body through George Lennie, locked together in the same life process. They are ranch hands, working the earth, itinerant involved with a particular plot of ground, everywhere. There dream of owning their own place has omnipresent quality.

Like William Faulkner and Willa Cather, John Steinbeck wrote his best fiction about the region he grew up and the people he knew. In the territory appear Mexicans, Spanish, Chinese,
Germans, Irish and English including ranchers, farmers, migrant workers, community leaders, fisherman, bartenders, school teachers and radicals. The characters include the wealthy, poor, the able, bigoted, mature, and puritanic, psychotic and happy. The dominant themes in the fiction, including man’s relationship with the land, the attractions of simple life, the conflicts of the haves and have-nots, the failures and dangers of middle class existence. In portraying dreams, friendships and grim necessities, Steinbeck was more sensitive and perceptive in works like *Tortilla Flat*, *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*. The prose style particularly the rhythms and diction possess greater sensitivity and naturalness. The language is more realistic and precise.

The symbolism is convincingly part of the talk, places and incidents of the time. The ranch provides another kind of security and also a place for dreams, but for George and Lennie, the world it remains essentially unfulfilling. The fundamental symbol is the dream of a little house and a couple of acres an’ a cow and some pigs.

Characterization symbolizes something enduring and hopeful to rise above the circumstances and to convince others as well as themselves that dreams are part of the territory; all they have to do is hoping some day they will have their own place.

The most characteristics qualities of the written language are precision, natural, biblical rhythms and imagery customarily based on elements of the land or daily life. The views and feelings of dispossessed families are particularized in accounts of the Joads, Steinbeck’s most significant family in modern American fiction. The Joads are down to earth farm family unexceptional in most respects but determined to survive their identities intact. *The Grapes of Wrath* is a social document of the time, a record of drought conditions, economic problems and share cropping life, those who live and work on the land, pay for it with their blood, sweat and
toil, and own the land. The migration of hundreds of thousands of people westward was a major cultural phenomenon of the 1930’s.

The novels, *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men* and *the Grapes of Wrath* strongly criticize economic injustices particularly the plight of the have-nots. The family is another important symbol of the dramatic forces of a story or novel illustrating human strengths and weakness. Territory and social protest are another identifying marks of the fiction. Steinbeck’s treatment of land is remarkable for its acute and portrayal of environment and effects of nature on man. The small farmer and migrant worker confronted by the powerful alignment of big farmers and finance in the 1970’s. Steinbeck’s pervasive compassion for human beings appears characteristically in portrayals of the naive, handicapped disenfranchised paisanos who rarely find their promised land. Tolerance and sympathy are evident. The literary craftsmanship and skill with which the themes, symbols and moral vision are expressed would seem to identify most definitely. Steinbeck’s fictions ensure his place with the best writers of his generation.

The closest he got to any kind of friendship with someone in his own class was with Bill Black, the most popular boy in the class and a successful athlete. He was a friend but Steinbeck was jealous of his success. His work was meant to help people understand one another. He has wanted to enlist everyone’s sympathy for men of all degrees, for the wise and feeble minded, beggars and kings alike. His most persistent theme has been the superiority of simple human virtues and pleasures to the accumulation of riches and property, of kindness and justice to meanness and greed, of life asserting action to life denying. Here in lies his sentimentality, his strength. His novels like Grapes of Wrath will endure for its narrative power and strength of vision.
A winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1962, John Steinbeck is one of the best known and widely read American writers of the 20th century, wrote the novella *Of Mice And Men* (1937) and Pulitzer prize winning novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) examines the lives of the working class and the migrant worker during the great depression. His characters and stories drew on real historical conditions and events in the first half of the 20th century. Seventeen of his works including *Cannery Row* (1945), *The Pearl* (1947) and *East Of Eden* (1955) go on to become Hollywood films and he himself achieved success as a Hollywood writer, garnering an Academy Award nomination for best writing for Alfred Hitchcock’s Lifeboat in 1945. He was known as a regionalist, naturalist, mystic and proletarian writer. He was respected for his empathy for the migrant workers of the time.

John Steinbeck was born to John Ernst Steinbeck II, had off and on attendance at Stanford University until 1925 when he officially left Stanford to pursue his dreams as a writer his first novel, *Cup of Gold* (1929) is a unsuccessful mythological work. He achieved his first critical success with the novel *Tortilla Flat* (1935) which won California Commonwealth club’s gold medal. The story of the adventures of young men in Monterey during the great depression was made into a film in 1942. The humorous tale of pleasure loving Mexican-Americans, brought him wider recognition. Steinbeck’s financial situation improved significantly and has earned 35 Dollars a week. He was paid thousands of dollars for the film right to *Tortilla Flat*.

Rickett’s impact on Steinbeck was so great that he decided to base his character Doc in *Cannery Row*. During the World War II he served as a war correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune. He became with Will Lang Jr. of Time Life Magazine. His novel *The Moon is Down* (1942), about the Socrates-inspired spirit of resistance in a Nazi-occupied village in
northern Europe. In 1962 he won the Nobel Prize for literature for his Realistic and Imaginative writing, combining as it does sympathetic humor and keen social perception. He said:

“The writer is delegated to declare and to celebrate man’s proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit – for gallantry in defeat, for courage, compassion and love. In the endless war against weakness and despair, these are the bright rally flags of hope and of emulation. I hold that a writer who does not believe in the perfectibility of man has no dedication nor any membership in literature”. (32)

In 1964, Steinbeck was awarded the United States Medal of freedom by President Johnson. In 1967, at the behest of News Day magazine, Steinbeck went to Vietnam to report on the war, a heroic venture was considered a Hawk for his position on that war. His sons served in Vietnam prior to his death. On December 20, 1968 John Steinbeck died in New York. His death listed as heart disease or heart attack.

The Salinas, California area, Monterey and parts of the nearby San Joaquin valley acted as a setting for many of his stories. Because of his feeling for local color, the area is sometime called “Steinbeck Country”. After his death, Charles Poore wrote in the New York Times: “John Steinbeck’s first great book was his last great book. But Good Lord, what a book that was and is: The Grapes of Wrath. He noted a preachiness in Steinbeck’s work, “As if half his literary inheritance came from the best of Mark Twain- and the other half from the worst of Cotton Mather”. But he asserted that “Steinbeck didn’t need the Nobel Prize- The Nobel judges needed him”. Poore concluded: “His place in [US] literature is secure It lives on in the works of innumerable writers who learned from him how to present the forgotten man unforgottably”.

Steinbeck was screened by Army Intelligence during World War II to determine his suitability for an officer’s commission. Steinbeck’s literary background brought him into close collaboration with leftist authors, journalists, and labor union figures, who may have influenced his writing. Steinbeck was mentored by radical writers Lincoln Steffens and his wife Ella Winter, and through Francis Whitaker, a member of United States Communist Party’s John Reed Club for writers, Steinbeck met with strike organizers from the Cannery and Agriculture Worker’s Industrial Union.

Steinbeck’s epic about the migration of Joad family, driven from its bit of land in Oklahoma to California, provoked a wide debate about the hard lot of migrant laborers, and helped to put an agriculture reform into effect. Man, unlike any other thing organic or inorganic in the universe, grow beyond his work, walks up in the stairs of his concepts, emerges ahead of his accomplishments.

A Russian Journal (1948) was an account of the author’s journey to the Soviet Union with the photographer Robert Capa. Steinbeck wrote thousands of letters. To Pascal Covici, he confessed that he wanted to write the book to his sons, the story of good and evil, love and hate. After returning to the United States, he traveled around his country with his poodle, Charley, and published in 1962 TRAVELS WITH CHARLEY IN SEARCH OF AMERICA.