DECONSTRUCTING AMERICA: READING JOHN STEINBECK

ABSTRACT
OF THE
THESIS
SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
Doctor of Philosophy
IN
ENGLISH

BY
MANISH SINGH

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
DR. MADIHUR REHMAN

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH (INDIA)

2013
Abstract
The first chapter of the thesis, "The Path to Doom: America from Idea to Reality," takes the journey of America from its conception as an idea to its reality. The country that came into existence as a colony of Great Britain and became a refuge of the exploited and the persecuted on one hand and of the outlaws on other hand, soon transformed into a giant machine of exploitation, persecution and lawlessness. It is surprising to see how the noble ideas of equality, liberty and democracy and pursuit of happiness degenerated into callous profiteering. Individuals insensitive to the needs and happiness of others and arrogance based on a sense of racial superiority even before they take root in the virgin soil of the Newfoundland. The effects of this degenerate ideology are felt not only by the Non-White races within America and the less privileged countries of the third world, but even by the Whites within America. The concepts of equality, freedom, democracy and pursuit of happiness were manufactured and have been exploited by the American ruling class. The first one to experience the crawling effects of the Great American Dream were original inhabitants of America, the Red Indians and later Blacks who were uprooted from their home and hearth and taken to America as slaves. Then came the Chinese, the Latin Americans and other Asians. The more the ruling class gained wealth and power, the more the numbers of those who bear the brunt equality, liberty and democracy and pursuit of happiness increased so much so that even the Whites hailing from the lower classes turned into virtual slaves though they entangled in the cunningly woven web of the Great American Dream. It is because of the huge gulf between idea and reality that America has been experiencing dissatisfaction unrest and socio-political upheavals since its inception and the country has been at war not only with the world but even with itself. Over the last decades or more, since the collapse of Communist Bloc, the condition has worsened with deeming velocity and
the strange hold of the ruling class upon the hearts and minds and lives of the subjects has increased manifold. Even during the age of innocence not everybody was deceived by the carefully and intricately designed illusion of the Great American Dream. Beginning with Mark Twain, writer after writer and thinker after thinker have tried to expose and deconstruct the myth that was put in place to hoodwink the masses. It is because of cumulative effect of these writers and thinkers that the American masses have started seeing through the fassad and are grappling with reality.

The second chapter, "Unravelling the Labyrinth: An Overview of the literary career of John Steinbeck," focuses on John Steinbeck's literary journey from the *Cup of Gold* to *The Winter of Our Discontent*. In this chapter the researcher tries to analyse the contents of Steinbeck's intellectual resources, what experiences lead him to take the position that he proof in his writings, as well as various other themes that the author grappled with and the ideological twists and turns that his works depict. Some of his non-fiction works are also taken up for the discussion in this chapter to better understand Steinbeck's mind. A part of discussion is devoted to his family background because his religious family background played an important role in giving shapes to his ideas and emotions. Similarly Steinbeck's experience as war correspondent during the Second World War also played a key role in giving shape to his perceptions. Otherwise also Steinbeck had experienced American life and society from closed quarters in varied forms and locutions owning primarily to his meandering academic and professional career. This vast and varied experience from childhood in a deeply religious family, to a seemingly aimless and unfocused academic career, to an unsettled professional career where he kept changing his jobs and locations continuously gave Steinbeck a keen insight into the motives and results of American
society. His arid readings and unending discussions and debates with his contemporary intellectuals too made their contribution to his ideological and intellectual depth.

The third chapter, "Determination of Class Division and Consolidation of Hegemony," begins with analysis of the idea of state in the works of such philosophers as Plato, John Locke, Jean Jacque Rousseau, Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser and goes on to discuss how America as a state came into being and what form the state took through various stages of American history, such milestones of American history as the Civil War, the workers' movements during the second half of the nineteenth century, the great depression of 1920s and the post 9/11 events are discussed from this perspective. The discussion then focuses on such works of Steinbeck as *The Pastures of Heaven*, *To A God Unknown*, *In Dubious Battle*, *The Pearl* and *The Grapes of Wrath* in order to analyse how the writer perceived and projected the class division in America, the condition of various classes, the role played by the state through Ideological and Repressive State Apparatus in maintaining class structure of society an in consolidating the hegemonic power of the ruling class. Steinbeck exposed the stark reality of the slogans of equality, liberty and democracy and pursuit of happiness mercilessly through which truth works. He employed various narrative techniques for this ranging from double irony in *The Pastures of Heaven* to uncompromising realism in *The Grapes of Wrath* to symbolism in *The Pearl*. He was ahead of his times like most American authors in so much as he talked of issues and truths that were way beyond the perception and imagination of his contemporary readers, that is why he has been widely misunderstood and criticised for all the wrong.
The fourth chapter, "Disintegration of Human Values," discusses Steinbeck's take on the fading, reshaping and reorganisation of human values in America to suit the purpose of the ruling class. In his works Steinbeck repeatedly exposes the design for the ruling class and how the lust for profit and power turns everything, even the most sacred human values into a commodity that can be bought and sold as the situation demands. The irony is that the entire process is so carefully designed and executed that the victims remain unaware of their loss till it is almost too late to salvage the very conditions of their existence. The selfish profit seeking power mongering designs of the ruling class are presented in such a way that values that served the purpose of making pursuit of happiness and peaceful existence accessible are perceived as callous that must be gotten rid of in order to make existence possible. The present chapter discusses such works of Steinbeck as The Pastures of Heaven, Of Mice and Men, The Pearl, The Winter of Our Discontent, and The Grapes of Wrath.

The fifth chapter, "Collapse of Freedom," focuses on another recurrent theme in the works of the author that is how freedom must be restricted and strangulated in the name of national security and maintenance of social order to serve the purpose of the ruling class and to minimise the chance of upsetting the status quo. People are robbed of their freedom in various ways and through various agencies. If in The Grapes of Wrath, it is the banks that close in upon the farmers of Oklahoma, forced them out of their homes and of their land, and turn them into a commodity. In The Pearl, it is the lust for a wealthy and plentiful life injected into a man of marginalised section of society through observation of the life of member of the ruling class that forces him out of his land turning him into a booty, hunted and haunted profit way lapping ruling class. Similarly in The Winter of Our Discontent a righteous and honest
man is turned into a criminal by the conditions created by the financial institutions by exerting pressures on his needs and responsibility, whereas in *Tortilla Flat* some innocent characters are turned into demon by popular and fallible perceptions and cultures. In all these cases an individual or a community is robbed of their freedom of choice and are forced to act against their will and against their brain. At times the collapse of freedom is directly engineered and executed by the Repressive State Apparatus and at times the collapse of freedom is indirect and forced sumptuously upon the people by the Ideological State Apparatus. So that they nobody to hold responsible for the collapse of freedom except themselves.

The last chapter of the thesis, “What All These Leads to....”, ties up the threads that had remained lose through the discussion in the preceding chapters. We have avoided summarising the other chapters instead the reason of the reactor that Steinbeck’s writings illuminates from his readers and critics. This chapter tries to analyse the love-hate relationship that the author had with the mother land and that his readers and critics had with him.

The present work is not the final word on John Steinbeck, America and the treatment of history in works of fiction; there are still many areas which remain unexplored and could be studied with various dimensions.
Dedicated to My Parents
Certificate

This is to certify that Mr. Manish Singh carried out his Ph.D. work on the topic “Deconstructing America: Reading John Steinbeck” under my supervision. To the best of my knowledge, it is his original work. In my opinion it is suitable for submission for the award of degree of Ph.D. in English.

(Dr. Madihur Rehman Suhaib)
Supervisor
Preface
The USA has been occupying centre stage in the affairs of the world since at least the Second World War. On one hand the war established America as the only atomic power of the world with the ability to atomise any city and destroy every nation. And on the other hand the Second World War also lead to the collapse of other imperial powers like England, France, Italy and Germany that were calling the shots in the affairs of the world till then. Later, with the USSR attaining the status of nuclear power, world politics experienced a phase of hectic activity with the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries buying with each other for the position of the master of the world. The so called Cold War lead to many upheavals in the world and generated a lot of heat in the world politics. The collapse of the Communist Bloc again established America as the sole super power of the world and only arbiter of fate of nations. The USA itself has seen many upheavals, mostly of economic nature, during the period beginning just before the Second World War till now. The position of America in the world affairs and the actions of the US government on world stage have been viewed from various angels with some observations projecting America as the saviour of the world while others viewing it as Satan personified.

It may seem like a contradiction if one maintains that the most objective analysis of situation of such import can be obtained only from the writings of creative geniuses because literature is supposed to be primarily subjective in nature but what goes in the name of objectivity is always subjective as well as created with ulterior motives, deconstructionists like Jacques Derrida and psychoanalysts like Jacques Lacan would bear witness to this statement. Hence it seemed wise and worthwhile to deconstruct America threw the writings of representative American fiction writer who experienced and lived the American way of life during the period when America was in the process of occupying centre stage in the affairs of the world.
John Steinbeck readily presented himself for the purpose because like America he too has evoked very contradictory response from readers and critics. There are those who swear by his literary genius, and then there are detractors who go to the extent of questioning his selection for the Noble Prize for Literature in 1962. Apart from that most of his works provide a comprehensive critic of the American way of life and the Great American Dream originating from the first hand experiences. What is even more interesting is the fact that at times Steinbeck seems to cross over to the camp of enemy when he tries to seek answers and solutions in a drab spiritualism.

The present thesis employee New-historicism as research methodology because New-Historicist approach seems the most logical approach in the purpose, it gave the researcher the opportunity to indulge in the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts in order to make the thesis as comprehensive as possible. Apart from that New-historicism also assures that every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices, which justifies a detailed analysis of policies and practices of various US governments. Moreover Steinbeck’s love-hate relationship with America could also be understood from the stand point of the occupation that every act of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practices it exposes. Finally the assumption for New-Historicism, that no discourse imaginative or archival gives access to unchanging truth, no expression is breakthrough in human nature without these insights. The exercise of understanding the writings of John Steinbeck, his attitudes and reactions as well as the understanding of American way of life would have become immensely more difficult.

The chapter division is not based on individual works, but on themes. Each chapter deals with a separate theme and discusses various works of John Steinbeck
from the perspective of theme under discussion. Hence Steinbeck's novels are repeated chapter after chapter, but they are analysed from varying perspectives.

This thesis has the incredible impression of Dr. Madihur Rehman Suhaib, without his guidance and support this tedious journey is unthinkable. I am thankful to Prof. S. N. Zeba Ex-Chairman, Dept. of English, AMU and Prof. Asif Shuja Chairman Dept. of English, AMU for their support and cooperation. I am also thankful to Dr. Tassaduq Hussain, Dr. Asim Siddiqui, Prof. D Murthy, Dr. Abouullah Faiz and Dr. Mohd. Sajjad for keeping me stuck in the right direction and also controlling my conscience during various faces of the research. In continuation to this I am very much thankful to Maulana Azad Library, AMU, Aligarh, Seminar Library, Dept. of English, AMU, Central Library, Delhi University, New Delhi, University Library, JNU, New Delhi, University Library, Osmania University, Hyderabad, ASRC, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, and American Centre, New Delhi. Acknowledging my parents and brother is beyond any word. The league of my friends is also beyond any narration and pushing the idea of friendship, without naming any one of them I am very much thankful to all of them. Lastly, I am very much thankful to UGC for providing me financial assistance for this research.
CONTENTS

Preface i-iii

Chapter – 1 1-18
The Path to Doom: America from Idea to Reality.

Chapter – 2 19-58
Unravelling the Labyrinth: An Overview of the Literary Career of John Steinbeck.

Chapter – 3 59-84
Determination of Class Division and Consolidation of Hegemony.

Chapter – 4 85-112
Disintegration of Human Values.

Chapter – 5 113-142
Collapse of Freedom.

Chapter – 6 143-150
What All These Leads to...

Bibliography 151-165
Chapter-1

The Path to Doom: America from Idea to Reality.
Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future: but we go round, or scramble over the obstacles. We’ve got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen (Lawrence, 7).

European expansion began with Columbus’ discovery of America in 1492. The discovery was the need of the hour and not accidental as has often been claimed. Hence the discovery nurtured the nature and character of European expansion, and continues to do so today:

We must never forget that the settlement of what is now the United States was only part of a larger enterprise. And this was the work of the best and the brightest of the entire European continent. They were greedy. As Christopher Columbus said, men crossed the Atlantic primarily in search of gold (Johnson, 11).

Something similar happened with India. After the Portuguese explorer Vasco Da Gama’s touching of the land in 1498, Dutch got here being followed by the English, then a whole series of battles was engineered just to set them up in India, so that they could run their machines and simultaneously sell their products, thus creating a huge market, and for this absolute liberty for business they needed authority. Initially declaring themselves as traders, then as the greed increased the race got momentum and in that race among all the players including the then Indian kings, English finished first and India formally became an English colony. Similar
scenes got enacted in America but here the unrestricted geography minus population played a very significant role along with the absence of the history of the land and people unlike that of India. The absence of the organised state apparatus meant that the British and other European settlers had to face little problems of dealing with the existing power structures, and New England became the model for future settlements, and for European dominance of the entire continent.

The next class emigrants purchased the lands, added field to field, cleared out the roads, threw rough bridges over the streams, put up hewn log houses with glass windows and brick or stone chimneys, occasionally planted orchards, built mills, school-houses, court-houses, etc., and exhibited a picture of plain, frugal, civilised life:

Another wave rolls on. The men of capital and enterprise come. The settler is ready to sell out and take the advantage of the rise in property, push farther into the interior and become, him-self, a man of capital and enterprise in turn (Turner, 20).

Yet, the new land was not a cake walk for the settlers. Inhospitable climatic conditions and natural exigencies on the one hand, and the native Red Indians on the other hand, who though not as well organised as the invaders, were passionate in defending their homestead, posed a serious challenge. Still, abundance of fertile land, and absence of any laws governing the occupation of that land encouraged wave after wave of European, particularly English, settlers to come to America and make it their home. It was this absence of laws and regulations that became known by the name of freedom, and the greed of settlers was camouflaged as the Great American Dream. Expansion grew unbridled under these circumstances, and the territory shrank to
minuscule proportions. Apart from the greed for productive land, gold rush of the second quarter of nineteenth century added fuel to the fire, and ‘Go west my boy and grow with the Country’ become a powerful slogan exercising the minds of the entire generation of young Whites. Intellectual flavour was added to the entire exercise by the publication of ‘research’ papers and books proclaiming the looming extinction of White race in America because of shrinking natural resources, thus demanding the opening of territories for White settlers. The native Red Indians were conveniently projected as subhuman, even savage, to deny their rights and all their claims:

In these successive frontiers we find natural boundary lines which have served to mark and to affect the characteristics of the frontiers, namely: the "fall line;" the Alleghany Mountains; the Mississippi; the Missouri where its direction approximates north and south; the line of the arid lands, approximately the ninety-ninth meridian; and the Rocky Mountains. The fall line marked the frontier of the seventeenth century; the Alleghenies that of the eighteenth; the Mississippi that of the first quarter of the nineteenth; the Missouri that of the middle of this century (omitting the California movement); and the belt of the Rocky Mountains and the arid tract, the present frontier. Each was won by a series of Indian wars (Turner, 9).

To augment and strengthen this feeling of security from foreign invasion, it was successfully argued that the borders without Territory should stretch from sea to sea. Another aspect of the White occupation of America was total absence of laws and rules of any kind. This absence of laws gave rise to peculiar condition:
In the early days of the settlement there was no proper political organisation. People worked hard and preserved their earnings for themselves. As the nation was protected by sea on both sides there was no need for a standing army. There was no police either as those settled on the frontier took care of themselves and were not within the bounds of law. As a result, economic prosperity kept rising without a corresponding development of political organisation or political Will (Asokan, 9).

Hence the American dream envisioned personal freedom and prosperity at the expense of the other; the other ranging from the Red Indians to Blacks in early period then the entire third world later:

The most significant thing about the American frontier is, that it lies at the hither edge of free land. In the census reports it is treated as the margin of that settlement which has a density of two or more to the square miles (Turner, 3).

The expansion of the White America was very rapid and multiple centres were created by the emerging new lords in their areas of control. Hence the scene changed from boundary to boundary, domain to domain and multiplicity of frontiers came into existence. “We are great, and rapidly-- I was about to say fearfully-- growing! So saying, he touched the distinguishing feature of American life” (Turner, 2). As expansion of frontiers went out of control, the silence broke down; strong resistances grew because of rapidness of expansion was depriving the natives of their land and of their philosophies:
This interface between local conditions and European attitude and way of life created an enigmatic dimension along the frontiers and played a key role in the creation of American way of life. During the seventeenth and eighteenth century the frontiers acquired the power of a metaphysical concept as the expansion grew from the coasts of New England and Virginia to the land of Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York to further towards north, south and particularly the west. "The overwhelming dynamic was the lust to own land. Now, for the first time in human history, cheap, good land was available to the multitude" (Johnson, 64).

A natural corollary of this rapid expansion was the growth in agriculture, but the conditions were rather too tough because of lack of machines and other implements. Owner of a thousand acres of land living in utter desolation was a common sight, and the threat posed by the natives added to their woes. The potential for creation of wealth was enormous because the newly acquired land along the frontiers was very fertile for a new kind of cotton which was very light and easy to wear; but the farming of this cotton was still an uphill task because of lack of labour and machines. Hence foundations were laid for the practice of slavery as slavery system made the labour cheap and also easily available to the land owners and planters. Like expansion, slavery too grew rapidly because of the demands of the situation. "In the lower South, slavery expanded with the growth of rice and cotton plantations" (Zinn, 81).

Despite the inhuman conditions under which the slaves were forced to live, slavery received both social and governmental support for the single reason of
economic viability. It was slavery that made fast growth in agriculture products possible:

In 1790, a thousand tons of cotton was being produced every year in the South. By 1860, it was a million tons. In the same period, 500,000 slaves grew to 4 million. A system harried by slave rebellions and conspiracies (Gabriel Prosser, 1800; Denmark Vesey, 1822; Nat Turner, 1831) developed a network of controls in the southern states, hacked by the laws, courts, armed forces, and race prejudice of the nation's political leaders (Zinn, 155).

This agricultural and financial growth came at a price, on the one hand the number of arrival of Black people to the land of America was very dissatisfactory that was because of the hard work that was expected from them, and on the other hand the inhuman conditions under which they were forced to live turning them into a potential threat to the White owners. Slave resistance and rebellion became a reality and a network of controls developed in the south despite the laws, courts, armed forces and race prejudice in the political system. The fear of slaves was so great that not only the secular tools of power were used to curtail the threat, but even religion was used for the purpose and it was argued more or less successfully that slavery was ethically right, sanctioned by religion because Blacks were sub-human and were created by God with the sole aim of securing White man kind.

Along with the suspicion of the Blacks, non-land holding Whites also came under suspicion. It was feared that such Whites would encourage and help Black rebellion not so much out of the sympathies for the Blacks, but simply because of hatred and envy for the effluence of the White farm owners. Another twist to the tale
was added by industrialisation of the north and new conflict of interest developed between the northern and southern states. Whereas slavery was necessary for the economic prosperity of the southern landowners and planters, the northern states needed cheap labour. Hence the northern states were declared free states and slaves from the south escaping to the north with the allusion of freedom became an added thorn in the sides of the southern landowners.

Eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw rapid industrialisation and growth in the power of the capitalist class in Europe. This phenomenon was replicated in America with greater force. Innovations and discoveries had put direct and indirect effects on agricultural production on the one hand, and there was a shift of power from feudal to capitalist class on the other hand. Machines made agriculture less profitable as compared to industrial production:

The arrival of the Arkwright spinning-machine and the Hargreaves jenny in the England of the 1770s meant that, whereas in 1765 half a million pounds of cotton had been spun in England, all of it by hand, by 1784 the total was 12 million, all by machine. Next year the big Boulton & Watt steam engines were introduced to power the cotton-spinning machines. This was the Big Bang of the first Industrial Revolution. By 1812 the cost of cotton yarn had fallen by 80 percent. Then came a second wave of mechanical innovation. By the early 1860s the price of cotton cloth, in terms of gold bullion, was less than 1 percent of what it had been in 1784, when the industry was already mechanized. There is no instance in world history of the price of a
product in potentially universal demand coming down so fast (Johnson, 204-205).

In America slavery was abolished in the middle of the nineteenth century and industrial sector had started organising itself on corporate lines. The growth in industrialisation and in the power of the capitalist class in America copied all the good and the evil of the phenomenon that was experienced in Europe. There was the cycle of over production leading to the inflation on the one hand and growing politicisation of the working class due to the increase in the volume of the class on the other hand. The cyclic depression followed roughly a ten year period with the resultant closure of industries and rampant unemployment, consequently this lead to agitation and rebellion by the working class. Initially their rebellions were isolated and disconnected, but towards the end of nineteenth century a consolidation of working class movement was experienced with the workers of one industry helping the agitating workers of other industry under a common leadership. Just as the case of slave rebellions earlier, the entire state power including the police force, the courts of law, legislative councils and the military was put at the disposal of the capitalist class to crush the working class movement.

During this entire period of ethnic and class movement the American ruling class reclaimed the value of wielding hegemonic and ideological power. In the case of Blacks and Red Indians it was the land holders and the planters who more or less successfully brainwashed the Whites into believing that expansion and slavery were ethically right and socially necessary. The age old slogans of the White capitalists depicting the White race as torch bearer of civilisation, knowledge and moral right and as servants of god sacrificing personal well-being to uphold the world were used
freely in America. Then as industrialisation took root and the capitalist class came to wield economic power, the mass media including newspapers, magazines and books were used freely to advance an ideology and a mind-set that helped in consolidating the capitalist hegemony. Ideological State Apparatus including the family and education system too was employed in the service of the capitalist ruling class. Mark Twain was perhaps the first American author who could see thoroughly this strategy. In his story “Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy,” he underlines how from early childhood the minds are brainwashed, attitudes are formed and myths turned into belief system by the mass media:

Liberation from the top would go only so far as the interests of the dominant groups permitted. If carried further by the momentum of war, the rhetoric of a crusade, it could be pulled back to a safer position. Thus, while the ending of slavery led to a reconstruction of national politics and economics, it was not a radical reconstruction, but a safe one— in fact, a profitable one (Zinn, 155).

Transformation of power structures in America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries followed the example of Europe, particularly England. In America too, the power shifted from one ruling class to another and was consolidated in a more elaborate and organised manner. It was with this concentration of power in the capitalist class that America started as a nation which in turn necessitated common national aspirations, a common philosophy and common national goals which everybody would believe in but which would only serve the cause of the ruling class. The American Dream came in handy to fulfill their need. It had the inherent potential of promoting individualism and yet making it appears common cause. The myth of
America as the land of opportunity, of fulfilment of individual aspirations and the country that provided an unrestricted atmosphere for personal growth was created. Asokan voices this myth when he says “The New World came into existence mainly in response to the individual’s aspiration to progress in an unrestricted atmosphere” (Asokan, 7). The consolidation of capitalist power and effluence lead the American ruling class to look beyond the national boundaries for further growth of power and creation of wealth. The imperialistic aspirations of the American ruling class were also strengthened by the necessity for wider markets for the products of American industry and overcome the cycle of depressions that consolidated working class movement and posed a threat to the hegemonic power of the ruling class. Then came the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, at that stage the American imperialist aspirations were limited to South America and the Monroe Doctrine formulated the plan that European imperialist powers should leave South American markets to the American capitalist class and in return America would not touch the markets of Asia and Africa. America first engaged in a war for imparting control with Spain for wrestling control in Cuba. The victory in that war opened up significant South American markets for the American capitalist, and American financial institutions, and marketing chains and banks were established in South American countries.

America also established its ability of strategic manipulations when it forced the Cuban parliament to initialise American control of the country by amending its constitution. A similar exercise was undertaken in Philippines when American forces were sent there on the pretext of liberating the country from foreign occupation and then turning Philippines into an American colony by using brutal force. It was just a
matter of time when even South American continent proved too small to fulfil the ambitions of the American capitalist class.

America had already started trading with China after declaration of independence in 1776. American commercial interests in China during the second half of the nineteenth century lead America to establish first trading outpost in China and then to enter into a diplomatic relation with the Chinese government but here this was with unholy nexus of Great Britain. This resulted in a significant involvement of America with local political manoeuvring and alliances with shifting power structures. Later in 1899-1900 with the proclamation of ‘Open Door Policy’ America’s involvement in local and regional politics and trade during the early twentieth century become much more aggressive and direct:

The Chinese government had long placed severe restrictions on foreign trade. But after the British navy humiliated Chinese forces in naval war in 1839-1842, China granted trading privileges to Britain and subsequently to other nations. The first treaty between China and United States, in 1844, included a provision granting most-favoured-nation status to the United States (Cherny, 400).

The American involvement with China was only a part of the United States’ expansion across Pacific Ocean which fundamentally changed the global position of the United States, so much so that by 1900 the United States was recognised as a world power with significant commercial, political and military interests and territorial holdings throughout the pacific regions. It was necessary to substantially augment the United States’ military and navy power to protect and augment the imperialist interests of the country because they had not only to deal with the local
conditions in countries like Cuba, Philippines, Hawaii, China etc., but also to deal with the established European interests in the regions where it was a new entrant.

It was with the intention of safeguarding the interest of its capitalist class in the various regions of the world that the US entered into the First World War. The US sided with England and its allies at a crucial juncture and played a key role in tilting the balance of power. The main reason for their alliance was the breakdown of American chain of supply to England which was of perennial importance to the US capitalist class. The result of the First World War made the US emerge as a key player in international politics and power structure and Wilson the then President of America became a hero.

Just as the War of Independence and the civil war during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, while giving a boost to the interests of American ruling class, had put a great strain on the American economy, the First World War too created an upheaval in the American economy, the great depression of 1920s and 30s created unprecedented unemployment, poverty, starvation and other social and economic ills. Another factor that added to the woes of the US by giving a beating to nations in the international arena was Wilson’s decision to make America a part of League of Nations.

One factor that stands out in the entire series of major events in the history of America like the declaration of independence, the civil war and the First World War is that the interests of the ruling class have been zealously guarded and promoted at the cost of the masses. Similarly the role that America has played in countries like Cuba, Philippines, China and later Vietnam, Angola, Afghanistan and Iraq testifies to sheer brutality and extreme use of force to crush all voices of the far inferior enemy.
The same strategy which was used to make the oppression of Red Indians and Black slaves acceptable has been used in Philippines, Vietnam and Iraq. The oppressed have been projected as sub-human and savage. The same songs that the American soldiers sang in Philippines were sung by American marines in Iraq that exalt the rape of native women and killing of the native people by the American forces. In both Philippines and Iraq the decimation of the local population through weapons of mass destruction was termed ‘Nigger killing Hunters’ by the American soldiers. The reference is too stark to need any emphasis. At a more refined level the loss of human life involved in the occupation of Philippine, Vietnam, Iraq and elsewhere has been termed human collateral by the ‘civilised’ American planners and political thinkers.

After the Second World War the US became the first nuclear power and Hiroshima and Nagasaki were reduced to ashes to present a spectacle of this power to the world. The world aligned itself into three blocks, one centred around America another around USSR and the rest followed the policy of Non-alignment. This third group of countries became the target of both the NATO and Warsaw Pact blocks in search of market. American foreign policy was copied and drafted with the sole intention of securing the interests of the US corporate sector in Asian, African and Latin American countries. Sometimes it involved direct intervention and aggression and sometimes political manoeuvring to lodge puppet governments as in Chile, Venezuela, Angola, Iran, Uganda, Panama etc., etc. The oil rich Middle Eastern countries were controlled through Israel. All along Soviet Union was projected as Satan personified the arch enemy of the Christian world and an excuse for aggressive US foreign policy. The collapse of Soviet Union and the socialist block sent the American masterminds in search of fresh enemy. Osama bin laden and the Taliban,
the erstwhile blue eyed boys of American political class readily presented themselves as the best bet.

Then stared the War on Terror, which lead to direct invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. In both the cases one of the main intentions was to protect the interests of US oil lobby. Afghanistan, though itself not an oil producing nation, is close to oil rich central Asian countries. Unexpectedly the Taliban who were controlling the political venture in Afghanistan at that time, refused to allow Americans to operate from their land and thus very dubious 9/11 tragedy was pinned on the Taliban.

The collapse of Soviet Union crowned America as the unchallenged super power. Yet economic challenge had started coming from the two Asian giants, India and China. China was still inaccessible and beyond the reach of American foreign policy. So attention was focused on India. The globalised economy which was crafted with the aim of providing access to the American and European multinational companies to all the markets of the world helped these new players to emerge as serious contenders for world market. The pressure of an aggressive foreign policy, the corporate sector shifting its manufacturing base to India and China and new competition in the world market caused an economic depression in America nearly as disastrous as that of the post first world war period. Another cause of worry for US ruling class and their political puppets has been that the have-nots in America are not prepared to take everything lying down. An almost spontaneous mass movement dubbed as Occupy Wall Street emerged.

Since the second half of the nineteenth century American ruling class and their strategic planners have matured the art of exercising hegemony and ideological control over the thoughts, perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of the masses. The
entire cultural and ideological apparatus including the family, education system, religion, media etc, etc., have been crafted and put in place diligently and carefully. For more than a century and a half American people have perceived and believed what the ruling class has wanted than to perceive and believe. Just to take one example, America has a two party system with very little difference in internal or external policies between the two parties, with the result that no matter whose candidate becomes the president of America and no matter who gains majority in the senate and the congress, the policies remain largely the same. Yet America successfully projects itself as the most successful democracy in the world. Not only that but also as the guardian of democracy throughout the world. Not only the people of America but almost of the entire world believe in the myth that America is the land of freedom and opportunity, the land where dreams turn into reality and the potential for personal growth is almost unlimited. It is this hegemonic control over the minds and hearts of the people that has made it possible for the American ruling class to wield power unchallenged. This power is so absolute that the working class movement wore out and died in the early twentieth century and even philosophers and thinkers like Noam Chomsky and Zizak have been able to make little dent despite their continued efforts.

Beginning with Mark Twain American novelists have seen through the lie called ‘The Great American Dream.’ It was Mark Twain who first tried to explode the myth of freedom, fraternity, and equality through such works as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *A Connecticut Yankee in the Court of King Arthur* and his essays. Whereas the *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* focuses on freedom not only of Black slaves but even of White Americans, the Connecticut Yankee lampoons
commercialisation of culture. In his essays and speeches Mark Twain targeted the American constitution, laws, policies and shameless use of force for aggression more directly. He remained the vice-president of America Anti-Imperialistic League till his death in 1910. Almost all later novelists worth their salt followed in the footsteps of Mark Twain and tried to expose the lies through which the minds and morals of the people have been controlled. Perhaps this is what Ernest Hemingway had in his mind when he said “All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn ... all American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since” (Hemingway, n. page.). F Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* narrates the disillusionment, the restlessness of 1920s. The anger resulting from the failure of political narrates to fulfil the expectations of the masses does not produce any tangible result. The dark mood of his novels is the result of his disillusionment with the Great American Dream and his realisation of the hollowness of American ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. Fitzgerald pain is also shared by Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson and John Dos Passos.

Ernest Hemingway focuses on the futility of war for the common man who is no more than cannon fodder for the ruling class that unleashes war to protect its own interests in *A Farewell to Arms*. At a different level *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *The Sun also Rises* and *The Old Man and The Sea*, also highlight the pain and trauma of the common man toiling to give a sense of purpose to their lives, forced to fall back upon internal resources in face of the failure of the system to provide any kind of material or ideological support.

William Faulkner studies the effect of the commercialisation of human values and human relationships on the quality of individual life in *The Sound and the Fury*. 
The final message of the novel is that all the slogans and philosophies used by the ruling class to control the heart and mind of the people are just sound and fury that signify nothing beyond profit for the ruling class. Soldier Pay narrates the trauma of a common soldier returning from war and finding his world transformed beyond recognition where all the traditional values have been abandoned to accommodate the selfishness and hunger for power and profit of the ruling class.

All through the 1920s and 30s the modern American novel came into its own and literary scene was changed with great excitement, most writers including Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, Frank Norris, Jack London and Steinbeck took up themes from the experience of the toiling American masses whose lives were demarcated because of the policies pressured by the political masters in an effort to safeguard the commercial interest of the corporate sector. War, commercialisation of society, self-centred and selfish individualism, dilution of the significance of the human relationship etc, are themes that find a voice in the work of all these writers.
Works Cited:


Chapter-2

Unravelling the Labyrinth: An Overview of the Literary Career of John Steinbeck
All of the Steinbeck’s novels deal with issues relating to the sections of society that are marginalised in one sense or the other. While *In Dubious Battle*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Of Mice and Men* projects the plight of the small farmers and agricultural labourers, *The Pastures of Heaven* deals with the psychological problems of the lower middle class, and *Tortilla Flat* centres around people who are misfit in contemporary America; similarly *To a God Unknown* and *Sweet Thursday* deal with the plight of characters who succumb to the demands of contemporary life but who still could not ignore the promptings of their hearts. In all his novels Steinbeck projects the American system and the American society as non-conducive for the weak, the innocent and those who wish to ignore the dictates of society and live on their own terms. Like Mark Twain, F Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner and a host of other American novelists, Steinbeck too grapples with the harsh and cruel reality of American way of life and explodes the myth of American dream.

Most of Steinbeck’s themes came from his personal experiences. He was born in the beginning of twentieth century in California to a family of Irish descent, the second generation Americans. His grandfather was a small time priest and his father a farmer. He served as war correspondent of the American government during World War I. Prior to that he studied but never achieving any scholarly merit and only kept on repeating the courses which aroused his interest. He became class president at Stanford University, California and quit university education when he was fed up with it. He took up odd jobs of driver, labourer, and junior editor with a newspaper. All of Steinbeck’s life, including the place he was born in went into weaving the thematic and structural fabric of his tales.

*Once there was a War* is the product of his observations of World War I as he travelled through England and Africa as war correspondent of the US government.
Cup of Gold, The Grapes of Wrath and In Dubious Battle are born out of his first hand experience of the impact of corporate farming upon the lives of small farmers and farm workers in the California region; Tortilla Flat, To a God Unknown and The Pastures of Heaven owe themselves to Steinbeck’s experience of living with the less fortunate and the marginalised people in and around Californian region; East of Eden probably has its roots in the religious background of Steinbeck’s family. Of Mice and Men again tells the story of two ranch workers who despite of facing the harsh realities of life are still capable of dreaming and planning for a bright future of joy, friendship and freedom, but whose best laid plans come to naught because of the crushed dreams and psychological problems of other characters. Most of these novels were written during the period between the two world wars while America was grappling with The Great Depression of the thirties. Steinbeck had observed the American system very closely and the results of his observations convinced him that liberty, equality, fraternity and the pursuit of happiness, supposedly the inspiration behind the American dream are no more than empty slogans and these are the targets way beyond the reach of common people. The reflection of his times and experiences in his works were not accidental or coincidental but the result of conscious efforts. Steinbeck asserts that the writer must “set down his time as nearly as he can understand it and must serve as the watch dog of society...to satirize its silliness, to attack its injustices, to stigmatize its faults” (Davis, 9).

The influence of the life he experienced in the Californian region on his works has not gone unnoticed by critics. Warren French for example says “…he was a Californian and he wanted to be a serious writer. His birth place could have inspired him” (French, 19). Steinbeck’s criticism of American way of life and American institutions ruffled many a feather. Kern county board of representatives passed a
resolution in 1939, demanding that the film based on *The Grapes of Wrath* should not be allowed to be produced and the book should be banned from public libraries and schools:

...WHEREAS, "Grapes of Wrath" is filled with profanity, lewd, foul, and obscene language unfit for use in American homes, therefore, be it RESOLVED, that we, the BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, in defense of our free enterprises and of people who have been unduly wronged request that the production of the motion picture film, "Grapes of Wrath", adapted from the Steinbeck's novel, not be completed by the Twentieth Century-Fox film corporation and request that use and possession and circulation of the novel, "Grapes of Wrath", be banned from our library and schools (Lingo, 352).

Certain critics too were highly critical of Steinbeck's popularity. In the words of R M Davis:

The extent and nature of his popularity have had almost wholly negative effects on his critical reputation. Arthur Misener asked, "does a moral vision of the thirties deserve a Nobel Prize?" and decided that it did not, attributing the award to the relative crudity of the European readings of American writers and to the politics of the literary prizes (Davis, 1).

On the other hand certain vested interests pronounced upon the opportunity to use Steinbeck's success as an example of America's tolerance for criticism and of American democracy. Roosevelt in a January 1940 radio address said:

As always, freedom of speech and freedom of the press were not attacked upon grounds of morality and taste, but to limit the discussion
of a great economic problem. What masquerades as a moral crusade strikes, in fact, at the very heart of democracy (Lingo, 373).

Steinbeck had gone to New York to establish himself as a serious writer, but he could not settle down there, and his first published work *Cup of Gold* (1929) did not attract much popular or critical attention. Unsatisfied, Steinbeck returned to California. Still he continued working to establish himself as a writer of serious fiction. *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932), vividly describes the rural life in his own California valley. His second novel, *To a God Unknown* (1933), is the strongest statement about man’s relationship to the land that reveals a strain of neo-primitive mysticism later to permeate even his most objectively deterministic writings. With *Tortilla Flat* (1935) Steinbeck received critical and popular acclaim, and there are many critics who consider this humorous and idyllic tale of the Monterey Paisanos as Steinbeck’s most artistically satisfying work. Steinbeck next dealt with the problems of labour unionism in *In Dubious Battle* (1936), an effective story of a strike by local fruit pickers. *Of Mice and Men* (1937), first conceived as a play, is a tightly constructed novella about an unusual friendship between two migratory workers. Although the book is powerfully written and often moving, its theme lacks the psychological penetration and moral vision necessary to sustain its tragic intention. Steinbeck’s series of articles for the San Francisco Chronicle on the plight of migratory farm labourers provided material for *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), his major novel and the finest proletarian fiction of the century. The struggle of a family of Oklahoma tenant farmers, forced to turn over their land to the banks and journey across the vast plains to the promised land of California only to be met with derision when they arrive, is a successful example of social protest in fiction, as well as a convincing tribute to man’s will to survive.
He attacks banks and corporations; he criticises the dehumanizing tendency of capitalists and collectivist alike; he criticises the narrowness and lack of charity in conventional and respectable people; he asserts the claims of masculine ease and companionship against respectable. At his worst, he asserts that it is "...the duty of the writer to lift up, to extend, to encourage" (Davis, 5).

The Grapes of Wrath combines techniques of naturalistic documentation and symbolic stylisation; its episodic structure being admirably held together by the unifying device of U.S. Highway 66 and by inter-chapters which possess Whitmanesque expansiveness. The novel's weaknesses lie in occasional lapses into sentimentality and melodramatic oversimplification, and in Steinbeck's tendency to depict human relationships in biological rather than psychological terms, and the general absence of philosophical vision and intellectual content.

Steinbeck's finest novels are a curious blend of scientific determinism, romantic mysticism, and a rudimentary, often allegorical, type of symbolism. His work remains popular chiefly for its social consciousness and compassion. Although he refused to settle into political conservatism in his later years, his all embracing affirmation of American values and acceptance of all national policies, including the Vietnam War, lost him the respect of many liberal intellectuals who had once admired his social commitments.

Through a career which spanned over four decades, John Steinbeck was a novelist of the people. His best books are about normal men and women, simple souls who do battle against dehumanizing social forces or who struggle against their own inhumane tendencies and attempt, sometimes successfully, sometimes not, to forge lives of meaning and worth. At the centre of Steinbeck's thematic vision is the dialectic conflict between contrasting ways of life; between innocence and
experience, between primitivism and progress, and between self-interest and commitment to the human community:

The late 1930s, which marked the high point of his reputation, favored sympathetic pictures of the dispossessed (many of his novels can be and were fitted into this category) and applauded broad and optimistic statement about The People, preferably couched in pseudo-epic from (Davis, 2).

His most interesting characters, George and Lennie in Of Mice and Men, the Paisanos of Tortilla Flat, Doc Burton of In Dubious Battle, Hamiltons and Trasks of East of Eden and the Joads of The Grapes of Wrath, struggle to resolve this personal, social, and psychological conflict in a world of human error and imperfection.

In much of his work Steinbeck championed what in The Grapes of Wrath he called "...man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit" (Steinbeck, Banquet speech, n.page.). Like that of Ma and Rose of Sharon, and this will move ahead with the novel “grows beyond his work, walks up the stairs of his concepts, and emerges ahead of his accomplishments” (Steinbeck, Grapes, 156). And yet, he was sensitive to “a strange duality in the human” (Steinbeck, The grapes and Other Writings, 828).

The “Tragic miracle of consciousness” (Bryer, 591) is, for Steinbeck, man’s greatest burden and his greatest glory. And the way in which Steinbeck portrays this burden and this glory in his novels and short stories is the source of his greatest strength as a writer. It accounts for the feeling, and the passion which are very much part of his fiction. It was his most important thematic concern; from his depiction of Henry Morgan's drive for power and wealth in Cup of Gold to the concluding
statement in his Nobel Prize speech, in which he paraphrased John the Apostle by noting that, in the end is the Word, and the Word is Man, and the Word is with Man:

Steinbeck had prepared and apparently circulated a number of manuscripts before his historical extravaganza, Cup of Gold-- a pseudo-epic about a lost generation version of Sir Henry Morgan, a seventeenth century Caribbean pirate--was published by the company that had rejected his short stories. The novel appeared in 1929 just two months before stock market crash ended a carefree era. Lewis Gannett reports in preface for a new edition of the novel in 1936 that 1,533 copies were sold but few newspaper critics who reviewed it refused to take it seriously (French, 21).

In his homeland, Steinbeck found much of the material for his fiction. In Dubious Battle, and The Grapes of Wrath, as well as many of the stories in The Long Valley (1938), are set in California's agricultural valleys. The action in Tortilla Flat, Cannery Row (1945), and Sweet Thursday takes place along the waterfront of Monterey Bay. The Pastures of Heaven is Steinbeck's name for the Corral de Tierra. And the mystic quality of To a God Unknown (1933) owes much to the strange, brooding nature of Big Sur. Later in life Steinbeck became a New Yorker, and he summered in Sag Harbor rather than in Pacific Grove. Still, central California remained to Steinbeck what Yoknapatawpha was to Faulkner. There is an acute consciousness of place in Steinbeck's California fiction, a way of seeing which informs the thematic design of his most successful work. Several times he worked for the Spreckels Sugar Company, gaining firsthand knowledge of the labour problems he would write about in his political novels, In Dubious Battle and The Grapes of Wrath.
During the summer of 1923, Steinbeck took the general biology course at the Hopkins Marine Station in Pacific Grove, following an interest in marine biology that would be further stimulated in 1931 when he met marine biologist Edward F. Ricketts, whose ideas about the interrelationship of all life were to have a major impact on Steinbeck’s worldview, although they had differing opinions on some points.

During the summer of 1928 Steinbeck met Carol Henning, whom he would marry in 1930, and later in 1928 he moved to San Francisco, where she had a job. Steinbeck shared an apartment with a friend and began work on a novel which, after it had been rewritten several times and had several title changes, was published in 1933 as *To A God Unknown*. This is Steinbeck’s strangest novel. The plot is unconventional, and Steinbeck’s hero is very unusual. But this was by intention, and in 1931, after Steinbeck’s first version was rejected by several publishers, primarily because of its obscure plot, he told Mavis McIntosh that he would rewrite it, but that he would not do what publishers seemed to want most that is to popularise the story. After he completed revising the novel for Ballou, his assistant, in February 1933, he sent the manuscript to Ballou with a letter of explanation:

The book was hellish hard to write. I had been making notes for it for about five years. It probably will be a hard book to sell. Its characters are not ‘home folks.’ They make no more attempt at being sincerely human than the people in the Iliad. Boileau insisted that “...only gods, kings and heroes were worth writing about. I firmly believe that.

(Steinbeck, E, 69)
To A God Unknown contains a mythic delineation of Steinbeck’s developing worldview, and he could not popularise such a story, nor could he create a flesh and blood hero out of a character who is more than flesh and blood.

By the time Steinbeck had met Edward F. Ricketts, who was already a proficient ecologist and theorising the concept of ‘Interrelationships ‘and ‘Mutuality.’ Alongside with it he was also a philosopher, a student of music and literature, and an essayist who is concretising his idea of ‘Structure of Relations’ in life forms.

During the time that Steinbeck was revising To A God Unknown, he and Ricketts had lengthy discussions about Ricketts’s doctrine of ‘Breaking Through,’ which Steinbeck put into To A God Unknown through Joseph Wayne and the mental design of Joseph come out as narrated by Ricketts in the essay with the same name as:

In the inward growth of individual, it will be granted that integrity is the most important thing in the world. But there are levels and emergents of even of integrity. There are, conceivably, individuals so integrated and great that they are willing to contribute that most priceless gift of all-integrity-to something “beyond.” (Ricketts, 101-102)

In a very real way To a God Unknown is Steinbeck’s morphology of ‘Breaking Through,’ and it is significant that Ricketts considered the novel one of the few modern works of literature which concerns them almost exclusively with a conscious expression of this concept.

In Joseph Wayne, Steinbeck created as his protagonist a man who is more than a man and a perfect example of Ed Rickets philosophy of ‘Breaking Through,’ which can illuminate the initiation of the idea as the same depicted in the Great American Dream, but when Joseph put him into this dream, he is out of the Phalanx and that s
the need of the ruling class and the end of the independence and turning up of the Joseph into a slave of the invisible that he struggles out to make into visible in the novel.

The desire for this revelation is what concerns Joseph Wayne most, and his strange compulsion to engage in rituals and his interest in religious symbols are best explained as vehicles by which he seeks to arrive at the meaning of life. In portraying Joseph's growing awareness of the world's underlying order, Steinbeck fuses images from Christ's Passion with the myths and rituals of the dying king in Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. And he depicts Joseph as the archetypal hero who breaks through to an understanding of the cosmic whole and then acts purposefully to save the natural order.

Steinbeck's next book, *The Pastures of Heaven*, his second to be published, is a book about people who try but fail to break into heroism. Indeed, what seems to interest Steinbeck most in this novel are not the lives of men as men, but the reasons why most men do not become heroes, why in fact so few become Joseph Wayne. *The Pastures of Heaven* is a group of loosely related stories about the inhabitants of Corral de Tierra, a lovely valley community located between Monterey and Salinas, which Steinbeck calls *The Pastures of Heaven*, a microcosm of America. The characters are simple people who have sought the quiet life of the Pastures as a refuge from a complex urban society, a recreation of the experience of Europeans settlers in America. Like the settlers, as they are shrouded in personal illusions and self-deceptions which render them unable to adapt to the simple patterns of life of the valley, and they fail in their efforts to find meaningful lives.

Fantasies of dreamers are distorted by the hard facts of reality; they are frail people living on the edge of personal chaos, attached by slender threads to a reality
they do not understand, and with which they cannot cope. Steinbeck has narrated these experiences from different angles through different stories. Shark Wicks, a farmer, has his self-esteem destroyed when his neighbours find out that, contrary to the image he projects, he is not a wealthy man but an expert in financial matters. Helen Van Deventer comes to the valley to escape a series of personal tragedies, but deprives herself of the chance for personal fulfilment when she murders her mad daughter. Junius Maltby and his son Robbie have moved to the Pastures from San Francisco, where Junius worked as an accountant. In the valley, he spends his days blissfully sitting beside a stream near his house, and his life becomes unreal, romantic and unimportant as his thoughts. He is pleased to sit in the sun and droop his feet in the stream. Steinbeck portrays Junius as a pathetic man, and when some valley residents give Robbie a package of clothing, Junius cannot face the fact of his own poverty and he with his son Robbie leaves the valley and return to San Francisco. Other residents of the valley are the carefree Lopes sisters, who give themselves to customers who buy their food but refuse to accept money for sex alone. They are eventually driven from the valley to live the lives of prostitution in San Francisco. The half-wit Tularecito thinks he is a gnome and digs a hole because he wants to communicate with 'Earth People' below the ground. After someone fills in the hole, the generally placid Tularecito becomes violent, and because no one can understand why, they decide he is dangerous and have him committed to a state mental facility. Other stories tell of Molly Morgan, the valley schoolteacher, who cannot cope with the haunting memory of a father who deserted her, and of Pat Humbert who engages in futile efforts to remodel his old house on the mistaken assumption that the daughter of a valley's neighbour will marry him once work on the house is completed:
Most of all, he sympathised with those who went beyond the illusions even of survival and of reproduction, who dispensed with “this shock absorber, hope” and recognised their place in the larger scheme, who did not generalise but felt the wholeness of nature (Davis, 14).

Throughout *The Pastures of Heaven*, Steinbeck shows compassion and affection for the plight of the ordinary people who strive for happiness but cannot achieve it. Steinbeck never condemns their innocence and simplicity—(from the standpoint of middle-class values) but he portrays their self-destructive tendencies of illusion and self-deception. *The Pastures of Heaven* is an ironic title because in it Steinbeck shows us that however lovely or however redemptive *The Pastures of Heaven* may seem, true heaven cannot be attained by men on this earth as dreamed by the founders of America.

Among Steinbeck’s finest fictional creations are his primitives or half-wits and his escapees or his dropouts. Tularecito is his first half-wit, Junius Maltby his first escapee. Many others would follow. These simple people are foils against which he can measure the excesses and eccentricities of material society. Steinbeck draws his primitives and his dropouts with great warmth. He admires their ability to live simply and easily, but he simultaneously depicts their inability to survive in the modern world. In diverse ways, they are either destroyed or driven back to society from which they fled.

In the continuity of man’s unsuccessful efforts to flee avaricious society in *The Pastures of Heaven* he wrote *Tortilla Flat* to further explore this no exit situation. *Tortilla Flat* is the first novel in which Steinbeck uses the Monterey Peninsula as setting and backdrop, and it was his first popular success. The connecting metaphor for this series of episodes about the Paisanos of old Monterey is King Arthur’s Round.
Table. Steinbeck's judgment of the efficacy of retreat and his rejection of 'dropping out' as a means of coping with the problems of contemporary life are revealed through an examination of how the Paisanos' court, like Arthur's Round Table, forms, flourishes, and dies. The story, says Steinbeck:

...deals with the adventuring of Danny's friends, with the good they did, with their thoughts and their endeavors. In the end, this story tells how the talisman was lost and how the group disintegrated (Benson, 24).

The main characters in Tortilla Flat are among the most interesting in Steinbeck's canon. Danny, the centre of the Paisanos brotherhood, is related to everyone in Tortilla Flat by blood or romance. Pilon, the philosopher and logician, is able to rationalise self-interest into altruism. There are also the Pirate, a lover of cogs, and Jesus Maria Corcoran, compassionate doer of good deeds. But while Danny and his followers live for several months in glorious indolence, they become increasingly listless; life begins to lose its meaning. Finally, a fire destroys Danny's house, and the brotherhood disintegrates. The Paisanos go their separate ways. They realise the feeble basis of their escape ethic. There is, Steinbeck concludes in Tortilla Flat, no strength or fibre in the philosophic and moral system of Danny's group, nothing that will enable them to achieve and retain more than the most superficial of goals.

Steinbeck experienced popular success with Tortilla Flat before In Dubious Battle was published, but many readers considered him a teller of pleasant, inconsequential tales. His shift into the arena of social and political controversy with In Dubious Battle forced a fresh appraisal of his work, particularly as that work dealt with the complex socioeconomic problems that plagued California agriculture during the 1930s. Steinbeck's interest in the California farm labour conflict was the result of
both circumstance and accident which bears the responsibility of his background of Salinas. By 1935 Steinbeck had come to understand that the power and depth he wanted to achieve in his fiction would result only if his narratives were true and carefully observed:

In 1936, one of his busiest years, he published *In Dubious Battle*—an ambiguous analysis of strike—that become, as he predicted, the centre of a storm of critical controversy (French, 23).

The background for Steinbeck’s political fiction is documented in several important historical and sociological volumes whether it is the writings of Henry George, the champion of the single tax, or James Bryce’s *The American Commonwealth* (1891), and most important, in Carey McWilliams’s *Factories in the Fields* (1939). These volumes speak of California’s powerful land monopolists who developed large empires such as Kern County Land, the Southern Pacific Railroad, and the Irvine Corporation, all of which ruthlessly and systematically exploited the small farmers and the migrant workers. With the execution of ‘Go West’ policy, agriculture in California’s central valley during the 1930s differed from that in most rural areas of the country in that California farms were large agribusinesses, farm factories operated by large corporations employing many hundreds of workers, mostly the migrant poor, who were paid low wages for picking fruit and vegetables, this whole functioning forms out the corporate nature of farming which get voice in *The Grapes of Wrath* and in many other novels of Steinbeck.

Steinbeck was deeply observing the labour tactics of fugitive organisers in California during the 1930s, and he was determined to portray the facts about California agriculture as they actually were. And for this he inquired about the secret labour organisation, and as a result of a series of long conversations with them, he got
the thread which moves the fabric of *In Dubious Battle*, a book about a strike in a California apple orchard. Completed in 1935, *In Dubious Battle* deals with the efforts of Mac and Jim to organise a strike among migrant workers in the Torgas Valley, which falls in California that comes with the efforts of the key migrant leaders and with the help of Doc Burton, a concerned observer but not a party member and Anderson whose dubious aim was to get his apples picked while those of other growers rot on the trees so that he can demand any price for them, but the strike went out of control and becomes increasingly violent, and after vigilantes burn down Anderson’s barn, the outraged farmer call the sheriff to evict the migrants, and the strike is doomed. In the final round of violence Jim is killed and as he had done before Mac uses the death of a friend for political purpose.

In a February 1935 letter to Mavis McIntosh, Steinbeck acknowledged that *In Dubious Battle* “...is a brutal book, more brutal because there is no author’s moral point of view” (Steinbeck, E, 105). *In Dubious Battle* is a tough and objective examination of diverse political opinions in which everything is learned from the actions and conversations of the characters. Taken as a whole, it is Steinbeck’s statement of the wrong perspectives, the wrong approaches, and the wrong solutions. In using a small strike of apple pickers to symbolise, what he called “man’s eterral. bitter warfare with himself” (Bloom, *John Steinbeck*, 43). Steinbeck seems to say that the battle is indeed dubious.

As Steinbeck explained to a friend in January 1935, the novel’s title comes from Satan’s speech in the first part of Milton’s Paradise Lost, and he quoted these lines, which also appear as the book’s epigraph:

Innumerable force of Spirits armed,

That durst dislike his reign, and, me
preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In Dubious Battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost—the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield;
And what is else not to be overcome? (Steinbeck, In Dubious, VII)

The novel’s mythic substructure is loosely tied to Paradise Lost. The Torgas Valley may not be Milton’s hell, but it is hell nevertheless. Rather than the story of Satan’s hatred for God, In Dubious Battle is a parable of mankind’s self-hatred. Unlike their real-life prototypes, Mac and Jim are satanic in their opting of violence as a means of coping with labour problems in California.

The value of any individual’s life is what it contributes to their cause, and Steinbeck carefully balances a harsh condemnation of California agribusiness against the unsuccessful ideology of the Marxist organisers. In Dubious Battle is not, strictly speaking, a proletarian novel. It is a strike novel in which Steinbeck asserts that neither blind political activism nor frustrated detachment can solve the plight of the economically disinherited.

At the time he was writing In Dubious Battle, Steinbeck wrote a two-page essay which he called “Argument of Phalanx.” In it he noted that men are not final individuals, but parts of a greater beast he called the ‘phalanx’, which controls its individual units and which can achieve ends beyond the reach of individual units; and for this the action therapy that has been prescribed by Steinbeck is that of ‘Mutuality’ which is very much vital with an example of George and Lennie in of Mice and Men.
In times of crisis, Steinbeck says, man must key into the phalanx. And once man becomes part of a moving phalanx, he becomes more powerful than if he were acting as an individual man:

"It is impossible," says Steinbeck, "for man to defy the phalanx without destroying himself. For if a man goes into a wilderness, his mind will dry up and at last he will die of starvation for the sustenance he can only get from involvement in the phalanx (Taylor, 437).

Doc Burton, who is unable and unwilling to key into the striking migrant phalanx and provide direction to its blind partisan leaders, grows lean and hungry and drifts away into the night, that Doc Burton also voices some of Edward F. Ricketts's ideas as they illustrates the complexity of the intellectual relationship between the two men. In both In Dubious Battle and The Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck analyses Ricketts's precepts about man and the world, accepting some and rejecting others. While Ricketts's philosophy was undoubtedly a major influence on Steinbeck's thinking, there were other influences as well. While he was studying biology at the Hopkins Marine Station, Steinbeck discovered the ideas of William Emerson Ritter, whose doctrine of the ‘Organismal Conception of Life’ was then in vogue among West Coast naturalists. That notion of Aristotle that “The whole is more than the sum of its parts” (Aristotle, Metaphysics, n.page), is the Ritter's belief that in all parts of nature and in nature itself as one gigantic whole, wholes are so related to their parts that not only does the existence of the whole depend upon the orderly cooperation and interdependence of its parts, but the whole exercises a measure of determinative control over its parts. The influence of this non-teleological view, in which the group is capable of moving toward some end or goal, is apparent in Steinbeck’s concept of the
phalanx, in which the individual may choose to be a part of the group in order to bring about changes that he could not bring about by himself:

The description of Steinbeck as conventional thinker contradicts Edmund Wilson’s view of his “biological realism” as a consistent philosophy and Steinbeck’s own assertion that he viewed the world from a scientific, non-teleological viewpoint (Davis, 5).

The failure of Doc Burton to join the phalanx in *In Dubious Battle* is Steinbeck’s unspoken criticism of Ricketts’s philosophy. For Steinbeck, however, this aspiration was not enough, and in defence of this in *The Grapes of Wrath* he created a character that shares Ricketts’s holistic view of life but also comes to realise the importance of the group in bringing about social change. Between Steinbeck’s two great political novels he published his deepest exploration into what he later called the tragic miracle of consciousness as discussed before.

*Of Mice and Men* (1937), is Steinbeck’s memorable parable about man’s voluntary acceptance of responsibility for his fellowman. Its dramatic version was produced on the New York stage by George S. Kaufman. Both the novel and the play were immediate successes and, as a result, Steinbeck became a national figure. Steinbeck’s story is about two wandering ranch labourers, George Milton and Lennie Small, who travel from ranch to ranch and job to job, always dreaming of a little house and a couple of acres with rabbits where they will “An’ live off the fatta the lan’,” (Steinbeck, Of Mice,16). When at one point the dream almost seems believable, Lennie, who cannot control his own physical strength, accidentally kills the wife of the boss’s son, and the story ends when George mercifully kills Lennie to save him from an angry mob.
"Of Mice and Men" is one of Steinbeck's most impressive works of fiction because it is an artful portrait of the conflict between the utopian landscape where George and Lennie enjoy peace, leisure, and economic sufficiency, and the reality of modern life. George and Lennie are two simple souls who need each other and who want to live in the world of their own which actually does not exist in the world, especially that of America. Steinbeck portrays the beauty of the garden and even allows his characters a momentary glimpse of it, but he created checks alongside such fantasies to show how the dream can never be realised. "Of Mice and Men" is Steinbeck's version of the pastoral and it ends without reconciliation and with a mood of overwhelming sadness.

George and Lennie's quest for their ideal fails because they neither possess the ability to bring that dream to life nor the dream has the capacity to sustain alongside with the Great American Dream. Lennie is killed, and George is reduced to a life in a world which he does not understand and with which he cannot cope. Much expressively than in any of his other novels, in "Of Mice and Men" Steinbeck asserts the superiority of the simple human virtues to the mean accumulation of wealth and power. The book is written from an un-judgmental, or what Steinbeck called a non-teleological point of view, which encompasses feeling as well as thinking and this becomes the primary way for the better assessment of the situation:

In March, 1940, he accompanied his friend on another expedition to the Gulf of California; this trip is described in the "Sea of Cortez," which also contains an account of the non-teleological philosophy that attracted both men (French, 26).

"The Grapes of Wrath" (1939) is, without question, Steinbeck's most ambitious as well as his most successful novel. The epic scale of the book, which focuses on the
struggles of the Joad family on their way to California as part of a whole of Oklahoma tenant farmers from the Oklahoma dust bowl, enabled Steinbeck to say virtually everything he knew and felt about man and the world in which he lives. And whereas the battle in *In Dubious Battle* ends in chaos, *The Grapes of Wrath* ends in triumph mainly because of the influence of Jim Casy, a visionary ex-preacher. Casy expresses Rickett's holistic viewpoint in ignoring what he regards as superficial distinctions between right and wrong to arrive at a recognition of the unity of all life, which he defines as holy:

> I figgered about the Holy Sperit and the Jesus road. I figgered, 'Why do we got to hang it on God or Jesus? Maybe,' I figgered, 'maybe it's all men an' all women we love; maybe that's the Holy Sperit--the human sperit--the whole shebang. Maybe all men got one big soul ever'body's a part of.' Now I sat there thinkin' it, an' all of a suddent--I knew it. I knew it so deep down that it was true, and I still know it (Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 26).

Proceeding from a non-teleological belief Casy discards the codes of doctrinal Christianity and concludes, "There ain't no sin and there ain't no virtue. There's just stuff people do" (Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 25). But whereas the battle in *In Dubious Battle* is dubious, and whereas Doc Burton, despite the depth of his understanding, cannot communicate anything of value to the striking apple pickers, in time Casy comes to understand the principles of the 'Organism Conception of Life' to bring together people in to one mutual unit:

> He got a job to do, but it's all laid out for 'im an' there's on'y one way to do it. But us, we got a job to do, an' they's a thousan' ways, an' we don' know which one to take (Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 150).
Burton ends up a lonely man but Casy, who affirms that “All that lives is holy” (Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 150), keys into the migrant phalanx and dedicates himself to the whole. Finally giving his life in the fight against the oppression of the dispossessed, he becomes a Christ figure who directs his disciples like Tom Joad to action. His life and death serve as a catalyst which unites the Joads with the entire migrant family in the just struggle for human dignity and a decent way of life.

*The Grapes of Wrath* is surely underpinned by Steinbeck’s working out the terms of his intellectual friendship with Ed Ricketts. But it also owes much to his friendship with Thomas Collins, to whom the book is dedicated who was the manager of a migrant camp for the Farm Security Administration and to a variety of other people associated with the problems of California agriculture at the time. In telling the story of the Joad family, Steinbeck fuses an agrarian idealism with the Ricketts doctrine of the unity of all life and with his personal gospel of social action.

Throughout the course of the Joads’s epic journey, Steinbeck chronicles the Joads’s change from zealously regarding themselves as an isolated and self-important family unit to a recognition that they are part of one vast human family which, in Casy’s words, as quoted earlier, is the part of one big soul. At the beginning of the novel the Joads are interested solely in themselves. But gradually, under Casy’s influence, Tom, Ma, and the rest of the Joad family shift their orientation and the result of it is that we see a different Tom, Ma and Rose of Sharon at the end of the novel overcoming every fear and to become a part of Phalanx:

And where a number of men gathered together, the fear went from their faces, and anger took its place. And the women sighed with relief.
for they knew it was all right—the break had not come; and the break would never come as long as fear could turn to wrath (Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 454-455).

Structurally, the novel is predominantly appealing because of the approach in which Steinbeck portrays microcosm and macrocosm by alternating sections of the Joad narrative with inter chapters which universalise the Joad story. These chapters depict the land and the social conditions that the Joads encounter on their trek westward and in California.

*The Grapes of Wrath* was an immediate bestseller and reached the top of the best-seller list within two months and remained there throughout the rest of the year. The 1940 movie version, starring Henry Fonda and Jane Darwell, reinforced the book's popularity. It has been in print continuously and has been translated into a variety of foreign languages. It remains a classic and is on the reading lists in English classes throughout the world. Steinbeck, who had done some political writing, most notably in a pamphlet entitled "Their Blood is Strong" (1938), a nonfiction account of the migrant labour problem in California, was attacked by a variety of civic, agricultural, and political interest groups who claimed that *The Grapes of Wrath* grossly distorted agricultural conditions in Oklahoma and in California. A national controversy grew around the book, and it was banned by some libraries and school boards. An editorial in Collier's magazine branded it as Communist propaganda, and it was attacked on the floor of Congress. Though Steinbeck received as much acclaim for *The Grapes of Wrath* as he did condemnation, the Saturday Review poll in 1940 nominated *The Grapes of Wrath* as the most distinguished novel of the year, and Steinbeck received the Pulitzer Prize for it in 1940. Consequently, the experience of writing the book and the controversy surrounding its reception took its toll on him. In
The Grapes of Wrath Steinbeck had expressed his faith that agrarian reform combined with a doctrine of social cooperation could solve the tremendous problems of California agriculture caused by a depressed American economy.

World War II convinced him not only of the inefficacy of agrarianism as a solution to serious social and economic problems but even led him to doubt the value of the group-man concept. Soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Steinbeck, who had already been writing speeches for government officials, offered his writing talents to the State Department, where they were quickly accepted. In 1942, at the suggestion of Gen. Henry Hap Arnold, he wrote Bombs Away, just to tell the American people of the potential of the nation which resulted as a failure. "Bombs Away is a disaster full of hearty patriotism, bluff egalitarianism crossed with elitism..." (Davis, 3). Steinbeck then takes the issues of the war itself for granted, and he attempts to apply his goal-directed vision of social cooperation to efforts to meet the threat of Nazi Germany. At one point in Bombs Away, Steinbeck applies his argument of phalanx to the organisation of airmen preparing for raids against the enemy. He notes that 'the goal has been set now and we have an aim and a direction, and a kind of fierce joy runs through the country" (Marks, 86). Unhappily, though, no direction, no fierce joy runs through Steinbeck’s narrative, John Ditsky calls Bombs Away a slight and even embarrassing book, which, in addition to its more obvious faults, contains an unintended self-portrait of the artist in the midst of a collapsing theory. Peter Lisca reports in The Wide World of John Steinbeck that the writer was "Too disheartened by what he had seen of the war to prolong the experience in any way and he decided not to publish it" (French, 27).

The disintegration of Steinbeck’s belief in the phalanx, in group man, is even more apparent throughout the loosely related series of dispatches he wrote in 1943 as:
a foreign correspondent. These were published in 1958 as *Once There Was a War*. Men, he argues, cannot be treated as individuals in a war effort. Indeed, soldiers in their helmets resemble mushrooms in a bed of mushrooms. And yet, what could have been the central focus in these communiqués about Americans at war, the loss of individuality of men in war is lost. The majority of Steinbeck’s dispatches stress human interest, the hopes, fears, and activities of “GI Joes” under the various conditions of war.

Steinbeck called his first post-war novel, *Cannery Row* (1945), “...a funny little book that is fun and it is pretty nice [possibly *Cannery Row]*” (Steinbeck, E, 265). It was a kind of nostalgic thing written for a group of soldiers who had asked him to relieve them from the agony of war which is breaching its limits. Many critics, disturbed by the suddenness with which Steinbeck cut himself off from social and political concerns, attacked *Cannery Row*, charging that Steinbeck’s plot, which deals with the exploits of a group of vagabonds on Monterey’s waterfront and their attempts to give a party for Doc, their friend and protector, is sentimental and its philosophy trivial. *Cannery Row* may seem an unrealistic novel, for in it Steinbeck makes heroes out of bums and affectionately describes “a nostalgic thing,” a life incompatible with contemporary society, but its philosophy is by no means trivial or superficial. For beneath Steinbeck’s casual tone is his clear versioned evaluation of man’s unsuccessful attempt to escape the realities of modern life. Steinbeck’s main theme in the book concerns man’s quest to relish the wild taste of life.

Steinbeck’s next California novel, *The Wayward Bus* (1947), a detailed allegory of modern life in which a diverse group of men and women, thrown together on a bus bound from one California community to another, are forced to re-examine themselves and their relationships with one another. Before the end of their trouble
filled journey, individuals either destroy or redeem themselves, depending upon their willingness to alter their thinking and their patterns of behaviour. Additionally, none of the characters adopts a holistic view of life, for which Steinbeck gives primary concern, which gives meaning to the actions of such characters as Jim Casy and Tom Joad. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck noted that man is distinguished from all other forms of life by his ability to grow beyond his concepts and emerge ahead of his accomplishments towards perfection that comes from mutuality. Juan Chicoy and his passengers do not grow beyond their concepts because they have none. They do not emerge ahead of their accomplishments because they have accomplished little. Juan and his passengers do no more than the animals. Steinbeck and Ricketts observed that in the Gulf of California they exist. And this, the novelist seems to say, is the tragedy of man's wayward pilgrimage through modern life. Steinbeck rewrote this fable a number of times, and when it was finally published in 1947 as *The Pearl*, it went largely unnoticed. It was not, in fact, until 1953 that Steinbeck discovered that it was at last gathering some recognition.

In contrast to the raucous bawdiness of *Cannery Row* and the allegorical seriousness of *The Wayward Bus*, *The Pearl* is a simple, lyrical fable which Steinbeck "If this story is a parable perhaps everyone takes his own meaning from it and reads his own life into it" (Steinbeck, *Pearl*, 1). In this story of man's search for happiness and his need to choose between simplicity and complication, between a life in nature and a life in society, Steinbeck shows that the drive for wealth and power ends in tragedy and disappointment. *The Pearl* presents the human dilemma; it is the study of the agony involved in man's recognition of the vanity of human wishes. Kino chooses what friendship, tolerance, dignity, and love over the region of outward possessions that is the material possessions of the world.
Steinbeck’s early post-war fiction reflects the vision of a man who had returned from a destructive war to a changed America. Trying first to recapture a sense of the past in Cannery Row, Steinbeck came to realise that neither the vagrant nor the scientific visionary could survive the onslaught of civilisation. Then, in The Wayward Bus, he focused directly on the people of that post-war world and attempted with little artistic success to depict their repentance. And finally, in The Pearl he employed legend to explain what he regarded as the greatest of human dilemmas. In these books, Steinbeck’s organism view of life, his belief that men can work together to fashion a better, more productive and more meaningful life, seemed less and less applicable to the world he saw around him. Gradually, John Steinbeck was becoming a novelist without a vision.

For new literary vistas, Steinbeck hired on with the New York Herald Tribune for the purpose of visiting the Soviet Union with photographer Robert Capa and sending back essays which would later be the basis of the text for A Russian Journal (1948), a volume of essays and photographs. The book is nicely done, particularly those sections in which Steinbeck describes the simple farmers of Georgia and the Ukraine, whom he found to be hospitable people with wonderful sense of humour. He liked them and set down whole conversations with them with warmth uncharacteristic of his later fiction. There are numerous passages in A Russian Journal which reflect Steinbeck’s distress as to how the Soviet Union had stifled individual initiative. There are also long sections which describe the widespread destruction which resulted from World War II, particularly in Kiev and in Stalingrad.

Upon his return from Russia, Steinbeck made preparations to join Ed Ricketts for another collecting trip, this time to the west coast of Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlottes, for the purpose of writing a cold water Sea of Cortez. Steinbeck
had never regretted collaborating with Ricketts on the Gulf of California narrative, but he recognised the inherent liabilities of any collaborative endeavour which get mentioning in *East of Eden*:

Our species is the only creative species, and it has only one creative instrument, the individual mind and spirit of a man. Nothing was ever created by two men. There are no good collaborations, whether in art, in music, in poetry, in mathematics, in philosophy. Once the miracle of creation has taken place, the group can build and extend it, but the group never invents anything. The preciousness lies in the lonely mind of a man (Steinbeck, *East*, 161).

Yet he had continued to show interest in Ricketts's work by writing the foreword to the second edition (1948) of Ricketts and Jack Calvin's *Between Pacific Tides*, and while he was already making preparations for work on a giant novel which was tentatively titled *Salinas Valley*, denying himself he looked forward to collaboration with Ricketts. But the marine biologist was killed in a freakish car train wreck just weeks before the trip was to begin. Steinbeck was shattered by Ricketts's death. Later, he spoke of having had a kind of conscience removed and of possessing a new fierceness he had not felt for many years. But it is significant that he wrote little of consequence after Ricketts's death. Steinbeck would spend the next several years wrestling in his writing with the fact of his own literary indebtedness to Ricketts. Throughout this period he continued to work on "Salinas Valley," which he finally completed in 1951 and re-titled *East of Eden*, but his other writings between Ricketts’s death in May of 1948 and the 1954 publication of *Sweet Thursday* reflect a rekindled absorption with Ricketts’s person and ideas.
In 1949 the recently divorced Steinbeck met and fell in love with Elaine Scott, then the wife of actor Zachary Scott. She became his third and last wife in December 1950. They lived mostly in and around New York City, and in 1955 when Steinbeck bought a summer cottage in Sag Harbour, on eastern Long Island; it marked his decision to make the East Coast his permanent home. These changes, as well as his reaction to the death of Ricketts, suggest that the period between 1948 and 1955 was a period of re-evaluation for Steinbeck.

In his works written after Ricketts’s death, *Burning Bright* (1950) and *About Ed Ricketts*, which is warm, personal accounts of a man who influenced Steinbeck deeply and permanently and who, for Steinbeck, would not die because he is always present even in the moments when we feel his loss the most.

In *Burning Bright*, the only work Steinbeck wrote directly for the stage. He attempted to lift a story about what he considered the most interesting aspect of Ricketts’s character “...to the parable expression of the morality play” (Schultz, 53). The problem with this play novelette, as Steinbeck called it, unlike his more successful dramatic ventures in *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Moon is Down* is that it is less a work of art than an abstract piece of philosophizing. *Burning Bright* deals with the inability of a middle-aged man, Joe Saul to father a child by his young and beautiful wife Mordeen. Mordeen is deeply in love with her husband, and she knows of her husband’s desire for a child. She therefore commits adultery with Victor, Saul’s assistant, and becomes pregnant. When Saul learns of his own sterility and figures out what his wife has done, the narrative turns from the theme of sterility into a parable about man’s need to recognise his kinship with the entire human community. Steinbeck presents in Joe Saul a man who went away into madness of self-interest and returned to realise, “It is the race, the species that must go staggering on” (Steinbeck,
Burning, 101). Learning from his close friend, significantly named Friend Ed (the Ricketts figure in the play), that man’s greatest talent is the ability to receive, to receive anything from anyone and to do it gracefully and thankfully. Saul accepts the product of his wife’s adultery, an acceptance heralded by his assertion of the unity of all men. “I had to walk into the black to know—to know that every man is father to all children and every child must have all men as father” (Steinbeck, Burning, 102).

Steinbeck chose as his epigraph for Burning Bright the first stanza of Blake’s poem The Tyger, which illustrates his celebration of life: despite man’s cruelty, violence, weakness, and wickedness, some life force had framed him in fearful symmetry. Discovering his own symmetry, Joe Saul learns from Friend Ed that “This is not a little piece of private property, registered and fenced and separated. Mordean! This is the Child” (Steinbeck, Burning, 102-103). Burning Bright failed as theatre and as fiction. The stage production closed after just thirteen performances because audiences and critics found its language unconventional and its archaisms discordant. Steinbeck’s abstract character types are even more problematic. For in attempting to universalise his story, Steinbeck, who, as Elaine Steinbeck noted, was too colloquial a writer to write symbolist fiction, abandoned a focus on individuals for philosophical abstraction. Commenting on the failure of Burning Bright, Steinbeck pointed out that he hoped his audience would jump a vacuum of unreality and join the company in creating a greater reality.

The jump is not too long in Viva Zapata! for which Steinbeck wrote the film script and which was put on celluloid by Elia Kazan. The characterisation and theme goes within the best line of Steinbeck’s 1930s documentations. He had been interested in the life and work of Emiliano Zapata and other landless Zapatistas for some time before he began work on his film script. And he treats them with the kind of
understanding and affection that he displayed in portraying his greatest fictional characters. In the course of the script, Zapata comes in to the tune of power and becomes as tyrannical as that of Willie Stark of *All The King’s Men*. But he rectifies his errors and at the cost of his life, becomes a mythic figure and a point of strength for the people. In *Viva Zapata!* Steinbeck warns against the abuse of power, whether exercised by anyone.

Zapata touched off a mass movement of agrarian reforms of which he became the leader and symbol. In so doing, he encountered resistance from Fernando Aguirre, a fervent young man with a typewriter. For Steinbeck, Aguirre is a Mexican version of Mac or Jim of *In Dubious Battle*. In the script Zapata comes to understand the distorted nature of Fernando’s principle that successful rule has no opposition. Reminded by his followers of the corrupting nature of absolute power, Zapata ultimately renounces power and gives it back to where it belongs, and they are thousands of other Zaptians.

While he was in the course of *Viva Zapata!* he started to work on *East of Eden* of which bulk of the writing took place during 1951 after he got relief from other professional commitments and could work without breaking the flow. The spirit of the work in him is so much, that in one of his letter to Covici, Steinbeck said that the story would be the human’s child as is the case with the *Burning Bright* that it belongs to the world and will be a part of ‘Universal Human Soul’ “He is the everyman, the battleground between good and evil, the most human of all, the sorry man. In the battle the survivor is both” (Steinbeck, E, 429), and arguing further he said the book is for his sons, in part as a family history. Not only would the novel provide histories of the Salinas Valley and Steinbeck’s mother’s family, the Hamiltons, but also, Steinbeck’s greatest narration of good and evil.
To portray this theme, Steinbeck invented another family, the Trasks, whose story became, over time, Steinbeck's version of the Cain and Abel story, which ends with an affirmation that the individual in contrast to group man can assert his moral impulse and by his own free will can win over evil. Eventually the story of the Trasks, who are symbolic characters as opposed to the more realistically drawn Hamiltons, came to dominate Steinbeck's sprawling epic study of three generations in two families. When Steinbeck submitted the first draft to the Viking Press, his editors felt that he had buried an interesting story in his sprawling epic, and they recommended substantial cuts to bring economy and unity to the book. Steinbeck resisted. He apparently felt that the complexity and psychological density of the manuscript justified its length. He regarded *East of Eden* as his magnum opus, and he forbade his editors to tamper with it. But the book fails, chiefly because it rambles and also because Steinbeck's moralizing badly constrains the range of his vision. In allowing morality to eclipse his earlier biological way of seeing, Steinbeck moved away from a well conceived and coherent view of group man to platitudes about man's free will. Many of those friendly with Steinbeck during the years when he composed *East of Eden* feel the latter criticism is unfair. His agent Elisabeth Otis believed that *East of Eden* is Steinbeck's greatest and most misunderstood novel. Those who admire the novel assert that Steinbeck's thinking had matured, that he recognised that the individual is capable of achievements impossible among groups. Yet Steinbeck's individuals particularly the members of the mythical Trask family are not quite believable. They are symbol people who are so poorly clothed in the trappings of experience that, contrary to Steinbeck's intention, the symbols are not only discernible, but overwhelming. Five years of research, writing, and rewriting went into *East of Eden*. And while it is not a major work in Steinbeck's canon, it is
impressive for the largeness of its scope and for the expansive quality of its conception. Though Steinbeck insisted while writing *East of Eden* that this could be his final release but by the time he finished it, he realised that there was something to follow it. “I don’t mean I will stop but this is a definite milestone and I feel released” (Steinbeck, E, 431).

*Sweet Thursday* is Steinbeck’s effort to recapture the persona of Ed Ricketts in fiction for one last time:

I’ve just finished another book about the Row. It is a continuation concerned not with what did happen but with what might have happened. The one can be as true as the other I think it is a funny story, and sad too because it is what might have happened to Ed and didn’t. I don’t seem to be able to get over is death. But this will be the last piece about him (Steinbeck, E, 474).

The novel seems on the surface a sequel to *Cannery Row*, for it is another narrative about Doc and Mack and the boys who live and play on the Monterey waterfront. Unlike *Cannery Row*, however, Steinbeck wrote *Sweet Thursday* with the theatre in mind. The action of the novel centres on the efforts of Mack and his friends to find a suitable spouse for Doc, who, back from World War II, seems lonely and disillusioned. They match Doc with Susy, a Monterey prostitute. Finally content, Doc marries Susy, and together they leave Monterey so that Doc can assume a research position in marine biology at the California Institute of Technology.

*Sweet Thursday* is a sentimental novel, and the Doc of the novel seems a weak and ineffectual version of his counterpart in *Cannery Row*. In fact, though, Steinbeck’s crafting of Doc in *Sweet Thursday* as a lonely, dissatisfied man is for the novelist a statement of the plight of the thinking, feeling man in the ‘Wasteland’ of T.
S. Eliot. This change in Ricketts is paralleled by a change in *Cannery Row* itself. The Cannery Row of *Sweet Thursday* consists of empty streets, along with silent Canneries, which is much different from Cannery of Ricketts where people were livelier and also making the Row much livelier and Doc is a mirror of that change. In *Sweet Thursday* he is more sinned against sinning and therefore becomes a victim of the aspects of modern society that Steinbeck most disliked. In short, *Sweet Thursday* is Steinbeck's bitter-sweet lament for the death of an era he loved and for the man who was, for him, its central symbol.

Steinbeck laid down the ghost of Ed Ricketts once and for all in *Sweet Thursday*, but he paid a price for the endeavour. His portrait of the decline of life on Cannery Row signals a similar decline in his writing. That pattern is apparent first in *The Short Reign of Pippin IV: A Fabrication* (1957), a light hearted tale narrating the incidents that cropped around a retiring middle aged astronomer who suddenly put to rule the unruly French. It is a sapless and languid novel and Steinbeck was aware that this novel was a slim book and would have a limited audience:

> I started out gaily on my novel and the, without warning an idea happened that so charmed me that I couldn't shake it out. It seemed easier to write it than to lose it. It is the wrong length, the wrong subject and everything else is wrong with it except that it is fun and I could not resist writing it[ The Short Reign of Pippin IV] I must say I do have fun with profession. If that's what it is. I get real cranky when too many things interfere with it (Steinbeck, E, 524-525).

Then he felt otherwise about a modernised edition of Malory's *MorteD’Arthur*, of which *Tortilla Flat* along with *The Grapes of Wrath* are the best examples. He began research for this task by reading many books about Malory. He
talked extensively with Malory expert Eugene Vinaver and showed him a piece of his work. Vinaver responded positively and offered to aid Steinbeck in any way possible. Buoyed by Vinaver's praise, Steinbeck indicated that this would be his most important work to date:

In answer to criticism that the novel was formless, Steinbeck explained that it followed a definite pattern based on the Malory version of the Arthurian legends, and he even offered to add to the book inter-chapters like those later used in *The Grapes of Wrath* that would comment upon the moral, aesthetic, and historical significance incidents. These chapters were not added, but chapter titles in the manner of those of the Caxton edition of Malory's *Morted' Arthur* were supplied (French, 54).

Over the course of a five year period, Steinbeck translated a substantial part of the *MorteD'Arthur*. In total, his translations include five of the six parts of the tale of King Arthur, the Gawain, Ewain, and Marhalt sections of the first romance, and all of *The Novel Tale of Sir Launcelot of the Lake*. These were published posthumously as *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* in 1976. The first five sections are a readable and clear translation in modern diction which retains the sense and sensibility of Malory. Steinbeck took more liberties with the Gawain and Launcelot tales by deepening characterisation and providing psychological perspectives to his examination of character but throughout it, he however remained faithful to the original:

Now it seems to me that Malory’s self-character would be Launcelot. All of the perfections he knew went into this character, all of the things of which he thought himself capable. But, being an honest man he
found faults in himself, faults of Varity, faults of Violence, faults even of disloyalty and those would naturally find their way into his dream character (Steinbeck, E, 553).

Steinbeck’s final novel is *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961), a book set in the fictional eastern Long with a piercing study of the moral vacuum in contemporary America. In it Steinbeck chronicles man’s fall from grace as a result of his devotion to the all holy dollar; all codes of individual and group morality have been replaced by subservience to a fast-buck philosophy. The centre of the novel is Mr. Baker’s bank which Steinbeck aimed as the main tool and the real conspiracy reflection for the degradation of society and as mentioned above man’s subversion to the perfect capital that is dollar. As Ethan, the protagonist describes it, he and others:

...stood at attention as the clock hand crossed nine. There came a click and bussing from the great steel safe door. Then Joey dialled the mystic numbers and turned the wheel that drew the bolts. The holy of holies swung stately open and Mr. Baker took the salute of the assembled money. I stood outside the rail like a humble communicant waiting for the sacrament (Steinbeck, *The Winter*, 196).

Hawley, who seeks meaning and purpose in a moral wasteland, spends the novel taking stock of the fortunes and misfortunes, and at the end of the volume, after considering suicide; he commits himself to working for a better world. “I had to get back—had to return the talisman to its owner. Else another light might go out” (Steinbeck, *The Winter*, 276) But despite his claims of his own salvation, Ethan is unconvincing. His ‘light’ is opaque and reflects Steinbeck’s inability to provide a coherent vision for the future.
There is evidence which suggests that by the time Steinbeck finished *The Winter of Our Discontent*, he had lost interest in writing fiction, and in his last years he was more active as a journalist and traveller than as a novelist. He wrote about his expeditions in *Life Magazine*, continuing this he authored two volumes of non-fiction during the 1950s as well as a series of columns for *Newsday*, supporting the American military presence in Southeast Asia, which he later lamented.

His nonfiction reflects his newly adopted way of life as a journalist and traveller. The first, *Travels with Charley in Search of America* (1962), is the record of his 1960 journey across the United States with his pet, Charley. The latter, *America and Americans* (1966), is a narrative of reflections about his country. The work is crafted with fine photographs. As in his earlier travel narratives, the log portion of *Sea of Cortez* and *A Russian Journal*, *Travels with Charley and America and Americans* imitate both the positive and negative aspects of the America being presented with a spirit of tenderness and warm interest.

Unlike to *A Russian Journal*, where we learn about the Russian people only on surface, *Sea of Cortez* is a significant work in travel literature because it contains the kind of curiosity which leads to discovery of self. It helps us understand the meaning of what is observed and also the mind of the observer. Other than them *Travels with Charley in Search of America* is in many ways Steinbeck’s most important volume of travel literature. Lacking the unity of the log portion of *Sea of Cortez* and even the steady tone of *A Russian Journal*, it goes with sentimental tone with grasping movement of passages. In one of the section of the book in which Steinbeck describes his trip across the Mojave Desert, he intuits the great concept of ‘Onenesses’ of life in language which recalls the tone of the log portion of *Sea of Cortez*. 
Travels with Charley, explaining much of Steinbeck’s vision of America. In it by and large, the America Steinbeck discovers in Travels with Charley is an artificial land. It is life at the peak of a civilisation in which artificiality has dominated everything even the food along with the human nature. In the log portion of Sea of Cortez Steinbeck and Ricketts questioned the value of some kinds of social change. In Travels with Charley he finds that change has destroyed the American landscape and the development is so much dubious that it looks like destruction and the perfect picture of ‘Wasteland.’ Indeed, he seems to say we have reached a point where progress has become a progression toward strangulation. Travels with Charley presents Steinbeck’s sense of loss which he didn’t find when he and Ricketts went to the Gulf of California and there he saw the greatness of mutuality which led to perfection and writing that what seems to be external is actually a part of being. That sense of loss which is apparent in America and Americans, is indirectly coming on American government, American concepts of democracy, American way of life and on American loss of principle and purpose, which is juxtaposition of the Great American Dream, this loss haunted him till his death in 1968.

This rekindling of interest in Steinbeck and reappraisal of his work owes itself to the fact discontent with the American government, the concept and practice of democracy in America, the ineffectuality of American way of life and that of the great American dream has became all repressive and general over the last two decades or so. Since the collapse of the communist bloc and emergence of America as the sole power centre of the world, the American ruling class has became more aggressive in their pursuit of profit and unchallenged power. The blatant lies that were restored to justify the invasion of Iraq, of which Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) is a prime example, and the way calamitous events like the collapse of WTO twin towers
were used the agenda of the oil lobby, not only made the collective American conscience to wear its hood, but also the fact that the disastrous effects of American adventurism in Iraq and in Afghanistan were chiefly born by the American masses acted as catalyst in the birth and growth of such mass movements as Occupy Wall Street. In the following chapters we shall try to analyze, how Steinbeck had raised the issues of hood winking of the people by the ruling class to achieve their goals, the exploitation of the under-privileged in pursuit of profit. The unholy nexus between the corporate sector and the government to fulfil the agenda of the ruling class, the corruption of culture to forge as way of life that suits the purpose of the ruler in his winks. Hence we shall try to proof that Steinbeck’s deconstruction of America which had earlier appear familiar and eccentric to the reader and critics were actually a keen inside in the workings of American state and society.


Works Cited:

  <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.html>


  <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3506602>


Chapter-3

Determination of Class Division and Consolidation of Hegemony
The most productive period of Steinbeck's carrier as a writer, ranging from the publication of *Cup of Gold* in 1929 and publication of *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939, coincides with one of the most significant periods in the history of America. The stock market crashed in 1929, leading to a prolonged period of economic depression. The economic depression leads to mass unemployment, social unrest, food crisis, and total disarray in the agricultural sector. The economic depression was no sudden, the US had been experiencing cycles of minor depressions almost every decade throughout the nineteenth century, particularly since the civil war (1861-1865). These cyclic economic depressions leading to laying off of industrial workers and closure of businesses had spawn localised working class movements throughout the industrial northern part of the US. By the end of the nineteenth century these working class movements had started showing signs of consolidation and centralisation; the alignment of railroad workers strike and textile workers strike in 1877 called by the various unions of workers under one umbrella at St. Louis and West Virginia respectively. These strikes received support from almost all the labour union of America.

The American ruling class and their agents, the US state machinery were unnerved by these consolidations of working class movements, and they had to organise themselves to deal with the situation in a hurry; all the organs of the state, the legislature, judiciary, police and the army come together to crush the movements. These strikes jolted the American ruling class and the state and made them aware of the possibility of revolutionary alignment of working class movements in America. Hence, by the time that the Great Depression gripped America, the American ruling class and American state were prepared to deal with any eventuality.
Apart from the Repressive State Apparatus, the Ideological State Apparatus including the media, the education system and the family had been organised and controlled much before the consolidation of Repressive State Apparatus. In one of his stories which was published in 1870 in *The Galaxy* from New York named “Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy,” Mark Twain notes how these cultural organs brain washed the entire generation of American youth into seeing the world from the perspective of ruling class, and how attitudes and way of life are moulded by them to serve the interests of the ruling class. Even before the mass media like newspapers, magazines and education system had emerged as significant factors in American society, and had started playing any noticeable role as elements of Ideological State Apparatus, the myth of American Dream had established itself in the minds of the masses, especially in the middle class, and almost without exception, it was believed that America was the land of opportunity based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Theories of state formation have been propounded all through ages beginning with Plato’s theory of ideal state where everything from living to immortal comes under the state:

Plato builds his ideal state in three successive ‘waves’. In the first wave he shows that men and women are different in degree only and not in kind. They should have the same education and should partake in the same public function. Plato gives his scheme of education. In the second wave, Plato advocates the abolition of the family on the basis of communism of property and wives. In the thirds wave, he introduces the rule of philosophy. Knowledge is virtue and therefore, the salvation
of society depends on government by philosopher rulers (Bhandari, 17).

John Locke in his theory of social contract gave the right to property to the individuals as a natural right:

Though the land and all inferior creatures belonged to all, yet every person had the right of property in his own person. The labour of his body and the fruits of his labour was his *i.e.* was his property (Bhandari, 274).

Rousseau emphasised the freedom of the individual:

The individual is free in the state because he does not surrender his rights to an outside authority, but to a corporate body of which he himself is a member. Any restrictions on the liberty of the individual are self-imposed (Bhandari, 326).

Karl Marx defined the state as necessary evil and held that state is a tool in the hands of ruling class meant to keep class antagonism and series of negations under check so that they do not jeopardise the existence of the ruling class:

The state has not always been there. It arose out of the necessity of holding class antagonisms in check but it becomes an instrument in the hands of the economically dominant class to establish its rule (Bhandari, 466).

Antonio Gramsci propounded the theory of hegemony while he was in jail during the fascist regime of Mussolini in Italy. According to him, the power of the ruling class is established and perpetuated endlessly by gaining the consent of the
masses. It is the purpose and duty of the Ideological State Apparatus to gain the consent of the masses without the masses realising how they are brainwashed into believing, thinking and feeling what they are required to believe, think and feel within the ruling class. All the elements of the Ideological State Apparatus the family, the mass media, educational institutions, religion, means of entrainment and other cultural units have to work in unison to achieve this gigantic goal. Not only that, but the Ideological and Repressive State Apparatus have to cooperate with each other for the task:

What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major super-structural “levels”: the one that can be called “civil society”, that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called “private”, and that of “political society” or “the State”. These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of “hegemony” which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of “direct domination” or command exercised through the State and “juridical” government. The functions in question are precisely organisational and connective. The intellectuals are the dominant group’s “deputies” exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government (Gramsci, 145).

The American system had been working on these lines much before Gramsci had theorised the state. The American intelligentsia and American opinion makers had mastered the art of camouflaging the real interest of the ruling class and their projecting anti-people actions as pro-people meant to protect the interests of the poor and the under-privileged. The cannon of Americanism like Abraham Lincoln and
Thomas Jefferson made the American people believe that they wanted an America that would be free from every evil, a family in which each member would be important in their own right, a world free from chaos, anarchy and exploitation; and America would be a country of which the rest of the world would be envious:

...this was accomplished by having a human and cultivated society -- set free from the narrower exactions of economics, for the cultivation of higher virtues and arts of civilisation -- which at the same time benevolently assumed responsibility for all who are economically, intellectually, and morally inferior (Flory, 46).

The illusion of the idea of America was created and is sustained with the aid of American constitution and seemingly strong ideal features. It allows various states to govern themselves according to the ethos in own so that every individual believes that they are living in the strongest democracy of the world where the government is the rule of the people, by the people and for the people.

It was Mark Twain who first sees though the lie of America and realized that America was nothing but a continuation of the class hierarchy of Europe sustained though means. In *The American Claimant* the protagonist says “I came away from England to get away from artificial forms...and here you have got the too” (Twain, *The American*, 43).

Steinbeck, like other American fiction writers, inherited the tendency of critical evaluation and analysis of the claim of the American state as well as the ability to see through the lie of the myth of America from Mark Twain. His novels have often been criticised for their political discourse and a propensity for sermonizing, but the political discourse and the sermons do highlight the fact that
Steinbeck was not one to be fooled by the Ideological State Apparatus of the American state. In fact, his novels prove how clearly Steinbeck understood the game plan of the American ruling class and their agents amongst the American intelligentsia. Through his political discourse he propounds a theory of hegemonic control not very different from the one propounded by Gramsci in *Prison Notebooks*. It may be worthwhile to note here that Gramsci prison notes were discovered and published much after the publication of *To a God Unknown, The Grapes of Wrath, In Dubious Battle, The Winter of Our Discontent, The Pearl* and even *The Pastures of Heaven*:

*Pastures of Heaven* may not appear to exemplify Steinbeck’s projection of the hegemonic control of the American ruling class over American society. Apparently it is a novel detailing the misfortunes and personal calamities faced by a small community living in idyllic setting in a valley. Yet this small community was intended to project the universal vision of Steinbeck and to represent American society at large. In one of his letters to Mavis McIntosh Steinbeck explains his purpose in writing *Pastures of Heaven*. “I think I would like to write the story of this whole valley, of all the little towns and all the farms and ranches in the wilder hills. I can see how I would I like to do it so that it would be the valley of the world” (Steinbeck, Elaine ed., 73).

*Pastures of Heaven* is at least a political fulfilment of this purpose. This apparently single tale of twenty families living quietly in pastures of heaven with little communication with the outer world is structured with double irony, and the irony extends beyond the plot of the novel and encompasses entire America. Like America,
the valley named Pastures of Heaven is conceived in sin in so much as it was discovered by Spanish booty hunters chasing some escaped native slaves. Hence the name itself becomes ironical; heaven conceived in sin, joy made possible by the misfortune and sufferings of others. Such a place cannot remain peaceful and joyous for long. Hence misfortune strikes the families living in the pastures one after the other apparently for no objective calls.

The situation of the discovery of the place has two aspects detailing the inception and growth of America. The group of persons being chased is a group of escaped slaves who are natives. So it brings into focuses the attitude towards the native Indians as well as the question of slavery. Both these chapters in the history of America have been discussed at length from various points of view and there is little one can add to the existing body of work on these subjects, neither it is the purpose of the present thesis. Suffice it to say that the land of opportunity, of liberty, of equality pounded the opportunities of liberty and happiness of the working class and the less resourceful into ground beginning with the dawn of its history, and the empire that controls the world has been fed and brought up by the blood of native Indians and the Black slaves. To a casual onlooker America might appear to be the land where dreams materialise and where misfortunes and frustrations are replaced by happiness and fulfilment, but Steinbeck knew that all this resourcefulness and plenty is a fasasm that conceals the privations, the frustrations, the pain and sufferings of the marginalised sections of the society. The passer-by is so awestruck by the grand beauty of the place that the fates of the people residing there escape their attention. Not only the casual observer and the passer-by, but even the residents for the most part fail to understand the factors that cause their sufferings and their misfortunes and blame it on fate or
nature or some supernatural factors. Worse still, at times they end up blaming some of their own, who are equally at the mercy of the forces beyond their control for their hardships and sufferings. If analysed from this perspective, the *Pastures of Heaven* indeed becomes a microcosm of American state at large, just as Steinbeck had intended.

*To A God Unknown* is a title that encapsulates Steinbeck's perception and understanding of American system. Who or what is this Unknown God? This definitely is not the God of Christianity because 'He' is not unknown, and 'He' is not a God but 'The God.' The God in the title of this novel are the forces and agencies that control the perceptions, feelings, thoughts and ideas, responses, reactions and lives of the people without revealing themselves to the naked eye; hence remaining unknown and mysterious factors beyond the comprehension of the masses. Thus the people continue living their lives as they are required to live by the masters and yet the illusion of liberty and of free will is maintained. That is the case with the protagonist of *To A God Unknown*, Joseph Wayne.

Wayne's decision to chart his own territory is apparently practical and logical. The family is multiplied while the land is not. So, when he decides to leave his home and family and develop a ranch of his own elsewhere, it is apparently the attitude of an enterprising soul who wants to grow and expand. At another level Wayne's desire to grow and expand is the individual expression of the collective unconscious of American society focused on growth and expansion even if it entails trampling upon the happiness of others and upon human relationships that have taken generations to acquire a venerable position in society. Ignoring the collective happiness and collective well-being for totally personal and selfish happiness and well-being goes
against the gain of humankind. And one has to pay a heavy price for it. Although Wayne achieves his goal and gains prosperity, he is guilt ridden and is haunted by the ghosts of the past and from which he has severed his links. The tree on which the ghost of the guilt resides symbolises a natural and pagan life, a life of minor needs and a joy of sharing whatever you have with the entire family and community.

That life has long been lost under pressures of capitalist mode of production where production has been transformed from an individual to a social activity, while the product of that social activity has been appropriated by individuals for their personal and selfish gains. This is the exact reverse of the earlier situation when production was individual while the product of that process was social:

Concentration of the means of production, hitherto scattered, into great workshops. As a consequence, their transformation from individual to social means of production - a transformation which does not, on the whole, affect the form of exchange. The old [feudal] forms of appropriation remain in force. The capitalist appears. In his capacity as owner of the means of production, he also appropriates the products and turns them into commodities. Production has become a social act. Exchange and appropriation continue to be individual acts, the acts of individuals. The social product is appropriated by the individual capitalist (Engels, n.page. n.d.).

Wayne begins very logical and at the comparative modest note, at this stage he is very subdued and respectful towards his father, putting forward his point of view in pushed tones:
"There won’t be enough in the land now, sir," he said

The old man gathered his shawl of shepherd’s plaid about his thin straight shoulders. His voice was gentle, made for the ordering of simple justice. "What do you wish to complain of, Joseph?"

“You’ve heard that Benjy has gone courting, sir? Benjy will be married when the spring comes; and in the fall there will be a child, and in the next summer another child. The land doesn’t stretch, sir. There won’t be enough” (Steinbeck, *To a God*, 1).

Nobody can find fault with Wayne’s logic and his point of view at this stage. But after leaving his family he gets caught up in his desire of spending his holdings, extending the boundaries of his possessions and in that all-consuming process his contact, consequently relationship with his family is reduced to zero. All respect for relationships evaporates, and Wayne is reduced to a dehumanised, almost mechanical entity whose only ambition and function is to multiply and expand his land holdings. Now this expansion drive has nothing to do with practical needs, it has acquired a life and will of its own and Wayne has become its slave and instrument. This is exactly what had happened with America during nineteenth century. Arguments and logic for the demand to open the territories by the ruling class were driven by self-interest and this self-interest was put forward as common interest so consistently that the American public was convinced of its veracity with the result that the little resistance was put up and the territories were de-reserved and opened for White settlers. That was a time when the slogan ‘Go west my boy and grow with the country’ fired the imagination of an entire generation of young Americans, and the westward expansion of White settlers became so rapid that the territories of the Red Indians were reduced
to insignificant small islands and barren pieces of land. When the entire US became too small to satisfy the megalomaniacal streak in the American ruling class they started looking towards South America and later other parts of the world for expansion. Monroe Doctrine of 1823 became the Bible of American foreign policy and Cuba, Mexico, China, Angola, Chile, Philippines and later Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries in the Middle East fall prey to this megalomania of American imperialists. Even so American expansion is yet to reach its limit and America has been eyeing the skies for quite some time:

The militarisation of space did not originate in the Bush administration. Clinton’s Space Command called for “dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investment,” much in the way armies and navies did in earlier years. The United States must therefore develop “space-based strike weapons enabling the application of precision force from, to, and through space.” Such forces will be needed, US intelligence and the Space Command agreed, because “globalization of the world economy” will lead to a “widening economic divide” and “deepening economic stagnation, political instability, and cultural alienation,” thus provoking unrest and violence among the “have-nots,” much of it directed against the United States. The space program fell within the framework of the officially announced Clinton doctrine that the United States is entitled to resort to “unilateral use of military power” to ensure uninhibited access to key markets, energy supplies, and strategic resources (Chomsky, Failed, 11).
It is the law of nature, and even of capitalist economy, that everything comes with a price tag; Wayne must pay for his decisions and actions. Nor does the past ever die, even when it is over it keeps overshadowing the present and the future. So after the death of their father, Wayne’s brother comes to live with him and Wayne on learning about the death of his father is so consumed by guilt along with the horror of the past incidence of his brother Thomas’s action and later on the murder of his youngest brother Benjy, that he becomes incapable of taking logical and practical decisions and control imperceptibly slides into the hands of his brother who finally decides to cut down the tree that has become the symbol of all the lost sensibilities for Wayne. On seeing the dying tree Wayne slits his wrist since the anchor of his life has disappeared. If Steinbeck is to be believed, that is the fate waiting for America. The American society is by degrees losing its sanity with mindless, random crimes like random shootouts becoming more frequent by the day; all such crimes are attributed to the pressures of modern life. It is almost like society committing suicide. The situation is ironical in that the country that projects itself as a controlling force for the entire world, and has assumed the self-proclaimed status of universal policeman, as well as powers of intervening in any conflict in any corner of the world cannot put its own house in order. Mark Twain in A Connecticut Yankee in the Court of King Arthur had predicted a similar fate for America. In that novel, the Yankee is surrounded by the corpses of the ‘Enemies’ he has killed, with the resultant stench of the decomposing dead bodies making life impossible for him.

*In Dubious Battle* paints a rather bleak picture of America. The novel denies the possibility of revolution and an end to injustice, inequality and travesty of freedom as most of the critics have an opposite point of view in regards to the novel:
Thus one Marxist critic of *In Dubious Battle* called it the most life like and satisfying proletarian novel of the 1930s. The label is false if used in the conventional sense of term since the novel does not seek to promote the cause of revolution, but it indicates the partisan nature of Steinbeck’s chosen setting—any fiction that dealt with the labour activities in the depression and stopped short of opposing it might incur such a label (Bogardus, 86).

By the beginning of the Second World War, the ruling class in America had mastered the art of deceit, of camouflaging their intentions by projecting the most anti-people policies and actions as pro-people and pro-America. The interests of the ruling class had come to be believed as the interests of the nation, anybody questioning the policies and actions of the state were branded as anti-America and anti-national.

At another level, market economy lacking in all human emotions and sensibility had become the mainstay of policy making at the level of the state and its governing bodies. Moreover, the fassad started showing signs of wear and tear, and whenever the dichotomy between proclamations and actions became too apparent to go unnoticed, the state would resolve to a sudden change in its goal and make huge proclamations in order to erase its misdeeds from public memory:

The famed ‘American exceptionalism’ merits some skepticism; the image of righteous exceptionalism appears to be close to universal. Also close to universal is the responsibility of the educated classes to endorse with due solemnity the sincerity of the high-minded principles pro-claimed by leaders, on the basis of no evidence apart from their
declarations, though it is often conceded that their actions systematically refute their noble visions. We then face a puzzling paradox, which is miraculously resolved in the United States by proclaiming a sudden ‘change of course’-an event that takes place every few years, effacing inappropriate history as we march on to a glorious future. One of its constant themes is the dedication to bring justice and freedom from a suffering world, recently resurrected as the driving passion for “democracy pro-motion” (Chomsky, Failed, 105).

The people were only too ready to accept state propaganda and proclamations as facts even in the absence of the least shreds of evidence. Such total hegemonic control of ruling class and its tool, the state, had made the possibility of revolution very sleek because it had led to lethargy and divisions within the working class movements. The disarray in the working class movement was projected as the strength and power of America. The Ideological State Apparatus at the disposal of the ruling class with its all its pervasive mental prisons in American society granted such control over the minds of the people of the working class that they believed, felt, perceived and acted the way they were required to believe, feel, perceive and act by the masters.

Jim, the protagonist of In Dubious Battle comes to the apple plantations in California at least partly because of his disillusionment with the situation of class struggle and working class movement in the industrial sector. Nothing was happening there as if nothing was required to happen. Day in and day out it was business as usual with nobody even noticing, let alone fighting against, the abominable conditions in which the working class was forced to live and work. Jim had probably hoped that the
situation in the agrarian sector would be different and initially the situation appears to be different.

There is Anderson, the son of an orchard owner who has leaning towards left; he appears to work against the interest of his own class when he sides with the striking orchard workers and gives them safe passage. There is Harry Nilson who inducts Jim into the party and who seems very clear headed in his perception of the prevailing situation:

“Well, it's a bunch of bunk; but here something that isn't bunk. You win a strike two ways, because the men put up a steady fight and because public sentiment comes to over your side. Now most of this valley belongs to few guys. That means the rest of the people don't own much of anything. The few owners either have to pay'em or lieto'em. Those cops out in the road are special deputies, just working stiffs with a star and a gun and a two-weeks' job. I thought I'd try and sound 'em out; try and find out how they feel about the strike. I guess how they feel is how the bosses told 'em to feel. But I might get a line on 'em, anyway” (Steinbeck, In Dubious, 148-149).

Here, Harry is revealing his class consciousness, his understanding of the fundamentals of class struggle and his understanding of how hegemonic control of the ruling class works. The orchard workers go on a strike to improve their working conditions. Initially the strike appears promising, and it seems that it will bear fruit. Jim is undoubtedly excited, but slowly it becomes evident that the ruling class is too firmly entrenched and too secure and resourceful to be shaken by the workers strike. They have their ability and their resource to sit out the storm, whereas the situation of
the workers is too precarious to continue with the strike for any length of time. The Ideological State Apparatus is working quietly, and quietly forcing the friends of the working class to change their perceptions and alter their course of action. Hence Anderson finally goes to the fold of his class and turns his back upon the workers when they need him the most. Even the workers themselves can be deceived into betraying their class. So Mac debunks his class and goes over to the class enemies in his lust of power and money. If the Ideological State Apparatus does not work decisively the ruling class can always seek the aid of Repressive State Apparatus. When the strike trudges on, the armed forces are called in and they cracked upon the striking workers, eliminate the leaders of the strike including Jim, and force the workers to accept defeat and fall in line.

This may be a depressing ending for the novel, but it faithfully reflects the condition of American society. By the second quarter of the twentieth century the capitalist class in America had amassed enough power from the domestic market as well as markets beyond American borders through its imperialist adventures in China, Cuba, Philippines, China, and some other Latin American countries to negate the possibility of any success for revolution:

The ‘universalizing tendency of capital,’ transferring the objective condition of production to the plane of global interchanges, within the framework of the international division of labor and the world market, distinguishes the capital system ‘from previous stages of production.’ Since, however, the conditions of production are as a result outside the particular industrial enterprise—outside even the most gigantic transnational corporations and the state monopolies—capital’s
‘universalizing tendency’ turns out to be very mixed blessing indeed. For while on the one hand it creates the genuine potentiality of human emancipation, on the other hand it represents the greatest the greatest possible of all complications—implying the danger of even totally destructive collisions—in that the very necessary condition of production and control happen to be outside, thus, nightmarishly everywhere and nowhere. In view of that, the biggest nightmare would be to expect that the ‘invisible hand’ should sort out all of the chaotically interlocking contradictions and destructive antagonism of the globally intertwined capital system when it failed to do what it was supposed to do, despite the boundless confidence conferred upon it by Adam Smith, Kant, Hegel and many others, on much a more modest scale in past centuries (Meszaros, 57-58).

The Pearl, one of the Steinbeck’s most popular works, can be read as a parable of the American Dream. All that this mother of all fiction was meant to achieve, and did achieve was transformation of labour into commodity which itself is stolen from the owners, that is, the working class by the ruling class through the use of Ideological State Apparatus and Repressive State Apparatus. The pearl that Kino finds through his labour by diving into the sea does not make him rich and affluent as he had hoped. It only turns him into a target of forces which he cannot even properly understand let alone control and fight against. When Kino tries to sell it at a fair price all the traders in the town conspire together to deprive him of that fair price of the fruit of his labour and when he tries to take it to some place where he can set his own price for it, he is chased by booty hunters. “When he tries to sell the pearl, however, the buyers try to
cheat him. When he refuses to sell, he is beaten and tortured” (French, 138). Vicious forces of society all unleashed, he and his family are tracked by armed trackers and in the process of escapement from the fury of the pearl Coyotito is killed. Finally Kino comes to the conclusion that this is the only way society is organised, and it shall not be possible for him to get his due. He does not want others to reap the rewards of his labour and so he throws the pearl back into sea out of desperation. “...he is plagued and tortured by would be robbers and assassins, and he ultimately hurls the pearl back into the sea” (French, 138). The structure of the story turns the novel into a commentary on the workings of a capitalist society.

Then there is the role of the doctor. At one level the doctor represents the colonial masters, but at another level the doctor can be taken as the symbol of the ruling class. The affluence and luxurious life of the doctor derive from the working class masses, but when Kino approaches him for the treatment of his son he refuse any help unless he is paid for it:

This doctor was not of his people. This doctor was of a race which for nearly four hundred years had beaten and starved and robbed and despised Kino's race, and frightened it too, so that the indigene came humbly to the door. And as always when he came near to one of this race, Kino felt weak and afraid and angry at the same time (Steinbeck, *Pearl*, 11-12).

That is how Kino falls in the vicious circle. In order to get his son treated he must sell the pearl as quickly as possible, but the traders sense his crisis and refuse to give him fair price. That is how a capitalist society is organised and because of it Kino becomes the prey of the capitalist class. This situation is not acceptable to Kino, but
his resistance creates panic amongst his own class because his difference is not just personal. "Kino has defied not the pearl buyers, but the whole structure, the way of life" (French, 139). The working class must sell their labour to avail of the basic necessities of life because that is the only saleable commodity they have, but because of their need they are forced to sell the commodity of their labour at a price determined by the buyer, that is, the capitalist class. If they refuse to sell their labour at a price which is not decided by them, they are deprived of the necessities of life, their home and hearth, their health and life; the very things for which they were selling labour as commodity in the first place, which are actually the part Great American Dream.

A similar situation forms the main theme of *The Grapes of Wrath*, but the exposition of the class structure of American society and the role played by the middle class is more direct and didactic in this novel. It is because of this directness and didacticism that the novel has been criticised as mere propaganda and not literature in the true sense. The farmers of Oklahoma cannot be allowed to remain more or less independent tillers of the land, because on the one hand the land is required by the corporate sector for maximizing the profit, and on the other hand cheap labour is required by the corporations which own the huge plantations in California. Hence the moment nature stops favouring the marginal farmers and they fail to pay their loans because of the destruction of the crops in the absence of rains, the banks close in upon them aided and abetted by the state. The farmers do not have ownership rights over the land, so technically the land is the property of the state which transfers its right over the land to corporations on the pretext of better management and financial inputs resulting in better yields and bigger profits. The
farmers are helpless victims. They cannot protect their interests, nor can they hurt the interests of the banks because a bank is not a person; in fact it is not even run by human beings. The bank is an inhuman and soulless organism that feeds upon profit and keeps growing and becoming more profound as the profits maximise:

But-you see, a bank or a company can’t do that, because those creatures don’t breathe air, don’t eat side-meat. They breathe profits; they eat the interest on money. If they don’t get it, they die the way you die without air, without side-meat. It is a sad thing, but it is so. It is just so (Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 34).

Of course the plan and intentions of this monster, the bank is put into practice by human beings, but they are only tools, not masters of the monster. So the farmers have no way of venting and expressing their anger and frustration. They may kill the driver of the tractor sent by the bank to expel them from their land, but if they do so, they would be killing one of themselves without hurting the interests of the bank in anyway:

“It’s not me. There’s nothing I can do. I’ll lose my job if I don’t do it. And look—suppose you kill me? They’ll just hang you, but long before you’re hung there’ll be another guy on the tractor, and he’ll bump the house down. You’re not killing the right guy” (Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 40).

So the farmers are left with no choice but to leave their land to the bank and move to California with the hope, that there they can at least sell their labour as commodity in order to save their lives. The farmers turned labourers must be kept
hungry and in utter desolation to force them to sell the only commodity that they own as cheaply as possible:

Burn coffee for fuel in the ships. Burn corn to keep warm, it makes a hot fire. Dump potatoes in the rivers and place guards along the banks to keep the hungry people from fishing them out. Slaughter the pigs and bury them, and let the putrescence drip down into the earth.

There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation. There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolise. There is a failure here that topples all our success. The fertile earth, the straight tree rows, the sturdy trunks, and the ripe fruit. And children dying of pellagra must die because a profit cannot be taken from an orange. And coroners must fill in the certificate, died of malnutrition, because the food must rot. It must be forced to rot.

The people come with nets to fish for potatoes in the river, and the guards hold them back; they come in rattling cars to get the dumped oranges, but the kerosene is sprayed. And they stand still and watch the potatoes float by, listen to the screaming pigs being killed in a ditch and covered with quick-lime, watch the mountains of oranges slop down to a putrefying ooze; and in the eyes of the people there is the failure; and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage (Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 365).

*The Grapes of Wrath* begins with the image of the turtle crossing the road, knocked upside down by a truck, seemingly helpless, but it has perseverance and it...
finally manages to relieve itself, turns back upon its feet and continues with the journey. The novel ends with the incident of a young lactating woman, breast feeding a dying old man to keep him alive. The image and the episode both symbolise the grit and the strength of the working class; the seemingly powerless class surviving at the mercy and the will of the ruling class has a dynamics of its own that keeps it alive and kicking, and the dialectics of history favour the working class because in order to maximise profits, the ruling class must keep the working class in growing numbers through various means as is done in the beginning of the novel by evacuating the farmers from their land and turning them into labourers. The ruling class must also keep the working class in a state of penury just short of death in order to buy their labour as cheaply as possible. The ever-growing numbers and everlasting penury of the working class is actually the doom of the ruling class because at some point it will not be possible for the ruling class to control this huge mass of humanity who have nothing to lose except their chains:

And the companies, the banks worked at their own doom and they did not know it. The fields were fruitful, and starving men moved on the roads. The granaries were full and the children of the poor grew up rachitic, and the pustules of pellagra swelled on their sides. The great companies did not know that the line between hunger and anger is a thin line. And money that might have gone to wages went for gas, for guns, for agents and spies, for blacklists, for drilling. On the highways the people moved like ants and searched for work, for food. And the anger began to ferment (Steinbeck, Grapes, 297).
In all the novels discussed above the central concern of Steinbeck remains the pathetic condition of the working class and other marginalised sections of the society which together form an overwhelming majority. The ruling class and the classes that serve as their tools including the professionals, the government servants, the political formations do not comprise more than ten percent of the entire population. How then it is that these ten percent of the people are able to control ninety percent of the population? This question becomes even more disturbing when one realises that the power of the ruling class and their wealth is created by ninety percent of the people who are exploited, tortured and starved by the ruling class. When Steinbeck confronts this question he cannot escape the realisation that the hegemonic control of the ruling class over the hearts and minds, perceptions and reactions, feelings and actions of the masses is total and absolute and that is why the half-hearted attempts that the working class make in changing the situation are doomed to failure. In *The Grapes of Wrath* the displaced farmers cannot change the situation even if they kill the agents who come to take possession of their land, because the real forces which decide their dispossession are beyond their reach. Hence the dispossessed have no option but to turn into labour and serve the purposes of the fruits cartels of California. Similarly Kino after all his struggles fail to ensure due benefit from the pearl which rightfully belongs to him and he must throw it back into the sea if he does not want it to fall in the hands of the enemy. Joseph Wayne cannot bear the burden of his guilt and he must destroy himself because he has dared to fall out of line and follow his own dreams instead of accepting the dictates of the society. In *In Dubious Battle* the working class cannot sustain their struggle beyond a point which is comfortable for the plantation owners and they must and accept defeat although they are better organised and in possession of theoretical principles of class struggle.
Steinbeck’s novels present a dark picture of America where the situation is not likely to change for the better in foreseeable future; the hegemonic control of the ruling class through Ideological and Repressive State Apparatus is too absolute for it. Still the novels are not cynical despite the successive failures of the working class and the comfortable position of the ruling class because Steinbeck’s experience had taught him that the working class shall continue with the struggles despite all failures. The instinct for survival is too strong to let them give up for good. The ending of The Grapes of Wrath symbolises Steinbeck’s vision. Beaten and on the run, the young lactating woman, Rose of Sharon, breast feeds a dying old man to give him a chance to live. This motherly instinct, this expression of Eros, the life instinct, is the greatest strength of the working class and the marginalised people. It is this instinct for survival that shall enable them to continue with their struggles and their efforts to claim what is rightfully their own. One never knows when history might create conditions conducive for the revolution; the working class is aware and ready to fight, Steinbeck called it phalanx. More of it later.
Works Cited:


  <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/ch03.htm>


Chapter-4

Disintegration of Human Values
Contrary to popular perception human values are neither universal nor static, even the origins of values that define a society are shrouded in myths and folk tales. Values only are one of many components of culture. Various societies during different epochs live with different value systems. Sometimes values evolve with time through the experience of life, while sometimes values materialise almost overnight through various agencies of law and cartelisation, yet it cannot be denied that like any other cultural component values too play a substantial role in sustaining an economic system, and, by extension, for the class that holds power at a given moment in history. Whenever economic system changes, and with it the ruling class, value system too undergoes a transformation to sub serve the interests and the needs of the emerging economic system and the ruling class. M Rokeach in *In Nature of Human Values* says that “The value concept... [is] able to unify the apparently diverse interests of all the science concerned with human behavior.”

By unifying the diverse interests of all the signs concerned with human behaviour, value served the interests of the ruling class. Values do not only unify and focus the study of the human behaviour; they also give the power of controlling human behaviour. Anything that gains currency as value system becomes unquestionable and practically unchallengeable. Hence the ruling class at times manipulate the exerting value system and subtly modifies it to save its interests, or it evolves new values to achieve its aims.

Whatever posture a ruling class and its agents might adopt, the primary purpose of what may be called the ulterior motive of any value system is to create a homogenous society, because a homogenous society in which all the individuals,
group of individuals or institutions work with the same or similar purposes have the same or similar aims and ambitions and the same direction, and finally they are easy to control, whereas a heterogeneous society with varied and divergent purposes goals, aims, and ambitions and multiple directions does not easily submit itself to control and manipulations. Hence all individuals, groups, classes, and institutions that refuse to identify with what is grandiosely called ‘National Identity’ must either be eliminated or crushed into subservience.

Whenever any economic system undergoes transformation, that society experiences social, political, and cultural upheavals, America too experienced such upheavals during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. The country was supposedly born of a dream of freedom, equality, and fraternity which would eventually lead to the realisation of full human potential. This dream was later formalised as the Great American Dream, but the dream was as much a myth and a hoax as most values that America profess by including democracy. American fiction writers beginning with Mark Twain saw through this hoax and have constantly worked towards exposing the myths of the Great American Dream. Steinbeck too occupies prominent place amongst such fiction writers, apart from fiction writers thinkers like Noam Chomsky have also tried to burst the myth:

That brings up a forth issue that should deeply concern American, and the world: that sharp divide between public opinion and public policy, one of the reasons for fear, which cannot be casually be put aside, that the American system as a whole is in real trouble, that it is heading in a direction that spells the end of its historic values of equality, liberty and meaningful democracy (Chomsky, Failed, 4).
The ‘Historic Values’ those Chomsky talks of, values like equality, liberty, and meaningful democracy never really existed in the country. These values were always a way of hoodwinking the people in order to make them fall in line and not to question the policies of the government formulated to safeguard the interests of the ruling class.

The phenomenon of value systems evolving and entrenching themselves with the blessings of the ruling class is as old as human civilisation itself. During the rise of Greek empire, nation and state were considered two different entities, with nation comprising of the elite ruling class, while the state consisted of all the people living within the domain of the Greek empire with language, culture, religion and way of life different from the elites of the nation. This dichotomy created two different classes, the nation exercising hegemonic power over the state. The culture and values of the nation were supposedly higher and more refined than the culture and values of the state; hence they enjoyed a privileged position. Overtime the underprivileged values and culture of the state got overshadowed and eliminated by the privileged values and culture of the nation, but the relationship between the higher and lower values, the values of the coloniser and colonised is sometimes more complex than this. The privileged culture and values too are ‘polluted’ by the ‘coarse, vulgar, and unrefined’ culture and the values of the underprivileged because the ultimate aim of every ruling class is to create as much homogeneity of thought patterns, perceptions, understanding, reactions to external stimuli and values as possible. The phenomenon of homogenisation of culture and values is markedly evident at international level with the globalisation of economy:
All values, in fact, are irrevocably poisoned and diseased as soon as they are allowed in contact with the colonized race. The customs of the colonized people, their traditions, and their myths—above all, their myths—are the very sign of that poverty of spirit and of their constitutional depravity (Fanon, 42).

The globalisation of economy is driven and lead by the United States. It is the American culture, values, thought pattern and way of life that are gaining in privilege all over the world. It is an irony mostly ignored and misunderstood that America which projects itself as the custodian and saviour of liberty, democracy and peace for the entire world is the country that has denied these values not only to the peoples of Cuba, Philippines, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and many other countries of Asia, Africa and South America but also to its own people. The United States is the most important and influential founding member of the United Nations Organisation and a signatory to the ‘universal declaration(s),’ of which the United States government at the behest of the corporate sector has trampled upon the rights and interests of the working class ever since the advent of capitalist economy and continues to do so. All organs of the state including the legislature, the judiciary, and the various organs of the executive joined together to break the joint strike of the railway workers and the textile union in 1863. This phenomenon has continued in the United States even after it signed the universal declaration. Chomsky underlines this point when he says:

...in the US, technically, everyone has the right to join a trade union. But the reality is quite different. In 1992, the International Labour Organization, which rarely has an unkind word for its paymasters, called on the US to conform to international labor standards on
“permanent replacement workers,” which were then violated only by the US and South Africa in the industrial world. “Permanent replacement workers,” otherwise known as scabs, are those brought into replace sacked unionized workers to break strikes: international labour law condemns the practice, but it is condoned in the US. There was an article in Business Week last week describing some of the consequences of the American state’s vicious anti-labour activities. Illegal firings for union organizing have gone up six fold, it reckoned, in the past 25 years. In particular, thousands of union organizers have been illegally fired since the start of Ronald Reagan’s presidency in 1981 (Chomsky, On The US, n.page.).

Even the media, print and electronic, the so called fourth pillar of democracy, which supposedly upholds and protects the values of freedom of speech and of free flow of information, has joined with the ruling class in subverting these very components of democracy. In fact the media is owned and controlled by the corporate sector in order to own and control the entire state apparatus. It was Mark Twain who first understood and underlined the big lie that media lives by in his essay “A Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy,” more recently Chomsky has theorized about the class interests and attitudes of the media. He says:

In short, the major media-particularly, the elite media that set the agenda, that others generally follow-are corporations “selling” privileged audiences to other businesses. It would hardly come as a surprise if the picture of the world they present were to reflect the perspectives and interests of the sellers, the buyers, and the product.
Concentration of ownership of the media is high and increasing. Furthermore, those who occupy managerial positions in the media, or gain status within them as commentators, belong to the same privileged elites, and might be expected to share the perceptions, aspirations, and attitudes of their associates, reflecting their own class interests as well. Journalists entering the system are unlikely to make their way unless they conform to these ideological pressures, generally by internalizing the values; it is not easy to say one thing and believe another, and those who fail to conform will tend to be weeded out by familiar mechanisms (Chomsky, *Illusion*, 19).

With time and with various ideological apparatuses, the hegemonic and ideological control of the American ruling class has become so absolute and pervasive that they do not mind the voices of dissent, the voices if such thinkers as Chomsky and Fanon, and of the marginalised sections of society. For they know that such minor and scattered dissent shall not create any dent in the power structure of the society. As Fanon points out:

A new generation came on the scene, which changed the issue. With unbelievable patience, its writers and poets tried to explain to us that our values and the true facts of their lives did not hang together, and that they could neither reject them completely nor yet assimilate them. By and large, what they were saying was this: “You are making us into monstrosities; your humanism claims we are at one with the rest of humanity but your racist methods set us apart.” Very much at our ease, we listened to them all; colonial administrators are not paid to read
Hegel, and for that matter they do not read much of him, but they do not need a philosopher to tell them that uneasy consciences are caught up in their own contradictions. They will not get anywhere; so, let us perpetuate their discomfort; nothing will come of it but talk. If they were, the experts told us, asking for anything at all precise in their wailing, it would be integration. Of course, there is no question of granting that; the system, which depends on overexploitation, as you know, would be ruined. But it’s enough to hold the carrot in front of their noses, they’ll gallop all right. As to a revolt, we need not worry at all; what native in his senses would go off to massacre the fair sons of Europe simply to become European as they are? (Fanon, 8-9).

The American ruling class has enlisted the support of the media and of the elite thinkers and writers since the very beginning. So when they were campaigning for the opening up of the territories to gain access to the natural resources therein, articles and books were written about a horrible situation arising out of natural resources running out in near future, how this situation would spell doom for the entire American society, and how important it was that the industry should be allowed to explore for natural resources in areas which were beyond their access till then. In more recent history ‘End of History’ was written just after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of uni-polar world with American corporate sector pushing for globalisation of economy in search of new, hitherto inaccessible markets. Simlarly ‘Clash of Civilisation’ appeared just before the American invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and the United States government declaring ‘War on Terror.’
Though all economic systems aim for homogeneity in society through and for controlling of the minds and hearts of the masses, the capitalist system has achieved the apparently impossible goal of harmonising homogeneity with individualism. So in a capitalist society all the individual members have similar aims and ambitions, perceptions and reactions, thoughts and feelings, yet every member of society is expected to fend for themselves even at the cost of others. Collectivism is discouraged, formation of groups and unions is perceived as a threat to the well being of the society except when these groups and organisations serve the interests of the ruling class by creating divisions among the masses. The result of this canonisation of individualism is the disintegration of such social units as family, and dilution of such values as commitment and collective sympathy. It also creates an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust in society because of which every individual tends to be wary of their neighbours and co-workers. So, many long standing values and features of the society that survived the onslaught of the ruling class through the ages have fallen victim to the capitalist economy probably because the ruling class in capitalist economy wields far more repressive and ideological power than any other ruling class in history and is far more better organised, and the power is far more streamlined than any of their precursors.

Like any other American novelist, Steinbeck too has portrayed and taken up issues with this aspect of contemporary American society. Most of his novels study the effects of disintegration of family, dilution of the values of commitment and collective sympathy, individualism leading to vagabondism and uprooting of entire communities from their land upon the lives of common people. Let us begin with *The Pastures of Heaven*. The very structure of the novel symbolises the promotion of
individualism in American society as discussed above which is much unreal and therefore painful:

"...Steinbeck seems to have discovered how much individuals were influenced by their unrealized dreams and desires, which he illustrates through each of the portraits he paints of the book's characters" (Railsback, 270).

The novel is more like a collection of short stories, the only connecting thread of which is the place. Each story deals with one individual or one household, very few characters are repeated from one story to another and every story tells a different tale. This structure of the novel creates a scene of isolation and lack of collectivism. All the individuals and households appear to be lost in the quagmire of their separate individual problems. They face their problems and fight against them or succumb to them individually with nobody else taking any interest. This isolation and loneliness leads to severe psychological problems with characters like John Battle and Molly Morgan losing their sanity. In the background of these stories of pain and sorrow, oss and madness the name of the place Pastures of Heaven is as ironical as the concept of the Great American Dream. Both are equally misleading and mythical, both are equally conceived in sin against humanity. Pastures of Heaven is the result of slavery and the heartless exploitation of the unfortunate and marginalised White Americans, diagrammatically it is the result of the lust for wealth, extremely inhuman decimation of the indigenous people, and inhuman exploitation not only of the unfortunate workers of America, but also of the world. So it can be safely argued that *The Pastures of Heaven* is a microcosm of America at large.
The theme of isolation is one of the most consistent themes in the works of Steinbeck. In *Of Mice and Men* for example every character is struggling with loneliness and isolation in one form or the other; the two lead characters George and Lennie have no families, no social circle worth speaking of, and not much of a background worth mentioning. They are displaced ranch workers who pop up in the beginning of the novel out of nowhere; they have nobody to fall back upon except each other. As it is, they together form one unit with each being the compliment of the other. Where Lennie is physically strong but mentally weak, George is mentally strong but physically weak; Lennie is the spendthrift while George is penny wise. Lennie has no idea about the consequences his actions might lead to; he is driven by his instinct. George on the other hand keeps advising him about the do's and don'ts of social behaviour and consistently tries to restrain him. Even this George and Lennie unit is destroyed towards the end of the novel when George is forced to kill Lennie in order to save him from a far more painful death. One can only imagine George's loneliness and isolation after Lennie is not there by his side to give him company and make him feel alive.

Candy, an old, retire ranch worker has no emotional anchor except his dog which too is killed by another ranch worker. He keeps worrying about his old age which is just around the corner when he will not be able to fend for himself with nobody to take care of him. The most malicious of all the characters, the boss' son Curly too is an isolated character, feared and hooted by everybody. He cannot even bond with his wife because of his inferiority complex that fuels his jealousy. His wife, seemingly very outgoing even to the extent of being flirtations, she is an extremely lonely woman deep down, because she cannot find companionship from her husband.
on the one hand, and because her dream of becoming a Hollywood star has been shattered on the other hand. There is another character Crook who cannot integrate with any other character because of racial prejudice since he is Black. Ever the location of the ranch, which is adjacent to a place called Soledad, which in Spanish means solitude, underlines the theme of isolation and loneliness in the novel.

The situation of isolation and loneliness and lack of any direction is at least partly a creation of the economic structure of society. The ranch is owned by a non-human entity, the company, with everybody else, including the boss being an employee. Everybody has to be answerable for the profitability of the enterprise and hence they develop a propensity for passing the buck. The dreams of the working class, though seemingly insignificant, are always beyond their reach because of the situation that prevails in society, particularly the strained inter-personal relationships. Along with an atmosphere of doubt and mistrust which bogs down all human relationship. It is because of this mistrust and lack of communication that Lennie was accused of attempted rape earlier, and this is the reason why he ends up killing Curly's wife. It is this situation that lashes George, Lennie, and Candy's dream of owning agricultural land and leading a happy life to pieces.

Unattainably of perfectly legitimate aims and dreams of the weaker sections of society is a significant thing of the novel. Nobody can find fault in George for dreaming of a piece of land which he can own and where he can assert his independence, nor can anybody call Lennie's desire for having rabbits on his agricultural farm which he can stroke to satisfy his instinct of stroking soft objects. Nothing is wrong with Candy's desire for a safe old age, nor is anything wrong with Crook's desire for a homestead where he can be his own boss and can be treated with
respect and dignity. It is the social and economic weakness of these characters and their vulnerability that makes apparently legitimate and insignificant dreams unattainable.

*The Pearl* is believed to tell the story of human greed, or to be a dramatization of the theories of Carl Jung. That may be so, but the novel studies the effects of market economy on the lives of marginalised people. The protagonist of the novel, Kino is a pearl diver in a comparatively less developed part of the world. Hierarchical restructuring of society has started taking shape in the town of La Paz, which the character of the doctor embodies. Greed taking precedence over human relationships too is the result of the economic restructuring of society. In order to pay the fees of the doctor for treating his son who has been stung by a scorpion, Kino wants to sell the huge pearl that he has found at the earliest. Sensing the crisis that Kino is facing all the pearl merchants of the town come together to deny him a fair price for the pearl. It is clear that the merchants forming the trading class want to cash in on Kino’s misfortune, driven by the God of market economy and profit. For them the values of the human relationships, of sympathy and pity have become secondary to the value of profit. The pearl has no inherent value; its value is decided by the need of the seller and the greed of the buyer. The greed of the traders and the resultant circumstances turn Kino into a murderer and now he has to deal with the sea of retribution from the law enforcing agencies. So Kino must uproot himself from his land and flee from the place that has been his home earlier this forthcoming situation has been predicted by Juan Tomas:

> It is hard to know,” he said. “We do know that we are cheated from birth to the overcharge on our coffins. But we survive. You have
defied not the pearl buyers, but the whole structure, the whole way of life, and I am afraid for you (Steinbeck, *Pearl*, 53).

On the way to the city he has to deal with and fight against trackers and booty hunters, and in the process his son is killed. The pearl, otherwise a valuable object, acquires negative value for Kino and turn into curse. What Steinbeck is trying to underline here is the fact that in a class based society driven by market economy and profit, nothing has inherent value and nothing is equally and similarly valuable for everybody. What value a thing possesses depends upon the class and the social position of the owner. So finally Kino must throw the pearl back into the sea in order to save the precarious position that he holds in society.

*The Grapes of Wrath*, the most celebrated and the most discussed novel not only of Steinbeck but perhaps of America, takes the bull of dissipation of human values under the pressure from corporate market driven economy by the horns. The novel opens with the land of Oklahoma farmers being occupied by the banks since they could not repay the loans because of the failed monsoon and the pressure of the Great Depression of the thirties. Loss of land is not only the loss of means of livelihood for these Okies; it is the loss of the roots, of the sense of belongingness, of community life, and of values of an entire pattern of life which they have been following for decades. All those values which make life understandable and hence peaceful and worthwhile are trampled under the bull dozers and tractors sent by the banks to dispossess the farmers. The entire community is reduced to rootless migratory labour, to nowhere people in search of nothing more than mere sustenance. An entire culture, an entire set of values, and a way of life is atomised by the atom bombs of the corporate economy. The opening of the novel also underlines the fact
that even in times of national crisis it is the weak and marginalised who lose whatever little possessions they have. The ruling class and their machinery of rule, the corporations and financial institutions, stand to gain in a big way from every crisis. The banks for example get possession and ownership of land worth far more than the partly debt than the farmers owed them. The gain of the ruling class does not stop here. The moment the banks move into take possession of the land, the entire region is flooded with pamphlets alluring the dispossessed farmers to the orange plantations of California with the promise of high wages and good life. The ploy succeeds, the dispossessed Okies throng to California, and then only they discover that all the promises made through the pamphlets were no more than blatant lies. Their only intention was to have a huge surplus of labour in order to reduce wages. Now they must perforce sell the only commodity at their disposal, that is, physical labour for as little as one time meal. The corporations and the financial institutions are not driven by any set of values except the aim of maximisation of profit. Hence stock piles of food are destroyed just to keep prices of food grains high and the working class on the verge of starvation. Human suffering, pain and misery turn into assets for the ruling class. On the one hand this situation provides then with cheap human labour thus maximising their profit, and on the other hand it creates a situation of rivalry and animosity within the working class, so that the chances of working class coming together as one body against the common enemy, the ruling class, are minimised. The influx of the dispossessed Oklahoma farmers parts the livelihood of the native Californian labour in jeopardy, and they are forced to resent the presence of the external elements. Familial relations and family values disintegrate all through the migration. This disintegration is made inevitable by the harsh conditions that are prevail en-route to California: the conditions of privation, hunger, and starvation to
such a point that everybody is forced to fend for themselves forgetting such values as friendship and family ties. Hence Al deserts his family without bothering to worry about their survival in his absence, and Connie deserts his wife Rose of Sharon who loses the future and spirit of humanity which is taking shape in her. So all long cherished values, which have been the means of survival for the human race all through the ages, values like brotherhood, motherhood, commitment to friend and family, fall victim to the market oriented economic dispensation. It seems that that human race has lost not only its past but even its future because there can be no future unless humanity behaves as humanity. All the weak and the unfortunate are now forced to live life from moment to moment and day to day forgetting the past and becoming oblivious to any sense of future:

And as the family group declines morally and economically, so the family unit itself breaks up. Grampa dies before they are out of Oklahoma and lies in a nameless grave; Granma is buried a pauper; Noah deserts the family; Connie deserts Rosasharn; the baby is born dead; Tom becomes a fugitive; Al is planning to leave as soon as possible; Casy is killed; and they are forced to abandon the Wilsons (Lisca, 306).

_The Grapes of Wrath_ does not present as bleak a picture as the foregoing discussion would suggest. The instinct for survival that robs mankind of humanity also ensures the survival of human values. It is this instinct for survival that makes the belligerent workers realise that the only hope of survival they have is sticking together and fighting for it. Mere drifting from one moment to another, and from one day to another cannot ensure even their survival, forget happiness and a worthwhile life. If
there are those who deserts their families and break ties of commitment, than there are those too who enter into new relationships and make new commitments. The friendship between Tom Joad and Jim Casy is a case in point. It is this instinct for survival that spawns trade union movements despite all oppressions. Friendship and commitment under such terrifying circumstances are far stronger than any other, so much so that Jim Casy takes upon himself the responsibility of the murder committed by Tom Joad unmindful of the consequences; and it is this instinct for survival that prompts Tom to promise Ma that no matter where he is, no matter under what circumstances, he shall remain an advocate of workers' rights and keep fighting for them. Rose of Sharon might have lost her baby, but the mother instinct survives, and she breast feeds a starving old man to ensure continuity of life. There is another positive effect of the condition that leads to disintegration of human values. The situation enhances the understanding of the working class and sharpens their perceptions. It is this projection of sharpening of perceptions and deepening of understanding that has led to charges of propaganda against Steinbeck. One character forced to sell all his belongings because of poverty says:

"Well, take it—all junk—and give me five dollars. You're not buying only junk, you're buying junked lives. And more—you'll see—you're buying bitterness" (Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 90).

At another point another character says:

"No—the stars are close and dear and I have joined the brotherhood of the worlds. And everything's holy—everything, even me" (Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 343).
This deep understanding is no less than a realisation of the brotherhood of the entire working class forged by common interest. Moreover, what the working class lose is not just the joy of life; they lose encumbrances like fear also:

How can you frighten a man whose hunger is not only in his own cramped stomach but in the wretched bellies of his children? You can’t scare him- he has known a fear beyond every other. (Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 248)

At another point Steinbeck writes:

This is the beginning-from “I” to “we.”

If you who own the things people must have could understand this, you might preserve yourself. If you could separate causes from results, if you could know that Paine, Marx, Jefferson, Lenin, were results, not causes, you might survive. But that you cannot know. For the quality of owning freezes you forever into “I,” and cuts you off forever from the “we.”(Steinbeck, *Grapes*, 158)

What Steinbeck is suggesting here is a very important insight: that even in terms of values, the ruling class loses far more than the working class. For working class the loss of values is more than compensated for, but for the ruling class it is a dead loss with nothing to take its place except certain material possessions and precarious power. Material possessions and power can be no compensation for human values and they by themselves cannot ensure survival. It is perhaps this imperishable attitude of human values, that Steinbeck calls the Great Human Soul of mankind.
Only the seemingly weak and the marginalised working class possess the great human soul of mankind, not the seemingly powerful ruling class.

*The Winter of Our Discontent*, critically less acclaimed than other major novels of Steinbeck, was still cited by the Swedish Academy during the Nobel Prize presentation and was treated at par with *The Grapes of Wrath*. This last novel of Steinbeck may be treated as his last work on American society and culture. It is probably the reason why he did not feel the need to write anything else during the seven years that he lived after the publication of *The Winter of Our Discontent*, even not attempting to capitalize on the attention that he received after the award of Nobel Prize for literature in 1962. The novel studies the effects of the degenerate social atmosphere characterized by corruption, dishonesty, materialization, bloated and unjustifiable ambition, deceit, and total breakdown of human values under the pressure of market driven economy upon otherwise honest individuals who have conserved personal and family values and integrity:

I arrived at home for the culmination of the TV scandal. Except as a sad and dusty episode, I am not deeply moved by the little earnest, cheating people involved, except insofar as they are symptoms of a general immortality which pervades every level of our national life and perhaps the life of the whole world. It is very hard to raise boys to love and respect virtue and learning when the tolls of success are chicanery, treachery, self-interest, laziness and cynicism or when charity is deductible, the court venal, the highest public official placid, vain, and slothful and illiterate. (Steinbeck, E, 653)
Ethan, the protagonist of the novel hails from an erstwhile aristocratic family whose fortunes have been lost because of the transformation of the economic system. and who is forced to work as clerk in a grocery store. Ethan has a very high sense of personal integrity and is honest to a fault. He comes under pressure from his family, who resent their lowly social status, and friends to adopt the ways of the world, and give up the values he has lived with thus far, in order to regain the lost status of his family. He at first resists such pressures, but eventually gives in and starts planning and scheming like any worldly wise man:

_The Winter of Our Discontent_, is the author’s most deliberate exploration of Arthurian themes in a contemporary setting, specially with the theme of wide spread immorality within a society, an immorality that saw itself as virtuous through the acceptance of ethical relativity, recreation, and rationalization, (George 174-177) and its rejection of “of such values as loyalty, courtesy, courage, and honor” (George, 5).

Ethan lives under the illusion that even while adopting the ways of the world he can still remain untouched by the corruption and moral decay of society. His fortunes and social status achieve a meteoric rise when he succeeds in getting the ownership of the store where he has been working as a clerk by scheming against the owner, and getting him arrested as illegal immigrant. His wealth and social influence increase manifold when his friend, in whose death Ethan had played an indirect role, gives ownership of a tract of land to him in his will. The entire situation is marked by a cruel irony in which Alfie and Danny bequeath the store and the land to him because of his honesty. The realization of his moral decay and that of his family
overtakes Ethan when he comes to know how his son has practiced deceit and
treachery in order to win a price and accompanying in glory without feeling abashed
and guilty in the least. He is now bogged down by unbearable guilt and thinks that
there is no way out for him from this quagmire of moral decay and corruption except
suicide. "... particularly at the end when realization strikes when the sins of the father
imitated by the son and suicide seems the only solution" (McElrath, 457). He is saved
from executing the irretrievable act of self-annihilation when he discovers the family
talisman in his pocket, which was slipped there quietly by his daughter.

*The Winter of Our Discontent* is significant not only because it is Steinbeck’s
last novel, but also because it is the only novel which does not have the social
backdrop of agrarian and rural society. Long Island is now a bustling town with
significant industrial activities accompanied by the operations of financial institutions
like banks. It is significant that Ethan blames the bank manager for the fall of the
fortunes of his aristocratic family, there by signifying that it is economic
transformation which is responsible for the disintegration of generations of values and
for absolute moral degradation. Ethan is surrounded by people who keep instigating
him to forget all personal values in order regain the lost social status of his family. His
decision to put his personal integrity, honesty and values on the back burner for a
while and to play alone with the modern culture and mind-set is the expression of his
desire to take revenge against the factors responsible for the downfall of his family.
That is probably why he plans to rob a bank, although he does not carry it to a
conclusion. After all it was the bank which had played a significant role in the loss of
the fortunes of the family. Steinbeck dramatises at length the process of Ethan’s
corruption and loss of his values by showing how his workmates advise him about the
ways of the world, and how his family keeps pestering him to give up the values that have become meaningless in the current social scenario. The entire novel exposes the Ideological State Apparatus at the disposal of the ruling class for controlling the minds, feelings, actions, perceptions and attitudes of individual members of society.

Like in *The Grapes of Wrath* in *The Winter of Our Discontent* too there is something in human nature that refuses to be corrupted; there are values that refuse to disintegrate irretrievably and that is the source of all the hope and the filling of the existential vacuum. Call it the Great Soul or instinct for survival, the fact is that Ethan's sense of personal and inherited integrity lifts him to the status of a truly heroic character. When he finally realizes the fatal mistake that he has committed after witnessing the moral decay of his son, he is willing to escape from his sin by making the final sacrifice, that is, of killing himself. Significantly it is the family talisman that prevents him from committing suicide, as significantly it is his daughter who slips that talisman in his pocket. The talisman and the daughter both symbolize continuity of life and of human values, or of the Great Human Soul.

While *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Winter of Our Discontent* end with the promise of imminent change for the better one through collective action and preservation of family values, and the other through abiding personal and family values that refuse to be dissipated by the pressures of the modern life *The Pastures of Heaven* and *Of Mice and Men* leave little to be hoped for. The two novels emphasize the impossibility of the American Dream; they both deny the possibility of unfettered individual and community happiness, of unambiguous freedom and liberty, of worthwhile life deriving solely from individual choices and decisions.
Every story in *The Pastures of Heaven* tells the tale of pain and sorrow, of suffering and oppression, of shattering of dreams. The sources of devastation of lives remain a mystery and beyond the comprehension of the characters whose lives and joys are at stake. In final analysis the novel depicts how the American Dream has destroyed the lives of the people who were lured by the promises it had made, apart from eliminating the entire race of the natives who inhabited the land before the advent of the Dream. From a distance the Great American Dream may be alluring still, but those who are part of it know it for what it is. Hence various characters that look down upon the valley from the tourist bus in the epilogue fantasize about the huge promise that it seems to possess: the businessman thinks about the possibilities of making profit, the young couple about the life of unhindered pleasure, the old man about the possibilities of unmitigated peace as he remunerates over his past experiences, and the bus conductor about the simple joys of owning a farmland. All these chance observers know nothing and care even less about how the land was discovered, what lust for power and the sadistic joy of oppression guided the White race to the place, nor do they know and care about the devastated lives of the people who now live there. It is because of this lure of the Great American Dream that young people from all over the world still flock to the American embassies and immigration offices.

*Of Mice and Men* too shows how simple, almost juvenile schemes, plans and dreams of the weak and the unfortunate go awry because of the forces that are at work in contemporary America and its market driven economy. The circumstances that prevail in contemporary American society rob the people of their long cherished values. George is forced to murder his friend Lennie because of his friendship and
because of his deep commitment to his friend. Curly's wife is forced to betray her marital vows and flirt with the ranch hounds because she is trapped in a sterile marriage and because of her instinct for attention cannot find fulfillment which led her to the dream of becoming an actress, an escape from the docile present to the fantasy same like that of George and Lennie's owning of a ranch:

> Quickly disillusioned by the severely limited role of wife of a cruel and brutal ranch owner's son, she dreams of escaping to Hollywood, a totally unrealistic fantasy (Hart, 36).

Even Lennie's physical strength, which would have been an asset under favourable circumstances, becomes a curse for him because it fuels Curly's jealousy and finally leads to his death, so with George where his powers, which in terms attracts all negative connotations made him responsible for the doom:

Richard E. Hart further highlighted George's character, asserting that he is cast as the thinker, the decision maker the caretaker of Lennie, and, I would argue, the ultimately free, moral agent who vividly illustrates the two aspects of Steinbeck's naturalism. George is free to choose—indeed, in a sense, condemned to freedom—but he is also determined by powerful forces within himself and the world—his lusts, his original promise to Lennie's aunt to look after him, his penchant for dreaming and fantasizing, his acquiescence to gambling and drink, and even, in the end, his overpowering love for Lennie (Joyce, *Tragedy*, 83).
George, Lennie, Slim and Crook cannot realize their dream of having two acres of land of their own, where they live as a family with no forces at work that might destroy their happiness and liberty because the Great American Dream has destroyed the possibility of realizing their dreams for the lower strata of society. Slim leading George away from the scene of Lennie's murder may be taken as a glimmer of hope is so much as it indicates the possibility of forming a relationship, but the preceding incidents of the novel have already shown that all meaningful and worthwhile personal relationships are doomed from the beginning in contemporary American society:

The dream of the farm originates with Lennie and it is only through Lennie, who also makes the dream impossible, that the dream has any meaning for George. An understanding of this dual relationship will do much to mitigate the frequent change that Steinbeck's depiction of George's attachment is concocted of pure sentimentality. At the end of the novel, George's going off with Slim to "do the town" is more than an escape from grief. It is an ironic and symbolic twist to his dream (Bloom, 139).

*The Pearl* seems to occupy a place between *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Winter of Our Discontent* on the one hand, and *The Pastures of Heaven* and *Of Mice and Men* on the other hand. The novel shows the disintegration of human values of a primitive society when it is infected with modern industrialized colonial culture. For Kino, the pearl, symbol of purity and joy and omen of good fortune turns into a curse, destroying his innocence, disintegrating his relationships and polluting the values he has lived with thus far. In the beginning the pearl is only a means of saving the life of
his son, but after he witnesses the opulent life of the doctor, the pearl acquires a value far beyond fulfilling his fatherly commitment, and generates and fuels greed in him the fear that was in the vision of Juan Tomas. It is because of this greed that Kino strikes his wife, leaves his community, and becomes a murderer and ultimately the cause of the death of his son and this was later taken up as a challenge by the whole structure:

It is hard to know," he said. "We do know that we are cheated from birth to the overcharge on our coffins. But we survive. You have defied not the pearl buyers, but the whole structure, the whole way of life, and I am afraid for you (Steinbeck, *Pearl*, 53).

Finally Kino and his wife decide to throw the pearl back into the sea, possibly symbolizing freedom from greed at last, and from the corruption of their values. but the damage has already been done. They have been already exposed to a way of life that holds material profit superior to all other human values. Their experiences have made Kino and his wife callous and indifferent, and it is questionable whether they can return to their original innocence, or find Blake’s ‘Higher Innocence’ as they have to move ahead. “This knowledge is the tool that he need to help him on the final journey, the inescapable journey that everyman must take” (Davis, 160).

It should be evident from the forgoing discussion that in all these novels, including those that do not have America as social backdrop, Steinbeck dissects the American Dream to expose the lies and hoaxes that it incorporates; he deconstructs the language employed by the American media and the mainstream American intellectuals and writers, which is indented to conceal the lies and the myths by which American ruling class maintains and expands its ideological and hegemonic control.
In doing so Steinbeck advocates for the preservation and ascendance of human values, such as commitment to friendship and other human relationships, personal integrity, honesty, equality, respect for individual freedom, the right to a happy and fulfilling life as an antidote to the Great American Dream and the American way of life.
Works Cited:


Chapter-5

Collapse of Freedom
The last twenty years have been phenomenal for America; the two decades have been packed with intellectual, economic, military, and activist activities. The invasion of Iraq, collapse of World Trade Centre twin towers and other terrorism related tragedies, invasion of Afghanistan, economic meltdown, wide spread protest against the foreign and economic policies of the Federal Government of the United States of America with hundreds of thousands of people taking to streets either against the invasion of Iraq or under the slogan of ‘Occupy Wall Street,’ publication of dooms day articles and books favouring as well as opposing the policies of US Government are all part of this frenetic activity:

“I think it expresses the frustrations the American people feel, that we had the biggest financial crisis since the Great Depression, huge collateral damage all throughout the country ... and yet you’re still seeing some of the same folks who acted irresponsibly trying to fight efforts to crack down on the abusive practices that got us into this in the first place,” he said.

Obama said he used “a lot of political capital” to prevent a financial meltdown and ensure banks remained solvent after he took office. He also touted the financial reform legislation he and Democrats in Congress moved through in 2010...

... “That does not make sense to the American people. They are frustrated by it and they will continue to be frustrated by it until they get the sense that everyone is playing by the same rules” (Memoli, n. page.).
One would have expected America as a nation to be more relaxed after the collapse of Soviet Union but the result of the collapse have been just the opposite of what would have been expected. One might argue that effects of the collapse of Communist Bloc were offset by the rise of Islamic terrorism, yet many serious doubts have been raised about the projection of Islamic terrorism, and the consequent declaration of War on Terror by the US Government and its think tanks, as a threat to the peaceful and democratic world order as potent as the one posed by Communists. Doubts have been raised even about the ‘Terrorist’ attack on World Trade Centre twin towers. It has even been maintained by a significant section of the United Sates intelligentsia that such total and absolute destruction of the towers could not have been possible by the aero plane collision. It too has been alleged sometimes openly and sometimes through insinuation, that the said tragedy was engineered either by the Zionists lobby or by certain agencies of the US Government itself to justify the imminent invasion of Afghanistan:

One may feel shocked by this title. Zionists have such a grip upon “The Guilt Industry”, virtually a monopoly, politically speaking. Was 9/11 an inside job? America was in some degree seeded with the perpetration of this event, from outside, and various echelons of its security services and military then responded by co-operating and then weaving a Muslims-did-it story. That is the hypothesis we will here examine. So when Netanyahu said the very next day, ‘This is very good for Israel’, he wasn’t just blurtng out something indiscreet, he was publicly congratulating the various agents who had worked so hard. The smooth integrity which the official story soon acquires, is an
expression of the nation's will-to-survive: an event has taken place and
been covered up, where the Truth cannot come out without effectively
disintegrating the nation, in its present form. Aye, there's the rub. That
is the sense of fun which the Chief Operators derive, as they see all the
media, who may not particularly like them, compelled to endorse and
weave out of their own accord, the fabricated tale (Kollerstorn, n.
page.).

It is not the purpose of the present research work to examine and analyze the
veracity of the various claims regarding Islamic terrorism and the motive of the US
Government or the US corporate sector, our purpose is to document the response of
the US state machinery to the actual or engineered threat of terrorism.

What seems to petrify the US Government policy makers more than the
external terrorist threat is the response of the people of America to the policies of the
US Government and to the economic fallouts of those policies for e.g. the American
masses did not respond to the Great Depression of 1930s the way they reacted to the
economic meltdown of 2008. Nor did the people of America try to influence and stop
the invasion of Cuba or Philippines or even of Vietnam at the instant the way they
tried to prevent the invasion of Iraq through rallies and night vigils outside the White
House. It seems that the US Government and its think tanks were taken off guard by
the reactions of American people. The war on terror, the invasion of Afghanistan as
the hot bed of Islamic terrorism responsible for the World Trade Centre tragedy,
invasion of Iraq to save the world from Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)
increased the military presence in various parts of the world including Philippines,
Cambodia as well as the economic policies and decisions of the US Government, the
The US Government on its own and at the behest of the corporate sector has reacted by tightening the noose on liberty and individual freedom. Massive investments are being made to develop equipments and software meant for spying on common people and carrying out extensive surveillance of civil society. Investments are also being made in developing equipments and software meant for controlling
mobs and large congregations of masses. Take for e.g. the experience of a very common and very normal couple in America. The wife wanted to buy a pressure cooker and goggled the word pressure cooker to search for the best options and the husband wanted to buy a backpack and goggled that word to look for the best options available. Next day they were visited by Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) agents who wanted to know if they were trying to built a pressure cooker bomb and carry it in the backpack to explode somewhere. The entire situation may appear absurd, but the real question here raised by Philip Bump in his write up dated 01 August 2013 in The Atlantic Wire is:

How did the government know what they were goggling, the fact is that the Federal Government of America and its agencies have access to equipments, programs, legislations such as The National Defence Authorization Act, The Next Generation Identification Program, The Biometric Identification Card etc. etc. at their disposal, meant for prying into the activities and lives of people and controlling their reactions (Bump, n. page.).

Not that America is new to such strangulating governmental control over freedom and personal liberty. The American people experienced a similar situation during the first instalment of ‘Red Scare’ after the First World War, and then during the second instalment of the 1950s, made even worse by the stench of McCarthyism. Any criticism of government policies, whether external or economic, was dubbed as anti-national, seditious and meant to destabilise the United States and those who were found guilty of these anti-national activities were presumed to be the agents of Soviet Union. Apparently the trigger for 1919 Red Scare was Bolshevik Revolution in
Russia. It was presumed that America would be the next target for the Bolsheviks and Communists. The Red Scare actually came as a nation-wide ant-radical hysteria provoked by a mounting fear and anxiety that a Bolshevik revolution in America was imminent, a revolution that would change church, home, civility, and American way of life. The efforts of the US Government to identify, prosecute, and deport any one perceived to be a Communist or radical, and hence a threat to the existing order was enthusiastically supported by the American press and public fear was transformed into xenophobia. Labour strikes of 1916 and 1917 which were backed by Industrial Workers of the World were projected as a radical threat to American society inspired by the left wing, drawing inspiration and support from beyond the borders of America. It mattered little that these labour strikes were perfectly legitimate for concerning rights that were part of the American constitution, while they were dubbed as “Crimes against Society; Conspiracies against the Government; and The Plot to Establish Communism.” President Wilson pressured the Congress in 1918 to legislate the Sedition Act which was intended to grant the government the power to deport undesirable political elements. In the words of Professor David D. Cole:

...Over the next thirty years, through and following World War I, the federal government consistently targeted alien radicals, deporting them with summary procedures for their speech or associations, making little effort to distinguish true threats from ideological dissidents (Cole, 954).

When twelve prominent lawyers including the future Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter criticised the government oppression as unconstitutional, the advocates of the repression went to the extent of predicting that a government
deposing left wing revolution would begin on March 01, 1920 that is the International Workers Day. Of course the revolution never happened but the government’s strangulation of liberty and individual freedom continued:

“REDS DIRECTING SEATTLE STRIKE—TO TEST CHANCE FOR REVOLUTION.” Thereafter, editorials consistently blasted labor action in Seattle and fed their subscribers on a constant diet of “The Seattle strike is Marxian.” “a revolutionary movement aimed at existing government,” and “ the stepping stone to bolshevized America.” The Cleveland Plain Dealer claimed that in Seattle “the [Bolshevik] beast comes into the open” while the Chicago Tribune warned, “it is only a middling step from Petrograd to Seattle” (Murray, Red Scare, 65).

After Second World War the United States government and the American capitalist class harboured views of the United States emerging as unquestioned and unchallenged world leader in the wake of nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The dream was shattered when Soviet Union acquired nuclear power and developed hydrogen bomb immediately afterwards. Adept at utilizing every national and international crisis to their advantage, the United States government and the ruling class backed media fanned fears of the hydrogen bombing of America by Soviet Union. The effort acquired urgency after the trial of Ethel and Julian Rosenberg, the results of Kellock–Taschereau Commission on investigations of espionage; Chinese Communists emerging victorious against the west supported Kuomintang in the Chinese civil war, the founding of the People’s Republic of China and the Korean War. Worse still was the fact that during the great depression of the
1930s Communism had gained popularity amongst the labour union activists and the intellectuals as an alternative economic ideology. In March 1947 the then President of America Harry S Truman signed an executive order and creating ‘The Federal Employees Loyalty Program’ and established political loyalty and review boards which certified the loyalty and Americanism of government employees, and recommended the termination of the services of those who were suspected of spying for the Soviet Union, or of being un-American:

To haunt what might be just one disloyal person, Executive Order 9835 was announced in March 1947, just nine days after the Truman doctrine itself, calling for a loyalty investigation of all federal employees on the grounds that ‘any disloyal or subversive person constitutes threat to our democratic process.’ In so doing the Order transformed the debate about loyalty in America. Whereas previously the dismissal of an employee would require definite proof the new loyalty program was designed to preclude any potential subversion (Neocleous, Critique, 124).

It was Senator Joseph McCarthy who realised the political benefits to be drawn from this witch hunting of Communists and in 1950 came up with the claim that he had the list of more than two hundred Soviet spies who had infiltrated the various state departments. McCarthy’s subsequent efforts, which later coined the term McCarthyism, the pardon of which is crafted in The Crucible by Arthur Miller. This was used for political witch hunting, launched the political carrier of not only McCarthy but also of Richard Nixon and Robert F Kennedy (The Hiss Case in History-2009-nyc), McCarran Internal Security Act of 1950 modified laws to restrict
civil liberties in the name of national security. The act was widely criticised as a mockery of Bill of Rights and a step toward totalitarianism, but these efforts got all out support from all forms of media including Hollywood which came up with a series of Rambo, James Bond and science fiction movies putting Soviet Union and its agents in America in the dock and glorifying the extra human efforts of the defenders of the American way of life:

At the hand of the dozen of directors, Military action has been romanticized, beautified, and in the most cases relativized, insofar as violence is represented as a positive thing for the American military but always negative for the demonized enemy. While much of this cinematic output has been excellent, practically all of it has served propaganda functions for the government and pentagon--vital functions indeed owing to the immense global power wielded by the Hollywood film industry. And today, perhaps more than at any time except World War II, motion pictures constitute a significant ideological and cultural weapon in the service of U.S. foreign and military policy (Boggs, *Imperial*, 148).

Mark Twain was perhaps the first American writer who saw through the fassad of freedom and questioned the authenticity of the slogans that constituted the Great American Dream. He even observed and exposed the insidious way that the ruling class has of controlling the minds and actions of the people much before Gramsci propounded his theory of Hegemony, or Louis Althusser of Ideology. In his story “Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy,” he shows how ordinary citizens are turned into slaves without even knowing it and how their ways of thinking, perceiving and
analyzing socio-political and economic phenomena are controlled by the propaganda machinery, including the press, at the disposal of ruling class. In several of his novels, most notably *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain has come down heavily on the American way of life and how it is unfavourable for freedom, and how it is geared towards corrupting innocent minds:

In San Francisco, the other day, “a well-dressed boy, on his way to Sunday school, was arrested and thrown into the city prison for stoning Chinamen.” What a commentary is this upon human justice! What sad prominence it gives to our human disposition to tyrannize over the weak! San Francisco has little right to take credit to herself for her treatment of this poor boy. What had the child's education been? How should he suppose it was wrong to stone a Chinaman?...It was in this way that he found out that when a White man robs a sluice-box (by the term White man is meant Spaniards, Mexicans, Portuguese, Irish, Hondurans, Peruvians, Chileans, etc., etc.), they make him leave the camp; and when a Chinaman does that thing, they hang him. It was in this way that he found out that in many districts of the vast Pacific coast, so strong is the wild, free love of justice in the hearts of the people, that whenever any secret and mysterious crime is committed, they say, “Let justice be done, though the heavens fall,” and go straightway and swing a Chinaman (Twain, *Disgraceful*, n. page.).

He even questioned and fought against the American foreign policy. When under pressure from the sugar lobby the American government floated the idea of the annexation of the Sandwich Island, through the signing of the Reciprocity Treaty in
1875 with the King Kalakaua of Hawaii, which gives free hand on the island for the corporate sector, as still now it is going with various free trade treaties all around the world, Mark Twain wrote against it and ridiculed it mercilessly. And for this vitality of his conscience he remained the Vice-President of the American Anti-Imperialistic League till his death in 1910:

The 3,000 Whites in the islands handle all the money and carry on all the commerce and agriculture-- and superintend the religion. Americans are largely in the majority. These Whites are sugar-planters, merchants, whale-ship officers, and missionaries. The missionaries are sorry that most of the other Whites are there, and these latter are sorry the missionaries don't migrate. The most of the belt of sloping land that borders the sea and rises toward the bases of the mountains, is rich and fertile. There are only 200,000 acres of this productive soil, but only think of its capabilities! In Louisiana, 200,000 acres of sugar land would only yield 50,000 tons of sugar per annum, and possibly not so much; but in the Sandwich Islands, you could get at least 400,000 tons out of it. This is a good, strong statement, but it is true, nevertheless. Two and a half tons to the acre is a common yield in the islands; three and a half tons is by no means unusual; five tons is frequent; and I can name the man who took fifty tons of sugar from seven acres of ground, one season (Twain, The Sandwich, n. page.).

This trend established by Mark Twain in American fiction continues to this day with almost all great American fiction writers including Steinbeck taking up edges against the lies and myths which the American ruling class sells to the people of
America and of the world in the name of democracy, American way of life and the Great American Dream. This is why Hemingway, himself a great American writer, says about The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn:

“All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn... all American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since” (Hemingway, n. page.).

Like class division of society and disintegration of human values, Steinbeck’s novels also closely study the effects of the contemporary economic infrastructure upon the subversion of freedom and individual liberty. In various novels he shows freedom vulnerable to propaganda and cultural mechanisms. In his novels freedom emerges as a very fragile and unstable idea that is more an illusion than reality.

*Tortilla Flat* was for Steinbeck the first taste of commercial and critical success, though there has been negative criticism too, mostly centred around the less than factual presentation of the people and life of the region. Yet the novel is a significant addition to American fiction that follows the tradition established by Mark Twain. The novel is set against the background of a fringe part of American society where apparently life seems to be free from external influences and where people live as carefree a life as they please. This seemingly free way of life, uncensored and unaffected by the influences of market economy, hides a very different reality. Danny and his friends Pablo and Pilon enlist in the army during The Great War in a fit of drunken patriotism. They never reach the rank of soldiers, and Danny is forced to serve as mule driver during the war.
In a weak moment Big Joe, Pilon, and Danny join the army: as the wine does down in the bottle, patriotism goes up in the three paisanos. It is ironic that from the moment the three actually volunteer for the responsibility, they have assigned menial jobs that have little or nothing to do with the war. Pilon, the most philosophical of the group, seems to sum up the paisano's love for freedom as he and Pablo drink and remember their childhood (Benson, 33).

He returns to Tortilla Flat as a disillusioned man, but wiser in the scene that he now understands the forces behind the war machine and he knows whose interests any war serves. On his return to Tortilla Flat he discovers that his grandfather had died from whom he has inherited two houses. The ownership of the property enhances his prestige in Tortilla Flat society. Danny is expected to behave more responsible but his native sentiments and his disillusionment with life forbid any show of responsibility. Danny and his friends Pablo and Pilon and the Pirade start living together and form a community. On the face of it these friends have rented one of the houses from Darny, which is soon burnt down and they move to the house where Danny himself lives. The non-payment of rent often creates tensions between the friends and there are other monetary constraints and motives that are interwoven into the story. Danny finally dies of wine induced hallucinations when he starts fighting against shadows and falls into a deep ditch.

Danny in particular becomes unfit for Tortilla Flat society because of his encounter with the external world and his experience of the forces which compel countries and their people to go to war with each other. It is because of this insight and the accompanying disillusionment that the carefree life of Tortilla Flat
interspersed with wine and women does not satisfy Danny anymore, and he has moments of deep depression when a philosophical mood bogs him down and does not permit him to enjoy life like his friends or neighbours. His last act of fighting against some kind of supernatural adversaries symbolises his desire to take on the forces that wage war for self interest and control the minds of the people through such artificial ideas and notions as patriotism. Danny, if nobody else, has time to understand that the freedom that the community at Tortilla Flat seems to enjoy is only an illusion and their lives, ideas, thoughts and actions are as much controlled by the ruling class as those of any other society.

At some point in the novel external world seems to intrude directly into Tortilla Flat, as when Pablo gifts his girl friend a vacuum cleaner which is of no use to her because of the fact that Tortilla Flat does not have electricity. At another occasion Danny and his friends come in possession of a machine gun when they chanced for the rake off a Coast Guard boat. They of course do not realise the value of the machine gun and sell it for five dollars along with the other scrap of the rake, but the machine gun symbolises forces and factors to which Danny and his friends are ignorant. If and when the ruling class sees it fit to wage war in order to serve their interests, people even from fringe society like Tortilla Flat enlist for that war and play the role of cannon fodder just as Danny and his friends had done during the Great War, this because their minds are controlled by the Ideological State Apparatus and they too take decisions because of such propagandist notions and ideas as patriotism. Hence freedom, like the Great American Dream, is an illusion created by the ruling class to control the working class and minimise the chances of revolt. *Tortilla Flat*
parallels the sensibility of *Pastures of Heaven* in so much as it tells the story of deprivation, pain and tragedy in the heart of a beautiful landscape.

*Sweet Thursday* is set against the background of the Second World War, Doc returns to Cannery Row after serving in Second World War to find the place a completely changed world. The change is so pervasive that even the landscape has not remained immune to it. Doc plans to serve humanity by conterminal with his research at the biological laboratory. The good intentions of Doc are defeated by the economic structure of society. He must have access to resources to conduct any worthwhile research, but for that he must become part of some organisation or society, because as an individual his access to resources is blocked. If he becomes part of some organisation he will have access to resources, but he will not be able to conduct any independent research because he will be subject to the purpose and rules of that organisation. This situation robs Doc of his freedom both as an individual and as a scientist. Apparently he has a choice; he may or may not decide to become part of some organisation but such kind of freedom accounts to the illusion of freedom symbolised by 'you can choose any colour so long as it is black,' Doc cannot conduct research in accordance with his free will no matter whether he decides to join some organisation or not:

The only creative thing we have is the individual, but the law doesn't permit me to give money to an individual. I must give it to a group, an organization—and the only thing a group has ever created is bookkeeping. To participate in my gift the individual must become part of the group and thus lose his individuality and his creativeness (Steinbeck, *Sweet*, 175).
Apart from robbing individuals like Doc of their freedom, market economy also has a devastating effect on the ecology of the area because profit oriented fishing has depleted the marine fauna alarmingly. Doc must go ahead with his research to mitigate the effects of market economy upon ecology and upon human society, but the laws framed to serve the interests and purposes of market economy make it impossible for him. It is not only Doc who is affected by the laws that rob people of their freedom; other characters too are left with little choice. Fauna, the new owner of the Brothel, tries to get the girls working in the brothel well settled but her choices are limited because she must turn these girls in to better prostitutes in order to achieve her purpose. Similarly Hazel must break Docs arm in order to ensure a happy life for him by bringing him and Suzy together, but this effort makes it impossible for Doc to go on his research expedition on his own. Hence the responses and actions of almost all the characters are controlled by external factors and forces, and Cannery Row is a pathetic society on the brink of disaster.

*In Dubious Battle* is the least discussed of Steinbeck’s novels. It is also one of his most overtly Communist novels in which he takes by horns the bull of labourer vs. capital struggle:

It is the best (psychological) portrayal that I know of communism, and perfectly lighted. If it leaves the capitalist and bourgeois counterparts in the shadow, at least it very cleverly gives one a glimpse of this in the dialogues, and that is enough (Davis, 47).

The novel is centred around the experiences of Jim, a new recruit in the Party, presumably any Communist Party in America. “First of all, *In Dubious Battle* is a communist novel; there is no other way of identifying the ‘Party’ to which the party
adheres” (Filler, 16). Jim hails from a very impoverished background. His father struggled with joblessness all his life and his mother sought recompense for her pains and sufferings in religion. His childhood experiences have convinced Jim that the existing economic order is unjust and heavily biased against the weak, particularly the working class. He perceives hope in the Party’s promise of establishing a more just socio-economic order based on equality of opportunity. After joining the Party Jim moves to the apple orchards of California under the influence of Mac, a very experienced party functionary who specialises in field organisation. Their task is to instigate and organise a strike of the orchard pickers against the owners with the aim of swelling to the party ranks. To achieve this end Mac does not hesitate in employing even less than honest and dishonourer means. Jim is not wholly comfortable with Mac’s tactics in organizing strike, but his new found identity, sense of purpose, and sense of power do not allow him to severe his association with Mac and the Party. During the strike too Jim has the first hand experience of the power that the ruling class holds over the Repressive State Apparatus which it can employ as it pleases to deny the just and logical demands of the working class. The orchard owners, the police, the sheriff’s department, the vigilantes, the sanitation department all come together to break the strike and deny the freedom of seeking an honourable and just means of livelihood to the working class. The novel ends in tragedy as the orchard owners and the state machinery come down heavily upon the striking workers, burning down the property of Anderson who is helping workers, forcibly evicting the striking workers from the camp, and killing those who are providing leadership to the strike.
This is only one side of the story; the denial of the freedom to the working class by the ruling class aided and abetted by the state machinery. This denial of freedom is very obvious; cruel, and stark. The ruling class and its tools make no attempt to camouflage their intentions because they know that the power and authority at their disposal is too overpowering for the working class to contest with. Hence they make no efforts to sugar-coat the bitter pill and are shameless in employing excessive force to achieve their ends. The tactics employed by the ruling class in In Dubious Battle, prophecies the tactics employed by the same class in breaking the “Occupy Wall Street” movement with the same threats by the police and by the sanitation department, as well as the same infiltration of the striking masses by informers and spies.

The other side of the story which is less obvious is centred around the strategy employed by the Party and its functionaries to instigate and sustain the strike. Mac for example lies to his associates when he claims that he is medically trained to deliver the baby of Lisa. His sole aim is to gain the confidence and respect of the workers which he can later employ to cloud their judgment and to make them follow his commands. Similarly he uses the occasions of the murder of Jack and Jim to refuel the flagging interest of the workers in the strike. Jim in particular is so moulded and shaped by Mac that he starts seeing and perceiving the events through the eyes of his teacher. So the novel paints a rather gloomy picture of the situation, and there is no escape from losing one’s freedom, either to the brutal force at the disposal of the class enemy or to cunning and subtle mechanisations of those who professes to be class friends. In either case freedom is impossible.
As most of Steinbeck's novels depict, freedom is not a universal concept impervious to culture and psychological and material factors. In *To a God Unknown* Steinbeck explores the limits of freedom defined by nature and spiritual forces. The protagonist Joseph Wayne leaves his father and family in pursuit of a dream which he shares with his father of establishing and owning a prosperous and extensive ranch. His desire to fulfil the dream however cannot obliterate his spiritual connection with his father:

Joseph’s pre-moral, pre-historical profile seems an act of will. Following a traditional American pattern, Joseph has abandoned a closed or closing society. He has withdrawn westwards to commune in solitude with untainted nature and to listen its secret. That, to repeat, is the form the rebellious impulse has so often taken in America—not a direct assault from within upon an intolerable social order or disorder, but a removal of the self with the aim of experiencing again the graceful simplicity by which society may be measured and from which society has gravely, but not hopelessly or irretrievably, fallen (Robert, 169).

He might form a relationship with the land and the nature that surrounds his ranch which is as powerful as his spiritual relationship with his father, but he still cannot mitigate the effects of his father’s death. He tries to harmonise the two relationships by imagining that the spirit of his father resides on a tree in the ranch, thereby gaining absolute freedom, but even that spirit of freedom has its limits because it comes in conflict with the belief systems of other characters with which Joseph has relationships too significant to ignore them completely. The spiritual
freedom that Joseph seeks is also subject to the forces of nature and it cannot remain immune to such natural calamities as drought and famine. When drought kills the nature with which Joseph has established a spiritual relationship, it also destroys him spiritually. Finally to preserve life Joseph must kill himself and so he slits his wrist to water the moss on the rock with his blood. So even apart from the effects of societal and economic forces, freedom has its limits which no human being can surmount even through Herculean effort.

_The Pearl_ like _In Dubious Battle_ and _The Grapes of Wrath_ explores the limits of freedom set down by the political and economic forces. Kino’s freedom is too fragile to be sustained in the face of the efforts of the trading community of the village. The pearl, otherwise valuable enough to fulfil all of his needs, turns into a curse for Kino because of the forces unleashed by the market economy under a colonial political disposition. The effect of these forces is so strong that Kino goes against his own nature and almost turns into a fiend in his effort to draw as much monetary gain from the pearl as possible. The effect of the socio-economic environment on Kino is twofold: first he gets a glimpse of an opulent life when he goes to the Doctor to have his son Coyito treated. Doctor’s life style draws Kino to itself like a magnet. The desire of living a life as opulent as the life of the Doctor can be made possible only if he sells the pearl for the highest price possible. Obviously he has become a subject of the perceptions promoted by the contemporary economic system, and acting under that influence he is ready to discard even such close relationships as his relationships with his wife.

Secondly, Kino’s freedom to pursue the goals that he sets for himself is compromised by the more powerful profit seeking forces represented by the traders of
the village. He must flee his home and hearth in order to escape these forces which limit his freedom. The fleeing by itself is an act of slavery because he is not acting of his free will. Even worse, he ends up killing his son in his effort to combat the trackers and the henchman of the profit seeking traders who are ordered to deprive Kino of his freedom. Finally, he must renounce his dream of an opulent life by throwing the pearl back into the sea in order to save his own skin:

Such is the reaction to The Pearl of Warren French in John Steinbeck (1961), who finds Kino’s disposal of the pearl capable of contradictory interpretations: it may be seen as a “noble renunciation,” but it can also be read as “defeatism” (Davis, 157).

The collapse of freedom under pressure from forces of profit oriented market economy is discussed at length in The Grapes of Wrath. The Joad family and other tenant farmers of the Oklahoma countryside are forced to leave their land because of default in the payment of their bank loans done to condition which are beyond their control:

Well, it's too late. And the owner men explained the workings and the thinking of the monster that was stronger than they were. A man can hold land if he can just eat and pay taxes; he can do that.

Yes, he can do that until his crops fail one day and he has to borrow money from the bank (Steinbeck, Grapes, 34).

The entire area has turned into a dust bowl because of the severe drought and the resources of the farmers are already stretched thin to the point of breaking down totally. Taking advantage of the situation the bank zeroes in upon them and in
collusion with the government snatches the land from the farmers evicting them forcefully from it. The farmers are left with no option but to forgo their rights over the land. In this desperate situation, the farmers become easy prey for the corporate orchard owners of California. The entire area is flooded with handbills promising the moon if they migrate to orange orchards of California as labourers enticed and duped by the propaganda, and because of lack of options they invest whatever little resources they are left with in the journey. It is only when they are on the road that they realise they are not the only migrants, but the entire Oklahoma farmers are undertaking the journey. They continue with the journey even after they encounter those returning from California and are told that the promises made in the pamphlets are nothing but a pack of lies because by now they are left with no other option to explore. The situation created by the financial institutions, the government and the corporate sector has already deprived them of freedom and rights promised by the constitution of America.

The novel is full of instances where even the basic human rights are deliberately and systematically denied to the poor and the weak people just to maximise profit for the financial institutions and the corporate sector. “Evil is epitomized by the great banks and corporations which oppress the common worker and manipulate, by fear, the lower middle class” (Pizer, 66). Food grains are unloaded in the river; piles of fruits are sprinkled with kerosene oil and set on fire while the hungry are forced to remain helpless spectators by the guards stationed there to prevent them utilizing the surplus food items to fill the stomachs. Corporation and financial institutions in collaboration with the government take all this trouble and meet all the expense to keep the food price higher because on the one hand the high
price maximises their profit and on the other hand it makes cheap labour available. All these situations and instances underline the dehumanised nature of market economy organised by and around the financial institutions and the corporate sector. The only aim and purpose of the market economy is maximisation of profit and such human values as freedom do not figure anywhere on its agenda.

Steinbeck makes it a point to emphasise that democratically elected governments do not function to protect the interest of the people. The federal government and its agencies are only tools of the ruling class, whose only purpose is to aid the class in establishing and maintaining it’s strangle hold upon the lives of the people. Hence democracy is not the rule of the people, by the people, for the people, it is the rule of the ruling class, by the ruling class, for the ruling class:

This reading of The Grapes of Wrath is significant because the “American experience” is quickly becoming more about multiples, rather than monolithic subjectivities—more about in-between, as opposed to essentialist conceptions of culture and ethno-racial formations, as the lines between “Us” and “Them,” “Here” and “There,” and “Home” and “World” blur. Perhaps the only borders which still appear entrenched—in the U.S. and abroad—are the lines of class. It is no surprise that Steinbeck’s Depression-era text addresses these contradictions as well” (Cruz, 55).

The Grapes of Wrath deviates from The Pearl in so much as the former depicts the incorruptibility of human soul, whereas protagonist of The Pearl, Kino falls victim to his environment and his innocence is destroyed by compromised
society, whereas Tom Joad takes the oath to keep fighting for the weak and the oppressed till his last breath when he bids farewell to Ma towards the end of the novel.

Not only Tom, but most of the characters of *Grapes of Wrath* see hope of snatching their freedom from the clutches of the oppressors by cooperating with each other and working as one composite whole instead of as isolated individuals. Rose of Sharon might have given birth to a dead baby, but she can still use the milk in her breast to feed an old man dying of starvation. Even the misfortune and exploitation infuse steel into the hearts and the soul of the people; the more they are exploited the more they are determined to fight for the end of exploitation. So the condition created by the ruling class and their agencies, like the government, might deprive the people of many freedoms, but the freedom of spirit cannot be killed and quelled by any force. *The Grapes of Wrath* ends without the revolution but it definitely hints at the probability of a revolution, to over throw the unjust and exploitative system in near future which could be the way of Steinbeck’s way for perfectibility:

For Steinbeck, however, this belief in the human potential for perfection did not imply either that, human beings could attain perfection in the span of a lifetime or that society could advance to an ideal state, as Plato proposed in *The Republic*. Rather, he held that the pursuit of perfection, as an auto telic practice, was the most effective method of assuring the progress both of the individual and of society” (Langione, 88).
The Moon is Down is perhaps the most un-American of Steinbeck’s novels. It tells the story of a peaceful people captured and slaved by an enemy seeking profit out of the rich coalmines of their country. The novel is important from the point of view of our discussion because of two aspects: one like The Grapes of Wrath it depicts the indestructibility of the freedom of human spirit. The people of a small central town of Northern Europe might have been overrun and physically enslaved by the brutal force of the invading enemy, but the enemy cannot overrun and enslave their spirit by any kind of force. They keep fighting for their freedom even against high odds. They are prepared to die to keep their freedom alive. The Mayor speaks for his people when just before his execution he tells his wife that while he can be killed, the idea of freedom and democracy is beyond the reach of any enemy. Similarly his last wish expressed to his friend Dr. Winter is to make sure that the resistance continues and the enemy is not allowed to kill the desire of freedom. It is this message of the novel that made The Moon is Down the war cry of all Anti-Nazi resistance movements across Europe during the Second World War:

The dramatic ending of The Moon is Down thus enforces Steinbeck’s implied message that the sun shall rise again and makes this book “a kind of celebration of the durability of democracy,” as Steinbeck declared in East of Eden in 1952: “And this I believe: that the free, exploring mind of the individual human is the most valuable thing in the world. And this I would fight for: the freedom of the mind to take any direction it wishes, undirected. And this I must fight against: any idea, religion, or government which limits or destroys the individual.” In The Moon is Down Steinbeck does “declare and celebrate man’s
proven capacity for freedom of heart and spirit— for gallantry in defeat—for courage, compassion, and love” through such men as Dr. Winter and Mayor Orden (Benson, 100-101).

The second important aspect of the novel is that it shows that those who deny freedom to others are themselves slaves of fear and of profit. It is actually fear that turns man into a demon and prompts him to oppress the weak. It is because the invading army is mortally afraid of the local resistance movement that they take Mayor and the Doctor as hostages in order to avert the possibility of an all out revolt by their subjects. Similarly the soldiers of the invading army want the war to end so that they may return to joy and safety of their homes, but it is the pressure of profit that forces them to remain in a foreign land; depriving them of their freedom. So the invaders who take away the freedom of the local people are themselves slaves of a force beyond their control:

This notion of the invaders as having the certitude of their own stature as men fated to rule over others becomes undercut, in the course of the play, by the central idea that such a “destiny” can be put to rout by another sort of men—men whose lives are concerned with the ordinary business of living unexceptional lives (Benson, 103).

Same is the case with the American ruling class. They have got on the back of the tiger of market economy, now they cannot get of it. It is an inalienable law of market economy, that once you have become part of it you cannot remain stationary, if you do not grow you decline. So just to remain affluent and for survival the financial institutions and corporations must keep growing otherwise they shall be
taken over by those who are on the ascent, not only that but the desire for the profit and power is additive, the monks who sell their Ferraris are few and far between. Steinbeck’s novels show how America is caught in the vicious circle of profit and power with the result that freedom is reduced to an illusion for both the oppressed and the oppressor.
Works Cited:


  <www.nytimes.com>


  <http://www.thewire.com/national/2013/08/government-knocking-doors-because-google-searches/67864/>

  <http://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1963&context=facpub&seiredir=1&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.co.in%2Furl%3Fs%26rct%3Dri%3Df%26q%3Dwww.google.co.in%2Furl%3Fs%26rct%3Dri%3Df%26q%3Dwww.google.co.in%2Furl%3Fs%26rct%3Dri%3Df%26q%3Dwww.google.co.in%2Furl%3Fs%26rct%3Dri%3Df%26q%3Dwww.google.co.in%2Furl%3Fs%26rct%3Dri%3Df%26q%3Dwww.google.co.in%2Furl%3Fs%26rct%3Dri%3Df%26q%3Dwww.google.co.in%2Furl%3S>  

  <http://muse.jhu.edu/results?type=ajax&startYear=&stopYear=&limits=subscription:Y&terms=content:Frank%20Eugene%20Cruz:AND&m=1>


Chapter- 6

What All These Leads to…
In the preceding chapters, the work has tried to analyse how John Steinbeck dissects society; how he deconstructs propaganda, both subtle and not so subtle, of the American ruling class; and how in the process he explodes the myths of freedom, equality, fraternity, democracy, and pursuit of happiness which the American ruling class, the American government and the American state apparatus swear by. It is this unwavering commitment to truth and the uncanny ability to see beyond the facade that made Steinbeck a very controversial writer who evokes mixed and confusing reactions in his readers as well as critics.

America at large maintained a love-hate relationship with this great writer. On the one hand he has been charged with writing propagandist literature, and on the other hand his overtly propagandist novella, *The Moon is Down* has been widely acclaimed as a masterpiece. Similarly his services were used by the American state during the Second World War (1939-1945), but the state sponsored media and critics turned up their collective nose when he was selected for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962. Perhaps for the first time in the history of America the credentials of an American recipient of the Nobel Prize were questioned both by the popular media and the literary circles. This American reaction to Steinbeck says a lot about the American perceptions and mind-set. So long as a person or a group serves the interests of the American ruling class and American government they remain the blue eyed boys of the corridors of the power, but the moment they try to chart out a territory of their own and re-use to
see the world through the eyes of the masters, they become enemies of not only the government, but even of the nation.

This is exactly what happened with *The Grapes of Wrath*. This novel exposes the dehumanised and anti-people nature of the American economy, especially the financial institutions. That is why it became intolerable for those whose interests the novel hurt and these were the ones who went to great lengths to make people believe that the American economic and political structures and philosophy were aimed at enabling each and every individual to realise their full potential. Soon after its publication, reviewers and critics came down heavily upon the novel, maintaining that it distorted the truth and mangled the facts. They left no stone unturned even in their search for evidence to support their claims. The evidence that is cited against the novel no more than knit picking, which tries to play upon the sentiments of one section of people or another against the events situations depicted in the novel. It was primarily because of such criticism of the novel that California farmers expressed their dislike for it publicly by burning bonfire of copies of the novel for painting them in rather a bad light and saying that the California farmers reacted actively against the migrant Oklahoma labour during the Great Depression.

Steinbeck on the other hand sticks to his guns despite the harsh criticism of his works and continued with his efforts of exposing the lie of the Great American Dream, and telling the truth without any sugar coating. He begins by tracing the origins of present day America in *The Pastures of Heaven* as a country conceived
in sin and crimes against humanity, and goes on to show how such a place can never allow its inhabitants to live in peace and joy. It may look inviting and joyous from a distance, but those who live there know how hard and painful life in heaven really is.

_Tortilla Flat_, Steinbeck’s first commercial and critical success, deals with fake war heroism, and shows how war serves the interests of the ruling class and leads to the actual soldiers being reduced to cannon fodder with shattered lives, mangled personalities, confused and wrapped psyches. It shows how slogans of patriotism and national interest are no more than the ways of winning the support of the masses for the war efforts of the ruling class in order to promote their commercial and economic interests. Those who fight in the battlefields either die there itself, or they die in instalments if they survive the canons of the battlefield.

In _In Dubious Battle_ Steinbeck focuses on the situation of the working class, particularly of the landless farm workers, during the Great Depression. Those were hard times, bleak and depressive for any sensitive mind. So the novel leaves little scope for hope from the ruling class or even from those who confess to fight for the interests of the working class. The writer traces in some detail the working and the mechanisations of the ruling class and their agents, like the police department, the health department, the courts of law, the vigilantes in maintaining their strangle hold upon the lives of the working class. The underhand dealings of the Party, probably an euphemism for the Communist Party of America, also do not escape the attention of Steinbeck and the novel ends in tragedy with the agents
of the ruling class and the agents of the Party engaged in a tug of war for controlling the minds of hapless workers. At the end of the day they see no hope for their emancipation and liberty. If liberty exists, it is only for the ruling class to use and exploit the labour of the working class as they see it fit to maximise their profits.

Steinbeck tells another sad story of exploitation, subjugation, and shattering of lives and dreams in *Of Mice and Men*. It too ends in tragedy with George who is forced to kill his friend and companion, Lennie, by circumstances created by the power structure of society. The novel shows how even the agents of the ruling class who seem to be in control of their thoughts and actions are no more than pawns in the game of maximisation of profit and how freedom and realisation of dreams are no more than illusions purposefully created to minimise the chances of revolt. When freedom is denied and dreams are shattered the victims are made to believe that tragedy happens because of their own failures or because of the heartlessness of their peers.

*The Grapes of Wrath* brings to conclusion the argument which Steinbeck had started with in *In Dubious Battle*. In this novel of epic proportions, he unravels layer after layer the mysteries of dispossession, of rising prices, rotting piles of food, falling wages and dehumanised character of private institutions and government agencies. Unlike *In Dubious Battle*, *The Grapes of Wrath* idolises the indomitable nature of the spirit of human struggle and the great potential of the ambers of anger that keep simmering beneath all the ash of pain and sorrow and
loss and heartbreak. Though the novel does not delineate any clear path for the overthrow of contemporary power structures of society, it still ends with some room for hope for a brighter future.

*The Moon is Down* is overt propaganda, Steinbeck’s contribution to the war efforts of the allied forces during the Second World War. Since it is powerful propaganda, *The Moon is Down* is aggressively optimistic. It is perhaps Steinbeck’s only novel that knells the death toll for the enemy with the oppressed emerging victorious through sheer power of will and the firm refusal to accept defeat as fate. *The Moon is Down* raises the question whether Steinbeck, who had warned his readers against accepting war propaganda of the ruling class at face value in *Tortilla Flat*, had himself fallen prey to it. Perhaps the Second World War was a time of serious crisis for the entire world, and consolidation of all forces against the Nazis was of paramount importance. The situation forced not only Steinbeck, but many other enemies of capitalism to forget their struggles against the capitalist class and to focus on defeating the Nazi forces.

*The Pearl* paints rather a bleak picture of the contemporary world and class based society. It tells the story of innocence degenerating into cynicism, and an almost pagan way of life being corrupted by profit driven economy. Although the novel ends with rejection of the capitalist way of life, but the rejection remains superficial and poorly worked out.
By 1954, Steinbeck had realised that the Second World War had changed the situation a little for the working class and the less fortunate members of society. The only effect it had had was to strengthen the control of the ruling class over the society and the way it worked. It was this realisation that resulted in the *Sweet Thursday*. The novel tells the story of the failed efforts of kind hearted people in saving the lives of the weak, as well as in saving the environment from the disastrous effects of industrialisation. The ending of the novel points to a very hazy and dubious future.

*The Winter of Our Discontent*, Steinbeck’s last work as well as his last word on the reality of industrialised capitalist economy and its disastrous effects on the private lives of upright and idealist individuals, is again the story of collapse of innocence under pressure from the demands of the modern way of life. It shows how single minded objective of maximisation of profit leads to the emergence of criminal tendencies in comparatively pure hearts and minds. The hope of redemption that the novel hints as the end of it is closing up, is again rather hazy and poorly worked out. Here too, hope largely depends upon a sudden change of heart in the protagonist who loses his innocence under the pressures and demands of contemporary society.

*To a God Unknown* on the other hand implies pantheistic spiritualism as a means to sustain individuals amidst death and sorrow, destruction and greed. The meanings and philosophies woven into the plot structure of the novel remain alien, painstaking efforts no more than of momentary value for tired and desperate
minds. The novel ends with the inconsequential death of the protagonist failing even the eventual rain which too remains unable to sustain and nurture life of the protagonist as the symbol of very foundation of individualism of America.

So, most of Steinbeck’s novels are bleak and depressing in terms of structure and tell the stories of doom and failure. Perhaps his observation of American society, past and present, did not suggest any clear way out of the current scenario of pain and sorrow, exploitation and loss. The failure is not so much of Steinbeck’s as that of America. The consistent and well planned efforts of the ruling class had made the web of exploitation and profiteering so strong that those who were caught in that web could not extricate themselves from it. Most of the time they did not even think themselves as helpless victims, and that they are in the web woven by the ruling class.

In terms of nature, Steinbeck was neither a cynical nor pessimistic writer: he made efforts into developing the concept of the ‘Universal Human Soul’. He spent long hours in discussing the concept of ‘Mutuality’ with Ed Ricketts but no matter which way he turned or how much effort he put into it, as the nature and structure of the American society left little scope for hope for a better future. Hence the concept of ‘Mutuality’ and ‘Universal Human Soul’ remained forced abstractions with little to be gleaned from them for any practical purpose.

The aggressive and cruel individualism of the capitalist society turned these concepts into unachievable ideals. Thus the endings of all the novels in which
Steinbeck tried to build upon ‘Mutuality’ and ‘Universal Human Soul’ remained failures, superficial and forced. The hope dramatised there remains an imposition from outside which is not justified by the plot structures of the novels themselves. Not that Steinbeck himself did not realise his failure. Despite joining the august rank of Noble Laureates, he died a sad and lonely man who could never achieve acceptance from a society he cared for so deeply and wanted a change in for the better and so desperately.
Bibliography


<http://www.thewire.com/national/2013/08/government-knocking-doors-because-google-searches/67864/>


< http://www.chomsky.info/articles/199407--.html>


<http://www.chomsky.info/articles/20091105.htm>


<http://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1963&context= facpub&seiredir=1&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.co.in%2Furl%3Fsa%3Dt%26rct%3Dj%26q%3Ddavid%2520cole>


<http://muse.jhu.edu/results#type=ajax&startYear=&stopYear=&limits=subscription:Y&terms=content:Frank%20Eugene%20Cruz:AND&m=1>


<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3506602>


<http://www.marktwainhannibal.com/twain/works/sandwich_view_1873/>


<http://s3.amazonaws.com/manybooks_pdf_new/twainmaretext02mtaclll2?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAITZP2AAM27ZG1SNQ&Expires=1383135573&Signature=kowLM3jU3FSUsq%2FqT5opBG9d%2Bb1%3D>
