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Animalistic Harshness in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

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This thesis entitled "Animalistic Harshness in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*," submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Durga Prasad Chapai has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This thesis makes clear the depiction of animalistic harshness in John Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* focusing on instinctual and sensational lives of characters revealing their animalistic nature. Steinbeck shows the violent nature of the Characters to depict their irrational behaviour through the medium of the crimes like killing, fighting, backbiting, subjugation, repulsion, anger and accusation of rape. Steinbeck's Comparison with the animals the callous and brutal nature of the characters is represented throughout the novel in which the events occur in rational and irrational manner. The researcher has focused on these aspects of the characters by use of naturalism as a methodological tool.

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I. Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* and Human Nature

Born in Salinas, California, in 1902, Steinbeck grew up in one of the richest agricultural valleys in California, where lettuce, sugar beets, broccoli and strawberries were harvested in abundance. In high school and college he worked in the fields and packing plants, listening to the stories and absorbing the speech of the working man. For nearly two years in the early 1920s, after dropping out of Stanford University he roved the California valley finding work on ranches owned by Spreckles Sugar, a company that controlled huge tracts through out the Salinas valley.

Steinbeck's father was owner of a flower mill and the treasure of monetary country. His mother had been a public school teacher. Although Steinbeck went to Stanford University he attended intermittently over a period of five years, took the course he wanted and left without degree. During and after college he held a variety of jobs, none of which was suitable for him in that he was clerk in a store, laborer on a road gang, caretaker of an estate at Lake Tahoe, and fish hatchery worker. Though, he was a worker he started to write novels from 1929.

Most of John Steinbeck's fiction is about his native California and the Great Depression. In the family library he found and read such standard authors as Milton, Dostoevsky, Flaubert, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. In high school he was a good student, president of his graduating class and active in athletics and on the school newspapers. He joined college at Stanford University as an English major but left school in 1925 and spent next five years traveling reading and writing. There have been representative writers in every age whose voice is the voice of the age. The son of a German man, John Steinbeck Sr, and Irish woman, Olive Hamilton, John Steinbeck was in his late twenties when America was the land of desperation.

Born in modern age the novelists of social awareness or manners depicted a personal vision of the world. Except John Steinbeck, John Don Passos, James T. Farrell and Earnest Hemingway are the novelists of social awareness.

The novelist of manners expose the cruelty brutality and the callous nature of the characters in the novels they wrote raising the issue of liberty, equality and fraternity. In Hemingway's novels brutalities of "war and death" are depicted. Hemingway's stories seem nothing but facts set one after another without comment.

The novelists try to convey a familiar world by depicting the facts to construct that world. Leo Braudy's focus is upon the characters in the novel, "The novelists of manners tend to be more involved with characters who are less completely describable and therefore less restricted" (132). Varieties of human communication and psychological nuance are exposed in the novels. The novelists do not capture the whole area of country for description but the limited world. Thus, the focus is upon the small town, America or the upper class enclaves of big cities in the novels.

M.H. Abraham defines the term "novels of manners" as "A realistic novel focuses on the customs, conversation and ways of thinking and valuing of particular social class it is often called a novel of manners" (192). But, According to Leo Braudy, "The novelist of manners are more interested in the shape of individual lives than the frailties of individual will, often stay outside or aslant from great events, allowing their characters free play to invent an ideology of their own" (133).

As M.H. Abraham, Leo Braudy in the book *Havard Guide to Contemporary American Writing* presents his view about the novel of social awareness or manners where the emphasis is upon what the author hears and sees, "We all constantly write and revise a vast social novel in our minds in order to make sense of what we see and hear" (138).

However, the features can be found in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* that Mailer, Braudy and Abraham presented from their own point of view. But the critic, Leo Braudy criticizes the novel of social awareness as being "Conservative" in surface level because of limiting themselves to a smaller world and on the other, the events that takes place in the novels are not shaped by the author in that he is only "observer" and a "mediator". He further comments the novels of manner as:

The greatest achievement of a novel of manners is to create not a didactic etiquette but a picture of possible human interactions including the darker, erosive forces that undermine the sunny assertions of stability. (141)

However, in the novel of social awareness or manner we find inequality, conflict, exploitation and Steinbeck thought that these conditions should be changed. He saw the root of these conditions of inequality and exploitation in social structure that had been and would continue to be, subject to change. The society is being threatened by selfish individual or group interests which Steinbeck doesn't like in that he is in favor of lower class people.

John Steinbeck wrote twenty four novels in his life where the success of *The Grapes of Wrath* was even greater than that *Of Mice and Men* by bringing Steinbeck to a turning point in his career. He becomes a public property and from that time on he has been a "hostage to fortune". He then wrote:

I'm so busy being a writer that I haven't time to write---Ten thousand people have apparently put aside all other affairs to devote themselves to getting me to speak. And I'm so increasingly afraid of crowds that I do not talk comfortably to pair of dice any more. (qtd. in Woodress 283)

Though, Steinbeck won a Pulitzer Prize in the *Grapes of Wrath* in 1939, the United States government had harassed him for his socialist and radical views on society throughout much of his life and many of his books were banned as Red material. Before his death on 20 December 1968, Steinbeck received the Medal of Freedom and published *America and Americans*.

The novels Steinbeck wrote at the beginning of his career did not sell enough copies and made the author unable to "feed" or keep a publisher "solvent." *Cup of Gold* (1929), his first published, is a historical novel where the life of the pirate Henry Morgan is based on though its theme is "antibourgeois" filled with "melodrama" and "romance". *The Pasture of Heaven* (1932) is a collection of related stories taking place in a farming valley near Monterey, a lovely spot sheltering twenty families into which comes the shadow of evil a middle class businessman from the city, Bert Munroe and family. The critic, James Woodress expresses his view as, "All the stories in the collection deal with the evil influence of the Munroes as they enter the lives of the other families in the valley" (28). *To a God Unknown* (1933), the third book, is an antimaterialist where the celebration of man's "mystical relationship to the land" is exposed.

Although, *To a God Unknown*, *Pasture of Heaven* and *Cup of Gold* did not make enough money for Steinbeck, he did not lose his hope and wrote *Tortilla Flat* in 1935. The critic, Charles Child Walcutt criticizes the book by pointing out "knowledge" and "spirit" (power and love) is not properly joined though this text is a successful book to earn money. When *paisanos* of Monterey have the money they cannot control it and they run "wild". He even comments Danny and other *paisanos* of Monterey as:

Danny and other *paisanos* of Monterey live a wild life of irresponsible gaiety, as happy as they are poor, until they find treasure. Then come greed and fear and drink and finally a mock epical disaster in which the hero is destroyed in a general debacle. (260)

In Dubious Battle (1936) is striking novel of that decade which might be called proletarian novel too. Charles Child Walcutt indicated the people being good as well as weak; the doctor seems intellectual but his "wisdom" is non participation. The conflict which happens is not satisfactorily resolved by pointing out the battle is dubious. On the one hand the violent force of communism that has undertaken to act in the interest of the people becomes as "destructive" as the "rapacity" of the fruit growers. He further comments:

The dialectic of the situation does not work into a new synthesis but remains in tension for the antithesis of communism is not valid for America, and the antithesis of love and wisdom are not yet powerful enough to prevail. (261)

The Long Valley (1938) contained the beautiful short story. *The Red Pony* and others which had little to say about that time. But, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), master piece of Steinbeck is based upon the plight of men desperately looking for a living. Steinbeck has demonstrated his intense concern for human suffering. According to A.A Alvi, natural causes like "drought" and "bank collective capitalism" (33) are the causes of their suffering. Eventhough, *The Grapes of Wrath* is the masterpiece, Martin Shockley's comment upon the book is that, "*The Grapes of Wrath* represents us unfairly, it will give us a lot of unfavourable publicity, and confirm the low opinion us that seems to prevail outside the state" (62).

With the success of *The Grapes of Wrath* Steinbeck traveled to Mexico to film documentary, *Forgotten Village*, which is about living condition in rural Mexico. Then, he returned to the United States and published *Moon is Down* (1942). In 1943, he worked as war correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune. By 1948, Steinbeck had made three excursions to Russia, divorced his second wife and lost his friend Edward Ricketts. Between 1950 and 1959, Steinbeck published several novels including *East of Eden* and in 1962, he received the Nobel Prize for literature. In his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize for literature in 1962, he expressed his view about literature and the improvement of mankind.

Furthermore, the writer is delegated to declare and to celebrate man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit for gallantly in defeat for courage compassion, and love. In the endless war against weakness and despair these are the bright rally flags of hope and emulation. I hold that a writer who does not passionately believe in the perfectibility by man has no dedication nor any membership in literature. (qtd. in Donohue 294)

Of Mice and Men is the middle book in Steinbeck's trilogy about agricultural labour in California. He began the manuscript in the early months of 1936, shortly after completing his impressive strike novel, *In Dubious Battle*. In the 1930s tensions mounted between the state agribusiness and the under paid, oppressed, nearly invisible agricultural laborers. Strike broke out early in the decade and communist labor leaders moved in to organize workers. From 1935 to 1940 exiles from the drought plagued south west poured into the Golden State drawn by America's long held conviction that the west was the Promised Land the place to begin a new and by the more concrete expectation of employment in the orange groves and lettuce fields.

But the state's agribusiness simply could not employ all these refugees even on the vast tracts of land that produced much of nations food supply. So, the migrants moved restlessly up and down the state, waiting for crops to ripen, longing for work. And in 1936, the resident Californians were aware of the white families who were homeless, hungry, poor but proud. In this context he wrote the text *Of Mice and Men*.

Steinbeck has declared *Of Mice and Men* is not a historical text, he further describes" *Of Mice and Men* is in one sense and anachronistic text insisting on its artistry, not its historicity" (qtd.in Searle x). But, he has represented the historicity of the itinerants who are isolated and rootless. The characters that were nameless and victimized in his earlier book are registered in this novel. The clash between troubled worker and his boss between the powerless and the elite is exposed in the novel. The working class peoples' own powerlessness has created "social instability". The interaction among the characters in the novel is because of the misunderstanding, Jealousy, callousness etc. Indeed, through out the novel Steinbeck consistently mutes conflict between elite and powerless. By evaluating the theme of conflict, the critics have criticized the text from different perspectives.

Harriet Beecher Stowe comments *Of Mice and Men* as "unsatisfactory" novel because of lacking "tragic stature" and "human significance" of the characters. George and Lennie have dreamed the "little piece of land" but it is impossible in their life because George would take the "bucks" to the "cat house" (135) if he got it. Because of the characters' activities, Farrel has declared that *Of Mice and Men* have "all the mannerism and none of the substance of genuine realistic writing" (qtd.in Doren 446).

For the critic Carl Van Doren the novel has exposed the dependence of Lennie upon George and an "aching timeliness" while making the plans of a "small farm" for

the security to have their "own". He even commented nineteen twenty's and thirty's novel as follows:

The novels of the prosperous twenties had perpetually ridiculed people who desired no more than enough to eat and a place to sleep. A novel of the depressed and unemployed thirties could make touching heroes of men for whom such desires were now utopian. (365)

Similarly, Charles Child Walcutt has defined the title and the idea of the novel as "naturalistic". The characters, George and Lennie are compared with mice" to show their life "little better" than the mice which are kept in the "maze." Though, they are loyal, they have destroyed their life themselves to have "physical power". He further comments on them as; "They are spirit and power in chaotic mixed in chaos rather than fused in forms" (262).

As Charles Child Walcutt, Arthur Hobson Quinn has compared the characters of this novel with the "chimpunks" and has exposed the tragic situation of Lennie on the stage where George is responsible to murder Lennie, "*Of Mice and Men* (1937), a Streamlined novelette easily transformed into a Nominally the action of the ranch hand George, who shoots his witless Pal Lennie to save him from being lynched is tragic" (359).

Some critics have taken *Of Mice and Men* as a successful book where Max J. Herzberg comments upon this book, "*Of Mice and Men* (1937) is especially notable for its depiction of the simple minded giant Lennie, another of nature's unfinished children" (1079). It was first conceived as a play and was dramatized in the year of its publication winning the Drama Critics Circle Award. The impact *Of Mice and Men* is remarkable because of its success as a book a play and a flim which is best summarized by the citation given by the Drama Critics Circle Award as:

For its direct force and perception in handling a theme genuinely rooted in American life; for its bite into the strict quality of its material for its refusal to make this study of tragical loneliness and frustration either cheap or sensational and finally for its simple, intense and steadily rising effect on the stage. (qtd. in Searle xxvi)

Not only the above critics, but James Woodress has also declared the text *Of Mice and Men* as a successful book though the text is filled with "human compassion" on the one hand, Woodress has declared Steinbeck as an "antimaterialist" in that he feels guilty by making so much money after buying "screen right" from Hollywood. And on the other hand, he gives two dollars a piece to three thousand migrants.

To praise the genre *Of Mice and Men* Fred B Millet has exposed John Steinbeck as a very successful writer:

Of Mice and Men written as an experiment (in that the author tried to see how nearly he could make a short novel approach a play) was a best seller and enabled Steinbeck and his wife to take a trip to the Scandinavian countries in 1937. The play adapted by Steinbeck from the book received the award of the New York Drama Critics Circle in April, 1938 for the best American play of the season 1937-38. In 1939 he was elected to membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters. (219)

Similarly, George Perkins and Barbara Perkins have supported the above critics by defining the text "*Of Mice and Men* vastly successful book and as a drama on the stage is a vigorous story of friendship between two migratory workers, a tragic tale, appealing but sentimentalise" (410).

Other critics to comment upon *Of Mice and Men* are Robert E. Spiller and Jame D. Hart as well as Edmund Willson Robert E Spiller's focus is upon "fantasy and reality" which are mingled in the text. Spiller has studied the friendship of the "lumpish" Lennie and his "faithful" George. His comment upon George is that, "George is believable as a revelation of wrapped personality" (218).

But the view of James D. Hart and Edmund Wilson is different in that Jame D. Hart has exposed the strong desire for a home but they are perpetually deprived of it though two itinerant farms hands represent the tragedy of a class. And Edmund Wilson, for one, declared in a 1940 essay that "the author's characters were more nearly animal than human a cry taken up through the decades" (qtd.in Searle viii).

The technique Steinbeck applied in his own genere *Of Mice and Men* is a "play novelette." The play novelette is his democratic chart, "hybrid" that embraces elite and popular audience. By evaluating his writing style the critics have defined him, "He could be both symbolic artist and disciplined craftsman, a writer for the sophisticated and for the masses"(qtd in Searle xviii). The critic, Charles Child Walcutt has analysed the text from the perspective of symbolism. The minor character, Lennie Stands for symbolic significance whom he defines, "Lennie's feeble mindness symbolizes the helplessness of the folk in commercial society; perhaps in a large frame it symbolizes the bewilderment of man in wildless cosmos" (262).

Except Symbolism and dramatic form, other techniques Steinbeck applied in *Of Mice and Men* are "Stream of consciousness" and "Irony." *Of Mice and Men*, wrote Henry Seidel Canby for the *Saturday Review* is a "good story" telling by violating most of the cannons of storyteller's art in order to emphasis "ideology" the "Stream of consciousness" or "behaviourisms" (qtd.in Searle xxii). The story that follows is not in chronological order as well as the events that happened among the

characters is not specific. In this sense, the violation of the cannons is his own technique which makes his work different from others.

Another prominent technique used in *Of Mice and Men* is Irony. By analyzing the characters' behaviour, the critic, Lois Tyson, comments upon the characters from the ironical perspective:

Irony is the real world seen through a tragic lens, a world in which protagonist are defeated by the puzzling complexities of life. They may try to be heroic but they never achieve heroic stature. They may dream of happiness, but they never attain it. They're human like us, and so they suffer. (211)

However, the themes of the novel are; dreams, racism, ageism, sexism, euthanasia and violence. But in this novel I am discussing animalistic harshness by applying naturalism as a theoretical tool.

II. Naturalism

All literatures are founded on some concept of the nature of man. New concept of the man and his place in the world appears when a major new literary movement begins. The critic Charles Child Walcott views “Naturalism has its roots in the Renaissance its backgrounds in the middle ages” (4). The medieval idea of man was of a fallen creature in a dualistic universe. This dual universe was divided into heaven and earth, God and Satan, eternal and temporal and in man, soul and body. Nature was under God’s curse and man too, by his own fall, was under God’s curse, the man was torn in the eternal battle between “good” and “evil” because of having both “body” and “soul”. Thus, in the medieval age the sub-ordination of nature and dualism of universe took place very widely.

During the medieval age the church was the main center of learning, and it emphasized to the churchman to find a theory of law to suit the needs of the time. Through the medium of scripture, the knowledge about the “God” was revealed. science called “natural philosophy” was “the handmade of theology”, this was pursued for the glory of God.

But, in Renaissance period, the subordination of nature and its dualistic separation from spiritual matters began to vanish and a new concept of the nature of man took shape. The changes which appeared during the Renaissance have been defined by the critic Charles Child Walcott, “The change began with astronomy the Science further from man and society, but it got to man very rapidly, in a series of great intellectual strides that may reviewed briefly by reference to the thinkers who made them” (5).

The new concept of the nature of man in this period began with astronomy. The works of many astronomers and philosophers like Copernicus, Keppler, Galileo

and Descartes had already pointed that the universe was constant and indestructible. They said that the universe was composed of billions of minute particles which are ceaseless motion. But Newton's system dignified and implied that its laws were not subject to God's miraculous and mysterious intervention.

But, one most important popular philosophy to be found in Newton's Theories is "Deism". Deism anticipated the social and moral consequences of Newton's theories which were set forth some twenty years before the publication of his *Principia Mathematica* (1687). The deist's belief about the man was against the orthodox belief that he was fallen. The critic Charles Child Walcutt expresses the deist's view; "they said that man was innately and instinctively good; they doubted creeds and authority; and during the following centuries they put increasing emphasis on the worship of nature as God's only revelation" (6). By the end of 18th century, the philosophers of naturalism or deism were very influential in that science had not adequately implemented it with biological data.

In the 19th century, the scientific method, deistic faith and biological discoveries begun seriously to "converge" upon man and to suggest not only that his nature was good but also that his natural self was his ultimate self. Auguste Comte's positivism and Darwin's theory of evolution tremendously accelerated this trend. Positivism was presented as a naturalistic method of finding truth by stressing and objectivity to affirm that the only significant reality is content of experience. Positivism is different from science in that "it was a touch to burn dark rubbish of the past and light the way into future" (Walcutt 6). But the function of science was to observe facts and formulate.

Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) was a culmination in the field of biology of naturalistic temper of the period. This book revolutionized the man's conception with

regard to nature and defined the creation story based on Testaments that the universe was created by God having certain "Purpose" and "Design". By studying man in the biological perspective and his biological development inevitably emphasized his animal nature. To the horror of the pious people, this perspective appeared to destroy the foundation of religion and of morality. His further investigation revealed that biological evolution was maintained by random variation and natural selection. The species best adapted to their environment are preserved and those who can not adapt are wiping out. For this the environment or natural world allows them to vary or change upon varying conditions of living.

Another interesting point of Darwin's discovery is the "descent of man." He traced the link of human to the lower forms of primates which shook the religious foundation as never before. Church would believe that man is the supreme creation of God, modeled out on him with divine "purpose" of ruling the earth as per the God's command, with the discovery of man's ancestor's being apes Darwin further disclosed the fact that the morality, religiosity and conscientious human beings are all shams. In the deeper elemental level of existence all the creature including men are subject to the instinctual drives like anger, violence, sex, desire etc. The present forms of civilization and moral uprightness demonstrated by man is merely a modified structure of human being to watch the rational level but the actual human nature is manifested in bloody battles and warfare for existence. The concept of man as magnanimous tolerant and virtuous is replaced by hostile and aggressive, and vicious brute in the natural world. The procreative nature of every species causes the birth rate higher than the food and other essential can sustain. So for the sake of survival a ferocious battle becomes inevitable, where victor is preserved and vanquished wipe

out. Same is true to human species where Darwin concept of struggle and survival thus:

Individual having any advantage however, slight over others would have the best chance of surviving and of procreating their kind [. . .] any variation in the least degree injurious would be rigidly destroyed. This preservation of favorable individual difference and variations, and the destructions of those which are injurious, I have called natural selection, or survival of the fittest. (54)

Literary Concept of Naturalism

Naturalism, a philosophical perspective developed in the United States. It appeared as a new trend of realistic writing of 19th century in which the basic goal was reproduction of reality in literature and other figurative arts. It professed its views in counter to the literary modes like Idealism and Romanticism and had scientific and experimental nature. *Webster's New International Dictionary* defines Naturalism in the following way:

The principle and characteristics professed or represented by a 19th century school of realistic writers notably by Zola and Maupassant, who aimed to give a literal transcription of reality, and laid stress on the analytical study of characters, and on the scientific and experimental nature of their observation of life. (1631)

Naturalism is a belief that nature is truth and reality and only by means of scientific method we can determine truth. It denies the existence of supernaturals, rejects faith, revelation an institution of source of truth. The natural world of objects and events in space and time is all that is real. Man is completely a part of this natural world and he is only an incidental product of the world process. In this sense, we can

infer that naturalism is close to materialism. For it all meaning originates in experience in accordance with the general, cannons of scientific method. Naturalists question existence of supernatural anywhere in the universe and hold that if any non-natural entities exist, they may be known by their observable influence on natural objects. For naturalists idealism is fickle in the sense that idealists believe in things abstract i.e. "idea" and imaginary unreal things which have no concrete existence.

In literature, naturalism is a style of fiction writing, which aims at scientific objectivity in the portrayal of characters and they are shown to be motivated primarily by biological, economic, and social forces. The naturalists exposed the horror, filth, sordidness lurking around the society and human psyche. It was indisputably true that kind of writing would shock readers of that time; so the writers had to undergo sever ordeal for sometime but soon people realize the reality and began to approve it which we can clarify by the evidence of success of naturalistic fiction.

With the help of Naturalism, writers started to depict real life than realism. It was an influence in the movement towards pessimism, materialism and despair. In Naturalistic fiction, there is always a tension between hope and despair. The idea of perfect unity and brutal facts of experience come the themes, motifs, forms, and style through which naturalism found literary expression.

'Determinism, survival, violence, and taboos' are major themes and motifs. "Natural law" and "Socioeconomic" influences are exposed being more powerful than the human will, which carries the idea of determinism. 'Emotion, Motivation, and Conflict' are the approaches for survival, which grows out of the application of determinism by leading the people to their roots. In the novel of naturalism, Determinism is also important factor. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* defines the term Determinism as, "The belief that the people are not

free to choose what they are like or how they behave because these things are decided by their surroundings and other things over which they have no control" (417).

Determinism is a Philosophical doctrine, which holds that every event has its antecedent causes. Certain set of factors or causes are responsible in the occurrence of every event or action. Past events and circumstances have much to do with the present and future events. Dependence, inevitability and predictability are the terms connected with Determinism. Occurrence of any event depend on other causes; what is bound to happen is inevitable or unalterable and given all the conditions or causes necessary for any event to occur, we can predict, what will happen in the future. That is to say specific set of conditions will determine a specific set of events and if these conditions are present again the same events may be predicted.

Most of the Naturalistic fictions deal with the theme of survival, which grows out of the application of determinism to biological competition. The survival of animal is a matter of violence and intimate sexual disclose of force against force. Like animals, the lower nature of man is also disclosed and explored by violence. From this violence and survival, there comes an attack on taboos. Sex, disease, bodily functions, obscenity and depravity which are considered improper is known as taboos. In Naturalistic novel taboo is found in the province of physical survival.

Naturalistic novel is often written like a documentary because it intends to report certain episodes of reality with scientific accuracy and objectivity. Satire, mockery and ironic reversals are the weapons against the values which they are attacking. Steinbeck often uses ironic reversal to undress the middle class conservative morality. Naturalists are also considered as impressionists; for they capture the mood, color, tone of setting and psyche upheaval undergoing inside the character's mind.

Emile Zola, Stephen crane, Jack London, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, John Steinbeck and so on are adapted as the theorist of “Naturalism.” In the nineteenth century, Naturalism became the mode of fiction in which many novels were written.

In literature, naturalism is an approach which proceeds from an analysis of reality in term of natural forces, e.g. heredity environment, physical drives, and the naturalists tended to concern themselves with the harsh, often sordid aspect of life. The chief literary theorist of naturalism was Emile Zola who said in his essay *Le Roman Experimental* (1880) “The novelists should be like the scientists examining dispassionately various phenomena in life, and drawing indisputable conclusion” (449). In Emile Zola’s phrase human beings are “human beast” so, the characters should be studied through their relationship to their surrounding to be impartial without moralizing about their nature.

Zola’s experimental novel as he termed it grew from contemporary scientific practices as well as from the philosophy of positivism. In order to discover fundamental truth the scientists must arrange and observe his data carefully. In fact, observation and experiment depict the accurate reality of the nature. The critic, Claude Bernard in the essay *The Experimental Novel* by Emile Zola describes and gives emphasizes upon observer and experimentalist in the following way:

The name of ‘observer’ is given to him who applies the simple or complex process of investigation in the study of phenomena which he does not vary and which he gathers consequently, as nature offers them to him; the name of experimentalist is given to him who employs the simple and complex process of investigation to vary or modify, for an end of some kind, the natural phenomena, and to make them appear

under circumstances and condition in which they are not presented by nature. (52)

Zola was deeply impressed by the scientific fidelity of the *Concourts' Germaine Lacerteux*. He reviewed it and wrote in Charles Child Walcott's book named *American Literary Naturalism: A Divided stream* that; "The drama is terrific, it has the powerful interest of a physiological and psychological problem, of a case of physical and moral illness, of a story which has to be true" (31). The experimental idea which he found in this novel derived Zola for more than 20 years.

Next philosophy to influence Zola was Taine's claim of manifestations of literary genius to be accounted for in terms of the race, the milieu, and the moment. But Zola challenged Taine for his negligence to give proper emphasis to the importance of individual temperament in art. For Zola, reality had to be converted into art where he writes as an experimental scientist in the preface of *Therese Raquin* (1867) that, "I have tried to study temperaments rather than characters". There is whole book [. . .] my two heroes are the satisfaction of physical need" (Zola 32).

Here, it is clear that the love of his two heroes is not the love of spirituality. His heroes intend to love not for spirituality but to fulfill their physical needs.

Zola's characters are primarily from the lower middle class or the lower class, the world is that of the common place and unheroic in which life would seem to be dull and actions there in are violent and passionate which involve sexual adventure, display of bodily strength which at last culminate in desperate moments and violent death. Zola's attempt in his novel was quite contemporary. That is, he employed the conditions of living of lower class in the novels just to find the identical result in either of them reality of fiction.

L'Assommoir clearly reveals the main idea of Zola, The degradation of Gervaise and Coupeau is presented as an inevitable result of forces over which they have no control. Their lives were very smooth and at distance from sin and sorrow but unfortunately misfortune enter in their lives not because God punished them or some extraterrestrial things happened in their lives but because they, on their own out of pressure, turned toward the way of their physical and moral degradation. This kind of inevitability runs through his novel. In *Germinal* also the main character Etienne Lantier's honest attitude to improve the condition of miners by promoting strikes takes a bad turn returning the miners to the pits and future as hopelessly black as the coal they dig. The power of naturalism is very oppressive here in the novel.

Another Naturalist writer Stephen Crane who is known as Christopher Marlowe of American Naturalism, shows his characters frustrated in a crazy world, where they do not function well enough to control their own destinies as well as unable to understand them very well. His Naturalism is to be found in his attitude towards received values, which he regularly attacked through his Naturalistic method. Crane's success is a triumph of style, manner and meaning because these things are same, we can also label that his Naturalism is descriptive. He says that sequence of events is caused due to the will and judgement of the people involved. He simply portrays that men's will do not control their destinies.

Like other naturalist writers Jack London also denies the existence of free will. He saw life as a "struggle" for existence in which quarter is always denied and only the strong can survive. In this sense, London's thought was linked to Darwin in that "strength is pure, strength is good, and weakness was therefore evil" (Blond Beasts 92). London's focus is upon "atavism." From atavism the man moves by natural steps to the superman whom he considers at one time to be superior because non-moral and

at another antisocial irritant who can not survive in the complex modern world.

Charles Child Walcutt's further comment about the nature of man is:

The world is a jungle, where men grapple with one another for life and its accessories murder and are in turn murdered, fly after pleasure, and resign themselves with store calm to whatever pain they can not elude. Man's only duty is to discharge his energy and die, at the same time expressing his individuality as best he can. (93)

The main problem of any Naturalistic novel is the relation between characters and the external forces that oppress or control them. The external forces control man's will.

According to Charles Child Walcutt, in his book *American Literary Naturalism: Divided Stream*, Frank Norris says, "novelist should present life realistically, but his concern must be with the people rather than theories" (116). He employs the appearance of factual reality to explore the unplumbed depths of human heart and mystery of sex. The dominant passion-love, hate, greed, sexuality etc. are found in his novels.

Theoder Dreiser's is different from other Naturalist writers. He is a pioneer Naturalist in American literature. He deserves a place in our literature for his sever attack as well as his long and active interest in American social problems. His mixture of despair and idealism, of wonder and fear of pity, and guilt has given same powerful novels of the Naturalistic tradition. Dreiser's had been considerably impressed by a Zolasque novel composed by one of his own experience with the dreary, beaten and down trodden life of those who have no money, no background, no sophistication and no special talent. He shows that will is not free to operate independently and it lacks the power to bring its impulse for fulfillment. His characters seek a meaning in their experience which they can not find. Desire has

always been seeking solid foundations for social and personal order. His characters are always bewildered because the world is too complicated and they are not equipped to understand it. Dreiser deals with things as they are. He demonstrates the evils of our society and says that these evils follow us, but never leaves us. Like Dreiser the evil intention can be found in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.

Steinbeck's naturalism figures the conflicting ideas in the novel. The people in his novel are always in the verge of becoming human but never do. The lines given help that his characters have animalistic nature: "I find it valid to understand man as animal before I am prepared to know him as a man" (A.A. Alvi 35). There is persistent failure to realize human life fully in his books, where the characters in many American naturalistic novels have ceased to human. The critic's description about Steinbeck is: "Steinbeck's absorption in the life of his native valley gives him a sympathetic perspective on the animal nature of human life, a means of reconciliation with people as people" (Kazin 395).

There is an element of sadism in Steinbeck's work, and violence and degradation often seem to fascinate him for their own sake. Edmund Wilson has observed that he does not humanize his animals in the manner of Kipling and other writers; rather he shows a tendency to drop human beings to the animal level. By analyzing the character's behaviour in Steinbeck's novels, Woodburn Ross, who stresses Steinbeck's affinities with Hume, Rousseau, and especially Comte, writes;

[. . .] he is a man of two worlds. As a believer in the inductive, scientific method he must record what he sees, he must write realistically, but as a man of powerful affections and intuitions he must reflect irrational attitude which are justifiable only in terms of the desires of the human spirit. He is therefore at the same time brutal and

tender, rational and irrational, concrete and abstract. (qtd. in Doren 447)

Likewise H. Huxley as Jack London and Steinbeck, John exposes brutality upon human brain where his comment is, “which make his mental existence a terror and burden and fill his physical life with barren toil and battle” (45).

This view is supported by the critic Charles Child Walcutt in the book named *American Literary Naturalism: A Divided Stream* to expose "Primitive brute" (96) to be remained in every human being. Having combined the primordial with the sort of exultation over physical strength that London manifests and there results the "Call of the Wild" school of fiction which Frederic Taber Cooper has commented as follows:

There is a vast difference between thinking of man as a healthy human beast and thinking him as an unhealthy human beast and the "Call of the Wild" of fiction is tending toward precisely this exaggerated and mistaken point of view. The chief trouble with all so-called *Back to Nature* books' that they suggest an abnormal self conscious, a constant preoccupation regarding the measure of our animalism. (qtd.in *Blond Beasts* 96)

The naturalist writers portray life as it is and believe that man is fundamentally animal without free will. To the naturalist writers man can be explained in terms of the forces, usually heredity and environment which M.H. Abraham defines:

This thesis, a product of post-Darwinian biology in the nineteenth century, held that a human being exists entirely in the order of nature and does not have a soul nor any mode participating in a religious or spiritual world beyond the natural world and therefore, that such a being is merely a higher order animal whose character and behaviour

are entirely determined by two kind of forces heredity and environment. A person inherits compulsive instincts – especially hunger, the drive to accumulate possessions, and sexuality and is then subject to the social and economic forces in the family, the class and the milieu into which that person is born. (261)

Naturalistic novel exposes the “tragedy” in which human being is crushed and destroyed by the operation of forces which has no power to resist or even to understand. The tragedy in Naturalistic fiction happens due to the circumstances and the loss of individual mind’s struggle. In this regard M. H. Abrams in his book *A Glossary of Literary Terms* writes: "The end of the naturalistic novel is usually “tragic” but not as classical and Elizabethan tragedy, because of a heroic but losing struggle of the individual mind and will against Gods, enemies, and circumstances" (175).

In Naturalism, tragic situation happens due to circumstances. Karl F Zender writes in *Studies in the Novel*:

Naturalistic writers depict humankind as puppet like in its incapacity to resist the forces of heredity and environment [. . .] it contributes to the creation of tragedy only through its illusion making power believing they free. Characters in naturalistic novels forge even more strongly their enslaving chain. (2-3)

The characters in Naturalistic fiction enjoy with material prosperity but never become happy and they are ignorant of prosperity, which can not buy happiness because this is not infantile desire.

However Naturalism is a broad term in that instinct and sensation falls under the area of naturalism though these terms are connected to the psychoanalysis.

Having naturalism, a study of nature, John Steinbeck in the novel *Of Mice and Men* has studied the character's psyche activities by being objective. The characters in this novel have led their life on the basis of sensation and instinct in which tragic situation of both the man and animal has happened due to animalistic nature of the characters.

Sensation and Instinct

Traditionally, perceptions have been thought of as mode of sensations. Sensations are divided into separate groups: Visual, tactile, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, etc. Some regions of the brain have been identified especially important for various sensation, but just how or indeed why certain brain activities in critical regions produce sensations remains mysterious. Therefore, sensations are essentially private; we have no way of knowing how the world appears to other people. Strictly speaking we can not know another person's sensation. Although, sensation is ultimately mysterious as consciousness is mysterious M. Rosenthal and P. Yudin define the term, sensation, "The stimulus in the form of discrete impulse is transmitted along the nerve canals the central part. The analyzer, the cerebral cortex; where sensation arises" (406).

The term instinct is used to imply without thought which produces action to prior to any thought of the consequences. The irrational forces in man's nature were emphasized by Freud, but the idea of Mc Dougall probably had a greater influence upon the scientific development of the concept of instinct. MC Dougall, in the book, *The Oxford Companion to the Mind* regarded instincts as irrational and compelling motivational force. His further comment about the instinct is that, "instinct was accompanied by an emotion" (qtd.in Gregory 374). Pugnacity and the emotion of anger, flight, and the emotion of fear, repulsion and disgust etc are the examples of instinct.

Instinct is a form of psyche activity, a type of behaviour. In a more specific sense, instinct is a type of behaviour inborn in a given species of animals and fixed by

biological heredity genetically transmitted from (parent to offspring) in the same way as anatomical features are. Freud defines instinct as; “Instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things” (567). Freud has divided instincts into two parts, *Eros* and *Thanatos*. The former is love instinct and the latter is death instinct. He has defined the two basic instincts in the given way:

The aim of the first of these basic instincts is to establish ever greater unities and to preserve them thus—in short to bind together, the aim of the second, on the contrary is undo connections and so to destroy things. We may suppose the final aim of the destructive instinct is to reduce living things to an inorganic state. (564)

Anyway, instinct is a natural tendency for people and animals to behave in a particular way using the knowledge and abilities that they were born with rather than thought or training.

According to M. Rosenthal and P. Yudin “Instinctive behaviour is characteristics of animals” (218) which is based on biological forms of existence developed in the process of adaptation to the environment. But Paul Thomas Young considers instinctive behaviour as, “This is a behaviour in which innate structure plays a dominant role, activation typically comes from the environmental conditions combined with internal psychological factors” (69). Likewise the critics Julius Gould and William L. Kolb define the instinctive behaviour in the given way; “An action which we ourselves should require experience to enable us to perform by an animal more especially very young one, without any experience, and when performed by many individual” (336). Thus instinctive behaviours are those actions or reaction to specific stimuli, shown in similar form of all normally developed members of species (or sex or age group) without any specific life experience being emergence.

III. Animalistic Instinctual Life in *Of Mice and Men*

According to Charles Darwin and other critics, the apes are the ancestors of the human beings. For Charles Darwin and other critics, anger, violence, sex, desire, flight, fear, disgust etc are innate in the human beings which are not intellectual motives. Having been the offspring of the animals the instincts, which are discussed earlier, are the animalistic instincts in humans. In this regard, the characters' behaviour in the novel *Of Mice and Men* is like animals revealing their animalistic nature. To divide into subchapters animalistic instinctual life is analyzed where the destruction of both the men and animals happens due to their callous nature.

Sensation and Determinism

Visuals, touches, sound; smells etc are the main factors to happen any event in this novel. The characters do any activities on the basis of their sense perception without thinking any consequences may happen in the future. Immediately, whatever their sense perception allows them they do. The misconduct upon the human beings as well as animals is the result of sense perception. Without understanding the reality the men expose their brutal nature to both the humans and animals which is very disastrous aspect for the human beings.

When the character Lennie sees the red dress worn by the girl in the Weed he gets attracted and catches it. Weed is their former working place from where they come to the bunk house near the Salinas River. Lennie's attraction towards the red color has created problem in their life in that they had to escape from there. By not being able to control himself he has caught the red dress worn by the girl. He has no former experience before this, John Steinbeck describes the nature of Lennie in the following way:

Well, he seen this girl in red dress, dumb bastard like he is, he wants to touch ever' thing he likes. Just wants to feel it so he reaches out to feel this red dress and the girl lets out a squawk, an' that gets Lennie all mixed up, he holds on' cause that's the only thing he can think to do. Well, this girl squawks and squawks. I was jus' a little bit of, and I heard all the yelling' so I comes running, an' by that time Lennie's so scared all he can think to do is just hold on. I shocked him over the head with a fence picked to make him let go. He was so scairt he could not let go of that dress. And he's so God damn strong, you know. (42)

The girl in the Weed tells the law she has been raped. The girl accused of Lennie of sex though his intention was not of that. Not to find out the truth the people in the Weed started a party lynch Lennie out. The people did not ask anything about the event happened between the girl and Lennie. What the girl said to the people around the Weed is right for them. Having one sided on their judgment they have troubled to George and Lennie. The words which the girl spoke about Lennie made them leave that place. Everyone for his or her existence, is ready to leave the place where there is no peace; "So we sit in an irrigation ditch under water all the rest of the day" (42). For survival George and Lennie have escaped from the Weed as the animals escape to save their life.

Colors, touches and sound have become the sources for the event to happen in the Weed. If Lennie had not become attracted with the red dress worn by the girl, he would not have touched that dress and he wouldn't have to escape from the Weed hiding himself in the irrigation ditch. If the people in the Weed had judged the activities by being objective there would not have any disgust toward Lennie.

Not only Lennie and the people in the Weed lead a life of sensation but Carlson, too. Candy, the Swamper, the old man has a dog which is old, Steinbeck's description about the dog is that, "And at his heels there walked a drag footed sheep dog, gray of muzzle, and with pale, blind old eyes. The dog struggled lamely to the side of the room and laid down, grunting softly to himself and licking his grizzled moth-eaten coat" (25).

The dog has to be brought up by Candy from his childhood. In its young, the dog was very useful to watch the sheep in the field though it is old at present. The dog follows Candy and goes wherever Candy goes. Carlson does not like the dog in the room. Steinbeck further describes from the perspective of Carlson: "He stopped and sniffed the air, and still sniffing, looked down at the old dog. God awmighty, that dog stinks. Get him outta here, Candy! I don't know nothing that stinks as bad as an old dog. You gotta get him out" (45). Carlson does not like the dog staying there in the room and advises Candy to take the dog out and shoot the dog right in the back of the head. Even though, Carlson advises to shoot the dog Candy rejects, "may be tomorrow, let's wait till tomorrow" (48). Carlson expresses his desire to kill the dog to say the dog can't eat, can't see, and even can't walk without hurting. By listening such expressions from Carlson, Candy looks at Slim for finding out some solution but there is no response from Slim. In spite of Candy's disagreement Carlson led the dog out into the darkness. Here darkness refers to death.

After the dog was taken away, Candy remains silent and did not answer at Slim's response, "Candy, you can have anyone of them pups you want" (49). But, at that moment there came a little growling sound from a little distance and looked down towards gratefully. Only Candy continued to stare at ceiling. A shot sounded on the

distance made the man to look quickly at the old man, Candy but there was no sympathy towards him.

As Jack London says brutality is innate upon the human beings, the character, Carlson exposes his brutal nature upon the dog as well as upon the swamper, Candy. Carlson could not understand the psychic upheaval of Candy and killed the dog without any hesitation. The 'Human beings are human beasts' has been proved from his behaviour. More than Carlson's intellectual aspect, his sensation works much and the disastrous event of the dog happens which is very harmful.

There is not only mistreatment upon the animals on the basis of sensation but upon the human beings, too. Crooks is also the human being though his color is black. Crooks is treated badly by the people in the ranch and kept in the secret room in the bunk house. After Curley is taken away to the city for the treatment Lennie goes into the Crooks's chamber to make him friend. But Crooks becomes angry and does not allow permission to enter in the room because of the mistreatment the people around the area behaved upon him. Steinbeck further describes his situation, "Cause I'm black. They play cards in there but I can't play because I'm black. They say I stink. Well, I tell you, you all of you stink to me" (80). Despite Crooks's disagreement as well as scoldness upon Lennie, Lennie's disarming smile defeated Crooks and became able to enter in his room.

Determinism is another philosophical doctrine in the novel which the antecedents play a great role to bring the tragic situation of Lennie and Curley's wife. The terms connected to the determinism are dependence, predictability and inevitability which have a significance in the novel. Lennie's dependence upon George, George's predictability to the future to observe Lennie, Curley, and Curley's wife's activities, the calculation of Lennie's death by shooting are suggestive that

Lennie may create a problem in future, etc are the examples related to the term determinism in this novel.

Having escaped from the Weed George, Lennie's friend guides Lennie and orders not to speak anything with the boss where they are going to buck the barley – George says, “if he finds out what a crazy bastard you are, we won't get no job, but if he sees ya work before he hears ya talk, we're set. Ya got that?” (8). George has frightened with the boss whom they are meeting the next day. George thinks that if Lennie speaks with the boss they are kicked out from the job. Everyone struggles for survival so that George has ordered Lennie to be quite while talking with the boss.

After reaching the bunk house at the farm the boss asks the question to Lennie but Lennie in a panic looks at George for help, “he can do anything you tell him,” George said (24). Likewise, Lennie looks helplessly to George for instruction while Curley asks the big guy, Lennie to speak. To know Curley's pugnacious nature, George predicts that Curley hurts Lennie. Steinbeck further describes:

Look, Lennie! This here ain't no set up. I'm scared, you gonna have troubled with that Curley's guy. I had seen that kind before. He was kind feeling you out. He figures he's got you scared and he's gonna take a sock at you the first chance he gets.

Lennie's eyes were frightened. “I don't want no trouble,” he said plaintively. Don't let him sock me George. (30)

George, Lennie's friend, who has played the role of parent advises Lennie not to make any mistake there and to be silent and go away from there while Curley comes around you.

Lennie cannot decide what is right and what is wrong in that he is mentally deficient, lack of thought is very important aspect of animalistic instinct in this novel.

He can not tackle with George in fear when George speaks, to the boss to say Lennie is his cousin and that promised his mother that he could care of him. Not to give any opportunity to speak Lennie, George tells the boss that Lennie is not bright but he is strong as bull and can do anything what the boss orders. To be dependent upon George, Lennie turned to George and scolded when the sound of the boss's footstep had died away. Steinbeck views that, "so you was not gonna say a word. You was gonna leave our big flapper shut and leave me do the takin. Damn near lost us the job" (25).

John Steinbeck in the very first chapter has exposed Lennie as 'without thought' Lennie has not any idea and creativity; he only leads a life of imitation. To imitate means to depend upon somebody for every activity. In this novel, Lennie fully depends upon George and imitates to observe the activity of his friend, George, performed:

Then he replaces his hat, pushed himself back from the river, drew up his knees, and embraced them. Lennie, who had been watching imitated George exactly. He pushed himself back, drew up his knees, embraced them, and looked over to George to see whether he had it just right. (5)

Not only Lennie imitated one time but again and again. Steinbeck for the more information emphasizes upon Lennie's imitation as, "George lay back on the sand and crossed his hands under his head, and Lennie imitated him, raising his head to see whether he were doing it right" (9).

By being mentally deficient Lennie imitates the way George does and asks George where they are going, and George in turn scolds him for forgetting. Lennie claims that he remembers about the rabbits the only part of their plan. The events that

happened in his life has to be repeated by George, “An you ain’t gonna do no bad things like you done in Weed, neither” (8).

On the one hand, Lennie’s lack of thought made George to fun upon Lennie, on the other hand he thinks that Lennie is “dumb” as well as is not bright either. To be thought Lennie can do nothing towards him George jokes to Lennie which Steinbeck describes, “why he’d any damn thing I tol’ him. If I tol him to walk over cliff, over held go” (41). Lennie never lifted a finger against him. Lennie obeys whatever George says him to do, “Jump in’ and he jumps. Could not swim a stroke. He damn near drowned before we could get him. An he was so damn nice to me for pulling’ him out” (4). Such activities of Lennie indicate that Lennie can not think of doing nothing, but he is sure he can take orders.

By thinking Lennie is guided by George, Crooks behaves oddly upon Lennie. Crooks asks Lennie what would he do if George left him or if George was hurt. Suddenly, Lennie’s eyes centered and grew quiet and mad. He stood up and walked dangerously towards Crooks, “who hurt George, he demanded” (71). By seeing the danger in the activities of Lennie, Crooks is frightened and tries to get out from the bunk house to say, “I was just supposing” George ain’t hurt. He’s all right. He’ll be back all right” (72). Having seat on the nail Lennie grumbled nobody is going to hurt George. Lennie has fully depended upon George in that without him he can not lead a life and gets angry when somebody speaks against George who has played the role of parent upon Lennie after the death of Lennie’s aunt Clara.

To be known the true nature of Curley as well as his wife and Lennie, the character, George predicts the future event. By predicting Lennie may repeat something wrong in future too, George orders Lennie:

Course you did well, look. Lennie – if you jus’ happen to get in trouble like you always done before, I want you to come to right here an’ hide in the brush.

“Hide in the brush,” said Lennie slowly.”

Hide in the brush till I come for you. Can you remember that? (17)

Because of the dependence upon George Lennie has a tragic situation in his life. Though George orders Lennie to remain away from Curley and his wife there is encounter among them.

By obeying George’s order Lennie did not react against Curley though Curley attacked Lennie to accused of laughing at Curley while others had joked to Curley. If Lennie was not dominated and ordered by George, he could not have suffer and harm as well as they had not to speak false to Curley’s wife that Curley’s hand was caught in the machine. To speak false with the wife is their fearness.

To take Curley out for the treatment in the hospital, Curley’s wife did not have a friend. To show Lennie playing in the barn with the pups, she drew his attention and made him to touch her hair softly. She allows Lennie to feel her hair, but he messes it up and screams at him to let go, “you stop it now, you’ll mess it all up” (89). Lennie could not control his anger and closed over her mouth and nose. She would not die if Curley’s wife had given Lennie to touch softly. After the death of Curley’s wife by Lennie, George thinks it is inevitable to kill Lennie. The death of Curley’s wife and Lennie’s is analyzed from the perspective of violence and iterative imagery in the next topic.

Violence and Iterative Imagery in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

Violence is unlawful physical force which results in rational and irrational level. In *Of Mice and Men* the murder of Curley’s wife climaxes this novel; is an apt

illustration of how violence can be conceived as animal. The characters are completely instinctive in their behaviours. The character Lennie has no resentment against Curley's wife he kills; on the rational level he has no reason for killing.

The killing of Lennie by George is a rational human act. When the moment comes to kill Lennie, George knows very clearly what he's doing and why he has to do it. The characters in *Of Mice and Men* are capable of violent acts for both the men and animals. The killing nature of the dogs and pups by Carlson and Slim is also rational act respectively. Slim's violence activities can be examined, "I would have had to drown most of them anyways. No need to thank me about that" (39). There is not natural death of the pups but physical force causes the destruction of them. Though he killed the pups to think all of them can not survive, the act which he performed is inhuman nature. Having guided by the animalistic instinct he could not experience the pain of killing as Lennie and harmed them as Lennie.

Lennie's act over the animals is irrational. On Sunday afternoon Lennie was in the barn petting his new puppy. He killed the puppy by bouncing it too hard. Lennie scoops out a little hollow and lays the puppy. And Lennie plans to tell George that he found it dead, but realizes that George will know what he did. Suddenly, Lennie becomes angry at the dead puppy, raging at the puppy for being so fragile and worrying that he won't be allowed to tend rabbits. Having Lennie's violence nature to kill the pups his aunt Clara gave him a "rubber mouse" instead of live mice. Steinbeck's further comment is, "Lennie pinched their heads a little and then they were dead because they were no little" (11).

Thus violence is innate in the human beings is approval through the activities of the characters. The acts of the characters' performance is either rational or irrational, the behaviour they exposed is animalistic as well as instinctive. Having

violent acts, the characters in the novel are kept in the place of animals. Steinbeck describes George's violence nature; "George went quickly to him, grabbed him by the shoulder and rolled him over. He reached down and picked the tiny puppy from where Lennie had been concealing it against his stomach" (43). Through out the novel the violent acts of the character can be examined in which the quarter is bitterly treated by the fittest one. Due to George's violent act, Lennie can not tolerate it and a sense of flight occurs which is found in Lennie's idea of going all alone by himself and finding a cave and living in it for ever. Steinbeck writes:

George, you want I should go away and leave you alone?

Where the hell could you go?

Well, I could. I could go off in the hills there. Some place I'd find a cave. Lennie still knelt. He looked off into the darkness across the river.

Yeah? How'd you eat? You ain't got sense enough to find nothing to eat.

I'd find things, George. I don't need no nice food with ketchup. I'd lay out in the sun and nobody'd hurt me. An' if I foun'a mouse, I could keep it. Nobody'd take it away from me. (14)

It indicates that Lennie cares for small animals and focuses only on simple pleasure such as ketchup.

Steinbeck frequently refers to the animal world with its life based on immediate motives. In the novel, there is the recurrent use of animal reference which can be regarded as iterative imagery. Human beings are shown to be having animal Characteristics. A good example of animal imagery can be found in the very first chapter *Of Mice and Men* when George says to Lennie:

Guys like us, which work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They do not belong no place. They come to ranch an' work up a stake and then they go inta town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch. (15)

In the novel, there is not dominant animal symbol but the close coordination between these symbols and human behaviours. Lennie Small himself is a huge man, shapeless of face, with large pale eyes, with wide slopping shoulders; and he walked heavily dragging his feet a little the way a bear drags his paws. Steinbeck's further comment about Lennie is that, "his arms did not swing at his sides but hung loosely and only moved the heavy hands were with pendula." (4). Not only is Lennie shapeless as a human being, going half way backward in the scale of evolution, but his response to the situations mostly unspoken of those of animal. The coordination between Lennie and bear is often mentioned in course of the novel, "Lennie dabbled his big paw in the water and wiggled his fingers so the water aroused in a little splashes; rings widened across the pool to the other side and can back again. Lennie was them go" (5). Again Curley was white and shrunken by now, and his struggling had become weak. He stood crying, his fist lost in Lennie's 'Paw'. Even Lennie's drinking water from the pool recalls animal behaviour, "[He] dropped his blanket and flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool, drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse" (4).

That Lennie is like a huge bear in a human shape led by his keeper George is an essential part of the whole story when the cocky Curley provokes Lennie for a fight, goes on raining blows on him and punches him hard, the huge person never reacts but whimper because he is forbidden to fight with Curley by his so called

keeper, George. When Curley's rage exploded and he cried, "Come on ya big bastard. Get upon your feet. No big son of beach is gonna laugh at me. I'll show ya who's yella" (62). Lennie looks helplessly at George and then he tries to retreat. Curley is balanced and poised. He slashes at Lennie with his left and then smashes down his nose with a right. Lennie gives a cry of terror. Blood welles from his nose. "George," he cried, "make 'um let me alone George" (63). He backed until he was against the wall, and Curley follows slugging in the face. Lennie's hands remained sides; he was too frightened to defend himself. It is only when George yells, "Get' im, Lennie. Don't let him do it." "[. . .] Get 'im, Lennie!" "[. . .] I said get him" that the huge giant innocently catches hold of the fist of Curley within his "big paw" (63). The result is that Curley's hand has been caught between the two jaws of a big nut – cracker. This very seen is expressive of Lennie's animal nature, innocent by itself but backed by huge power.

Without George, Lennie doesn't understand what to do. Lennie gets frightened and uses his strength to hold on to objects. Lennie is Just like a child. He will do what ever George tells him to, "Curley was flopping like a fish on a line, and his closed fist was lost in Lennie's hand" (63). George slapped Lennie in the face again and again and still lennie holds on. Through Lennie's action we can see that Lennie is very similar to child. Lennie's first instinct when he is scared is to hold on. Just as a little kid holds on to its mum or dad when they become frightened, Lennie holds on to objects.

Steinbeck's Lennie is obsessed with stroking soft things; mice, rabbits, newborn puppies, piece of velvet, woman's hair and clothe; Lennie says, "I like to pet nice things with my finger, soft things" (89). Lennie's morbid interest in stroking furry surface is again animal response. When he strokes mice or pups, just for the

tactile pleasure derived from the fact that he has no higher nature. He is frankly amoral and can never understand the implications of many of his actions. His petting is often so violent that inadvertently kills the animals he strokes. Same thing has happened upon the human beings too. When Curley's wife unsuspectingly invites him to stroke her soft hair Lennie is ecstatic, but when she begins to struggle against him, he panics, accidentally kills her neck and tries to bury her. As of Lennie's low intelligence to understand his strength, he becomes frightened and kills Curley's wife and as a result, she ends up being killed, "She took Linnie's hand and put on her head. And then she cried angrily. Lennie's fingers closed on her hair and hung on. He shook her and her body flopped like a fish. And then she was still" (90). Even when Curley's wife has been choked to death, he, like the animals that he never understands the meaning of death and what he has done. Steinbeck always uses the "paw" as the equivalent or Lennie's hand to show his animalism, "he pawed up the hay, until it partly covered her" (90).

In the novel there are many references to creatures like lizards, rabbits, dogs, deer and snakes (particularly water snakes). There are accurate descriptions of their movements indicating Steinbeck's deep interest in the world of animals. He writes:

On the sandy bank under the trees, the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of, 'coons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drive in the dark," and A water-snake slipped along on the pool, its head held up like a little periscope. The reeds jerked slightly in the current. (1)

The reference to human attitude towards animals – looking after them as long as they are healthy and able – bodied and shooting them when they are ill or old—has a close bearing with Lennie’s existence. The following passage from the novel clarifies this fact:

Carlson said thoughtfully, “Well, look here, Slim. I been thinkin’.
That dog of Candy’s is so god-damn old he can’t hardly walk. Stinks like hell, too. Ever’ time he comes into the bunk-house. I can smell him for two, three days whyn’t you get Candy to shoot his old dog and give him one of the pups to raise up. I can smell that dog a mile away. Got no teeth, damn near blind, can’t eat. Candy feeds him milk. He can’t chew nothing else. (37)

Lennie, too, when no longer useful and troublesome is shot later by George. So we may conclude that Lennie is more or less like an old dog – an animal. Crooks even tells Lennie, “[W]ant me to tell ya what happen? They’ll take ya to the booby hatch. They’ll tie ya up with a collar, like a dog” (71).

In the concluding Chapter of the novel we are back again in the midst of nature with the same snake, “A water-snake glided smoothly up the pool, twisting its periscope head from side to side, and it swam the length of the pool and came to the legs of a motionless heron that stood in the shallows” (98). At first, we came across the water-snake in the first chapter. The iteration is found in this chapter when Lennie, as in the first chapter, is again mentioned as “[. . .] appeared out of the brush, and he came as silently as a creeping bear moves” (98).

In Lennie’s simple consciousness he could only think of Aunt Clara, a huge rabbit and of George, crazily repeating the same impression: “And then from out of Lennie’s head there came a little fat old woman. [. . .] when she spoke, it was in

Lennie's voice" and "Aunt Clara was gone, and from out of Lennie's head there came a gigantic rabbit. It sat on its hunches in front of him and it waggled its ears and crinkled its nose at him. And it spoke in Lennie's voice, too" (101). There is the pathetic end, when as a consolation it is George, and not Curley who shoots him and puts an end to an unusual animal existence.

The shooting of Lennie is itself an act of repulsion on the part of George. It is almost like shooting a beloved creature, loyal and faithful, but it has to be: "And George raised the gun and steadied it, and he brought the muzzle as it close to the back of Lennie's head. The hand shook violently" (85).

Though the animalistic symbol is not found in other characters they have led the life of animalistic nature. The instincts "anger" "disgust" "fear" etc are used for the characters. To work the animalistic instinct, George killed his friend Lennie. If George had a desire to save Lennie he could save by sending Lennie to the mountain which Lennie had already told. When the animalistic instincts work there does not seem any sympathy and violent act happens. On the one hand, George has played the role of parent to take care of Lennie in every activity on the other hand, George gets angry when Lennie desires ketchup for pleasure. Steinbeck describes George's anger in the following way:

Well, we ain't got any, George exploded. "Whatever we ain't got, that's what you want. God a'mighty, if I was alone I could live so easy. I could go get a job an' work, an' no trouble. No mess at all, and when the end of the month comes I could take my fifty bucks and go into town and get whatever I want. Why, I could stay in a cat house all night. I could eat any place I want, hotel or any place, and order any damn thing I could think of. An' I could do all that every damn month.

Get a gallon of whisky, or set in a pool room and play cards or shoot pool.” Lennie knelt and looked over the fire at the angry George. (13)

Anger remains among the characters in this novel. Even though the boss is the major character, he gets angry when George and Lennie come late for the work. The swamper, Candy, further describes the boss’s anger as, “he gives the stable buck hell whenever he is angry” (21). The boss is not a common man but his nature is animalistic. Curley’s wife is the sister-in-law of the boss but she does not remain away from animalistic nature. While Candy and Crooks had talked at Crooks’s room at that moment Curley’s wife entered into the room. Crooks fears with her arrival and says, “May own house how. We do not want no trouble” (77). Not only Crooks fears but Candy too, Candy said accusingly, “You gotta husban’ you got no cost foolin’ around with other guys, causing trouble” (77).

Curley’s wife knows they disliked her and she threatens both Crooks and Curley, she turned on Crooks in scorn and said, “Listen Nigger” (80). Having feared with Curley’s wife Crooks stared hopelessly at her and sat down on his bunk. Steinbeck further exposes the threatening situation of Curley’s wife towards Crooks and Candy, having feared with her Crooks asked her to say the boss to enter in his room, but she threatens, “Well, you keep your place then Nigger, I could get you strung up on a tree so easily it ain’t even funny” (80). She threatens Candy to be a cripple and nobody would listen to you. Though Crooks get chanced them to enter in the room, he dislikes them, “A colored man got to have some rights even if he do not like’ em” (81). Anyway, Crooks’s repulsion makes her irritated and she threatens him with lynching.

To sum up, disgust, threatening behaviour, anger, the crime of killing, fighting, the comparison with the animals due to the characters' animalistic nature as

well fearness to have a violent acts etc are irrational behaviour preformed by the characters in the novel where the brutal and the cruel nature of the characters has played the great role in rational and irrational manner.

The violent acts in the novel are on the basis of determinisms and sensation, too. Subjugation upon Lennie by George, mistreatment towards Crooks as a black man by the characters, shooting of Candy's dog by Carlson and accusation of rape to Lennie by the girl in the Weed are all the instinctive behaviour.

Taboos and Idealism in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

For the critic, Charles Child Walcut sex, bodily function, obscenity etc are considered improper is known as Taboos. The accusation of rape upon Lennie by the Girl in the Weed, Whit and Lennie's discussion to meet the whorehouse in the city, dissatisfaction of Curley's wife towards her husband and to give eyes to the ranch workers as well as attraction towards Lennie when others are out, etc are the examples of Taboos.

By observing the characters' behaviour Steinbeck, John has talked about their obscenity in the novel. There is difference between the action performed by the characters and the reality appeared because of the events. In the Weed whose dress he fondled accused him of rape though Lennie's intention was not of that. The characters in the novel have not talked directly only about the taboos but through the medium of backbiting, too.

Having talked on the absence of somebody is known as backbiting.

Backbiting causes with fear to the persons whom they can not say anything in front of him or her. Same is the case in the novel, *Of Mice and Men*. When there is absence of Curley and his wife the characters talk about their obscene activities such as sex and bodily functions.

The first backbiter in the novel is Candy; Candy tells the nature of Curley and his wife to George and Lennie while there is absence of Curley and his wife. After Curley walked out the old man, Candy, looked cautiously at the door to make sure no one is listening, "That's the boss's son" he says quietly (27). From this we know that Candy fears from Curley and backbites over him where George is involved in the discussion. For the further description Steinbeck describes Curley's nature from the perspective of Candy, "He hates big guys. He is all time picking scraps with big guys. Kind of like he's mad at 'em because he ain't a big guy" (28). Candy informs that Curley jumps a big guy and licks him. The naturalistic writers say that heredity influences human nature, same thing happens in this novel in that Curley's father had "licked his pencil" to write the names of George and Lennie while they came to work in the ranch (23).

By listening to such matter of Candy about Curley, George says, "This guy Curley sounds like a son-of-a-bitch to me. I don't like mean little guys" (28). On the one hand, Candy accuses Curley to be a cockier ever since he got married, on the other hand they talked to wear "the gloves fulla Vaseline" to keep that hand soft for his wife. Though he got married his wife she is not satisfied with him in that she gives the eyes to the ranch workers. To roam around the bunk-house and to give eyes to the ranch workers is her dissatisfaction towards her husband. To know the true nature of Curley's wife Candy said; "Curley's married [. . .] a tart" (29).

When George and Candy have talked about Curley and his wife, on their absence, at that moment Curley's wife appeared in the door that had come to the bunk-house looking for husband. She has rouged lips and red fingernails and worn a cotton house dress. When she leaves, George remarks that she is a tramp, while Lennie only can say that she is purty. Lennie still stares at the doorway where she has

been. But George becomes angry with him and scolds him, "Listen to me, you crazy bastard," he said fiercely. "Don't you even take a look at that bitch? I don't care what she says and what she does. I seen 'em poison before, but I never seen no piece of jail bait worse than her. You leave her be" (33). George advises him to be away from her in that she is a rat trap and if Curley knows he knocks to him. Then Lennie fears and cries out suddenly, "I don' like this place George. This ain't no good place. I wanna get abutter here" (34). Lennie has a desire to be away from there but can not.

Not only Candy backbites about Curley's wife but Whit too. While George and Whit are playing cards, Whit says, "She ain't concealing nothing. I never seen nobody like her. She got the eye goin' all the time on everybody. I bet she even gives the stable buck the eye. I do not know what the hell she wants" (57). Whit further says that Curley's wife can not keep away from the guys. But George's comment upon her that "she's a jail bait all set on the trigger" (52). Whit said sarcastically that Curley spends half his life looking for her and rest of the time she is looking for him. This can be justified from the lines, "Curley burst into the room excitedly. "an you guys seen my wife?" he demanded" (54).

Though George and Whit backbite to Curley and his wife, they plan to go to the whorehouse, "we go into old Susy's place" (52). George spends the money he got in the whorehouse to go to old Susy's place where five girls have stayed for sexual purpose. Steinbeck further elucidates, "yeah?" said Crooks. "An' where's George now? In town, in a whorehouse. That's where your money's goin! Jesus, I seen it happens too many times. I seen too many guys with land in their head. They never get none under their hand" (75).

John Steinbeck in the novel has exposed idealism being fickle in that idealists believe in imaginary unreal things which have no concrete existence, at the first

George and Lennie, migrated in the California fields, cherish the dream of little farm of their own where as Lennie's refrain has it they can "live off the fatta land" (16). George yearns for his own place where he could get what comes out of the ground. He wants the full reward of his own labor. He wants the independence that ownership can give him. Nobody could fire him if the farm were his. If someone came he did not like, "Get the hell out" and by God he's got to do it" (16). They would produce all they could eat and then, "we'd just leave there—we'd have our own place where we belonged and not sleep in no bunk-house" (17).

George shared these false dreams to Lennie, but later Candy knew it and the three men planned to buy the land with the money they collected. Crooks and Curley's wife do not believe in their dreams and laugh at them which makes Candy and Lennie angry. Crooks tells Lennie that his dream of owning a bit of land is absurd, for so many men have similar dreams that come to nothing. Candy comes and Crooks criticizes their plan; "you guys is just kiddin' yourself, you'll talk about a hell of a lo, but you won't get no land" (75). Likewise, Curley's wife also comments on their plans, "Baloney;" she said. "I seen too many you guys. If you had two bits in the worl', why you'd be in getting' two shots of corn with it and suckin' the bottom of the glass. I know you guys" (78). But George Lennie and Candy claim that they get their own ranch and have a house, where domesticated animals as well as fruit trees will be available. On the one hand she accuses of them to be "idears" when they say, "a place a hundred prettier than this" (78). On the other hand, she herself becomes an idears, which is elucidated from the following lines:

Well, I ain't told this to nobody before. May be I ought'n to. I don't like Curley. He ain't a nice fella." And because she had confided in him, she moved closer to Lennie and sat beside him. "could been in

the movies, an' had nice clothes—all them nice clothes like they wear. An' I coulda sat in them big hotels, an' had pitchers took of me. When they had them previews I coulda went to them, an' spoke in the radio, an' it wouldn'ta cost me a cent because I was in the pitcher. An' all them nice clothes like they wear. Because this guy says I was a natural. (88)

The attraction towards Lennie may be constructed as a sexual advance. She even prefaces the offer with the complaint about how she is a lonely woman who dislikes her husband and is dissatisfied with her husband.

Having talked about the future plans to have a little piece of land to bring up the pets, Lennie exposes his animalistic nature and says, "I'll break their God damn necks. I'll [. . .] I'll smash'm with a stic" (59). He grumbled himself threatening the future cats which might disturb the future rabbits. Though they desired to have their own land has not fulfilled after lynching Lennie by George to show the false dream:

We gonna get a little place, George began. He reached in his side pocket and brought out Carlson's Luger; he snapped off the safety, and the hand and gun lay on the ground behind Lennie's back. He looked at the back of Lennie's head, at the place where the spine and skull were joined. (103)

George prepares Lennie for his death by giving the soothing speech about the little farm and the rabbits, and shoots him in the back of the head.

Thus idealism and taboos results with the characters' irrational behaviour in which "lack of thought" has a great significance in that Candy and Lennie know George takes the money he got to the whorehouse but don't lose hope and dream to have the little place which has no concrete existence. And to be feared the characters in the novel backbite Curley and his wife which is very close to the animalistic nature.

IV. Conclusion

The characters in the novel *Of Mice and Men* are characterized as animals through the activities they performed. Most of the characters in the novel are from lower class people. John Steinbeck exposes the immorality of the characters in detail to depict their irrational behaviours. The naturalistic novel focuses on the primitive brute and unfeeling attitude. Having guided by the primitive brutality there is a tragic situation of Lennie, Curley's wife and the animals.

To say the soothing speech to get a little place George lynched his friend Lennie which is inhuman nature. It is either real or imaginative they perform brutal nature which is elucidated from Lennie's case, too. Lennie's true nature is known through the expression of his desire to kill the future cats that disturb the future rabbits. Not only George, Lennie and Candy have become "idears" to buy a piece of land but Curley's wife, too. Curley's wife on the one hand accuses of Candy and Lennie to be idealist on the other hand she herself becomes "idear" to think the heroin of the flim which is her violent act. Not to like her husband in real life, she becomes idealist.

Having dissatisfied with her husband and to give eyes to the ranch worker is her irrational behaviour. To know the true nature of Curley and his wife the characters in fear have backbited about the obscene activities to say the word "glove fulla vaseline" and "tart" etc but in the absence of them. Lack of thought is very important aspect of animalistic nature which is in George and Whit too. They have exposed their irrational attitudes to make a plan to go to the whorehouse though they backbited Curley and his wife's nature.

Violence, sex, desire, flight, disgust, anger etc. are innate in the human nature. Curley's wife in fact performs her violent act upon Crooks and Candy to say the

threatening or disgusting words "Nigger" and "Cripple" respectively after knowing the truth that they disliked her.

Not only Curley's wife becomes angry but the boss and George, too. The characters become angry when there is something against their desire. George gets angry with Lennie while Lennie desires ketchup for pleasure. Though George played the role of parents to guide Lennie in every step there is not a true nature to be in the parents. Like George there is lack of humanity to the boss, too. The boss does not hesitate to give "Stable buck hell" whenever he gets angry. However, animalistic symbol is not found to other characters as it is found in Lennie, yet, they are not far away from animalistic harshness.

Naturalism is the belief that humans are animals, with animal thought and instincts. In the novel *Of Mice and Men* there are many instances where naturalism is used. Through out the book the characters are compared to the animals. The character, Lennie is compared with the dog, bear, horse, bull etc. Likewise Curley and his wife are compared with the fish. The comparison with the animals is to show their animalistic nature. George keeps Lennie in the place of animal and shoots as an unhealthy old dog after Lennie killed Curley's wife for she did not understand the importance of death and sex. The term "paw" is used as a symbol to show his animalistic nature in the novel.

To catch Curley's hand within his fist Lennie demonstrated his brutal nature towards Curley too. Since Curley did not understand Lennie's animalistic nature he met a tragic situation to lose his hand within Lennie's paw. Curley also is not different from animal in that he punched at Lennie's face to accused of laughing at him while others had joked to him.

The fellow human beings have not only suffered from the activities the characters performed but the animals, too. The violent act of the characters to the animals is cruel and brutal. Lennie kills the puppy by bouncing it too hard. Likewise Slim kills the pups thinking all of them can not survive. Though it seems rational act it is inhuman and brutal nature.

Likewise, George exposed violent act towards Lennie through the medium of subjugation. Lennie can not think well and whatever his friend George says to do he performs without any hesitation. Lennie can not lead his life himself and depends upon George. In naturalistic novel his or her free will does not work because he or she is in control of somebody. Same thing happens in Lennie's case too. He is fully dominated or controlled by George and doesn't react against Curley unless there is order by George to attack to Curley. If George had not controlled Lennie he would not have suffered from Curley's attack.

On the basis of sensation, there is mistreatment towards both the man and animals. Crooks is treated badly by the people in the bunk house where he is kept in the secret room for he is a black and he stinks. Similarly, Carlson killed Candy's dog for it is old and it stinks. Accordingly, due to the sensation the characters Lennie and George had to escape from the former working place after the lady in the Weed accused of rape to Lennie though his intention of touching the red dress worn by the girl was for the pleasure. Thus, the behaviours and the activities mentioned above expose that the characters in the novel are irrational and instinctive which is animalistic harshness.

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