

I. Introduction to John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

The present research John Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* dramatizes the quest for identity of the migrant ranch work. It deals with the different kinds of obstacles and the hindrances that the characters face in the course of their work. Ranch workers of California are alienated and deprived of their dreams and hopes. This research explores the issue of how the underclass farm workers are cheated, deceived and hoodwinked by the upper class people. In the depression era when it was difficult to get jobs in the south, most of the farm workers migrated to California hoping to get jobs in ranches. The research focuses upon the reality pertaining to the lives of those ranch workers who migrated from south to California hoping to get jobs and proper settlement. These farm workers are encouraged to dream that they too have houses of their own if farmers dreamed of finding a better life in California. The state's mild climate promised a longer growing season and, with soil favourable to a wider range of crops, it offered more opportunities to harvest. Despite these promises, though very few found it to be the land of opportunity and plenty of which they dreamed.

After World War 1, economic and ecological forces brought many poor and migrant agricultural workers from the Great Plains states, such as Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas to California. Following the First, a recession led to a drop in the market price of farm crops, which meant that farmers were forced to produce more goods in order to earn the same amount of money. To meet this demand for increased productivity, many farmers bought more land and invested in expensive agricultural equipment, which plunged them into debt. The stock market crash of 1929 only made matters worse. Banks were forced to foreclose on mortgages and collect debts. Unable to pay their creditors, many farmers lost their property and were forced to find other

work. But doing so proved very difficult; since the nation's unemployment rate has sky rocketed, peaking at nearly twenty-five percent in 1933. Hundreds of thousands of farmers packed up their families and few belongings, headed for California, which, for numerous reasons, seemed like a promised land. For although they came from many states across the Great Plains, twenty percent of the farmers were originally from Oklahoma .They were often met scorn by California farmers and natives, which only made their dislocation and poverty even more unpleasant.

Severe economic ordeals and hardships of the underclass farm workers mentioned in a life-like way. Lennie and George work hard to settle in California. They strive and labour hard to make their dream of prosperous and settled lives. But the society of California sets such traps to them that their dream turns out to be a burden and nightmare. The more they struggle, the more they are impoverished. On the contrary, they will have to flee from one place to another because they are deprived of opportunity. How can they hope to actualize their dream of material prosperity and stable settlement if they have to flee like a rolling stone?

The underclass workers are evicted and deprived of opportunity because the upper-class people never like to see the economic progress of the underclass workers. The underclass people are encouraged to dream about economic success but when the question of assisting workers arises, the privileged people turn their back and remain indifferent. So, the ideology of American dream is a sheer mask. It is a tool of deception and exploitation of the underclass farm workers which is dramatically exposed in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

John Steinbeck is a writer who voiced his deep sympathy for the poor and the oppressed, especially the migrant workers. Though nostalgic for the lost and primitive is felt in his writings, he nevertheless presents a majestic history through portraying

believable characters. Since his return to California in 1930's, he learned to know the poor, in particular the migrant farm-workers, American and Mexican, and he wrote from their point of view. His subject is mainly concerned to draw a true picture of these people. *Of Mice and Men* is a touching and perennially popular tale of two migrants and their mutual dependence and shared dreams. It vividly exposes the miserable situation of their peculiar class. It first came out in 1937 as a novel and soon afterwards was adapted by its author for the stage. Steinbeck was given the 1937, s New York Drama Critic Award, which honored him for handling a theme genuinely rooted in American life. There are obvious elements of social protests in the novel: the plight of migrant workers, a theme that is later developed more fully in the *Grapes of wrath*(1939); racial discrimination, revealed in the abuse and ostracizing of crooks, the black stableman, by the other ranch hands; the insensitive treatment of old Candy and the social prejudice towards women, exposed through Curley's wife unhappy married life.

Elements of social protests however are slight when compared with the more universal message of the story, a lack underscored by the fact that the characters have no visible social awareness of their situation and the cause-source for that. The migrant workers George and Lennie are deprived of their land just as the mice deprived of their homes during the industrialization of the U.S. in the 1930's. Although George and Lennie are innocent and hardworking men, they still can't earn enough money to settle themselves down and enjoy the elementary family life. Although they are real farmers whose life is closely attached to the land, they don't have a piece of land of their own.

Lennie is a symbol of the primeval and fundamentally innocent yearning for the earth that is found in all men. He dreams of finding his peace tending rabbit on a

ranch of his own all the time and keeps requiring George to describe the dream and reinforce it. Twice he expresses the desire to lose himself in a cave when he realizes that he has done some bad things. Lennie happily retains the dream until the very end. George asks him to look across the river and to listen as he describes the scene so vividly that Lennie will actually see it. When Lennie exclaims, "I can see it, George, I can see it! Right over there! I can see it!" (43) George shoots him. Lennie lives and dies in that dream. It is also Lennie who keeps that dream alive in George. In other words, George must have Lennie in order to have the ranch. He is however somewhat conscious of their situation. He believes, however, on the surface that without Lennie he could get along much better: "God almighty, if I was alone, I could live so easy. I could go get a job of work and no trouble, no mess...and when the end of the month come, I could take my fifty bucks and go into town and do whatever I want. Why, I could stay in a cat-house all night, I could eat any place I want, order any damn thing." (32) George may believe that he could get along better, but without Lennie, the hope of buying a farm of his own would be gone. After Lennie kills Curly's wife, and George kills Lennie for fear that his friend would suffer more in Curly's hands, George realizes that the dream has indeed ended. He shows frustration to Candy: "I'll work any month and then I will take my fifty bucks. I'll stay all night in some lousy cat house or I'll set in a pool room until everybody goes home. And then I'll have fifty bucks more" (21). His life offers little now but the promises of monotonous routine. He no longer even has the promise of the dream to look forward to. When George kills Lennie, he kills that part of himself that believed the dream could come true. The pattern of George's character develops downward from hope and optimism to despair, so is the fate of other migrants.

Just as crooks said that the dream of getting a ranch is in the minds of hundreds of migrants, but nobody ever gets it. Because of their lower social and economic positions. One is innocent and lacks intelligence; the other is old and disabled. Lennie's obsessive attraction to soft and furry things not only reveals his sensitivity and innocence, but also shows his longing for mild and delicate things in a kind of very tough life. In the beginning of the story, Lennie carries a dead mouse in his jacket pocket. When George asks what he wants with a dead mouse, Lennie replies that he only wants to pet it with his thumb as they walk. The mouse symbolizes the theme of innocence and frailty that pervades the novel. Reference to it establishes in the story a symbolic motif that reappears in the dog, Curly's wife, and Lennie's dream of tending rabbits on the ranch that he and George will buy someday.

When Candy's dog is shot by Carlson, he begins to realize his own situation. He is as old as the dog and useless for the boss now. His fate may be even worse than the dog's. He has to be left alone in this world to suffer from the old age, poverty and loneliness. He offers his money paid by the boss when he lost his hand on the ranch to George and Lennie only if they could bring him to live with them when they get a ranch. He says miserably: "You saw what they come to my dog tonight? They say he wasn't good to himself nor nobody else. When they call me here I wish somebody's shoot me. But they won't do nothing like that. I won't have no place to go an' I can't get no more jobs" (56). His last hope is to form a bond of comradeship with George and Lennie when they buy the farm, a hope that is shattered by Lennie's death. The old dog vividly symbolizes the situation of the frail and the old. Neither of them can survive in this cruel society. When Carlson lead the old dog out and shoots him in the back of the head with the Luger and that George will later use to shoot Lennie, and

like the dog Lennie is also shot with the same pistol in the back of the head, the motif of the destruction of the innocent, the frail and the old is repeated and creates a shocking effects in reader's hearts. There is no place for those lower classes migrant ranch workers in the man-eating-man society. The black stableman Crooks not only suffer from poverty and the lack of home as other migrants, but also from the lack of companionship is another theme in this story. George and Lennie are like man and his shadow. But they are very different from each other. One is small, and other is big. One is wise; the other is slow. But they never separate from each other. The main reason is because they need each other. Just as George says, migrant people are the loneliest people in the world, because they have to move from place to place to place for job. As soon as they get familiar with the environment, they start to move. They have no friends, not even neighbors. George and Lennie do not fit into the category of those fittest in the society. It is a subversive thing to do publishing a book about two people who have nothing else but their friendship and their fruitless labour. In American mythology, prosperity is promised to all, but because of the social reality just a few succeed. The dream of a better life for everybody is consequently not true and cannot be true for everybody. George and Lennie belong unfortunately to the group doomed to fail. The difference between George and all the other people at the farm is that George has got a friend in Lennie. George says in the first chapter (p.31): "Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world, they got no family. They don't belong no place. They come to a ranch an' work up a stake and they go in the town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch. They ain't got nothing to look ahead to... With us it ain't like that. We got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about us. We don't have to sit no bar room blowin' in our jack jus' because we got no place to go. If

the other guys gets in jail they can rot for all anybody gives a damn. But not us,” and Lennie continues “But not us! An’ why? Because ... because I got you to look after me, and I got you to look after me, and that’s why.” Migrant life was lonely, rootless, unforgiving and without guarantee. Migrant workers had a tough time during the depression and had had for a long time. They went from ranch to ranch in search of a job. What George says illustrates the social conditions of the novel. Workers were usually just seen as workers and nothing more; as George says: the optimism of the roaring 20’s is gone. George and Lennie are different as they have each other. They are also different to those who “belong no place” as George and Lennie have a goal; they will one day have a place of their own. Lennie is in many ways very different to George but he is still a friend for George; a friend who can be characterized as more than just a casual friend. They provide strong emotional support to each other and their relation is therefore better characterized as a close friendship. (Baron & Byrne 1993:309) A contrast to George and Lennie is Crooks. He has no friend; he is a ‘nigger’ and is therefore not living with the others. He is not permitted to play cards with the white hands. He shuts himself in his shed because the white says he stinks. He envies George’s good fortune at being able to share his life with Lennie, even though Lennie is a half-wit. He becomes proud and aloof, keeps his distance and demands that other people keep theirs. Yet in his heart, he is yearning for companionship, for someone to talk. So when Lennie once happens to rush in to his shed for his puppy when all the other men have gone down town, he is happy to talk to Lennie about his family history, although the other can’t understand him at all. While white people could hide their loneliness behind something, African-Americans seldom had anything to hide behind. In section four, Lennie has come into Crooks’s room and Crooks tries to highlight the difference between himself and Lennie. Crooks

say (p.103):"S'pose George don't come back no more... What'll you do then"?

Lennie does not like talk about 'supposing' and gets angry. Lennie's clumsy and uneducated manner depicts him as abnormal. It is; however, hard to be angry at him since Lennie's character is sympathetically depicted and closely related to innocence. Lennie does not want to hurt anybody; he is just unable to perform better. His inability to change is essential in the genre. People like Lennie are more occupied by what is here and now. Abstract thinking is not their greatest skill. Lennie is in need of a safe environment where he knows how things are going to be as he cannot understand other social conventions and thinks good of everybody. The thought of life without George causes Lennie's world to tremble. Lennie's reaction is thus normal for people in his position. Then, from a factual perspective, Lennie would be doomed without George, as George has essential skills and knowledge Lennie has not.

John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* is a touching tale for the quest of identity through land attachment between two-set against the back drop of the United States during the depression of the 1930's. Subtle in its characterization, the book address the real hopes and dreams of migrant ranch workers. Steinbeck's short novel raises the lives of the poor and dispossessed to a higher, symbolic level. Commenting upon the distinguishing hallmark of John Steinbeck's genius, James Topham makes the following observation:

The literary power of mice and men rests firmly on the relationship between the two central characters, their friendship and their shared dream. These two men are so very different, but they come together, stay together and support each other in a world full of people who are destitute and alone. Their brotherhood and fellowship in an achievement of enormous humanity. (4)

The superb literary *power Of Mice and Men* lies in the dramatic description of friendship in the wake of disaster and failure. A group of underclass workers, who work in ranch, continue to show remarkable sense of companionship and mutual trust though their lives are hovering on the brink of virtual disintegration. The dream cherished by both George and Lennie is the same. That is why they are compelled to occupy the same footing. They sincerely believe in their dream. All they want is a small piece of land that they can call their own. They want to grow their own crops, and they want to breed rabbits. That dream cements their relationship and strikes a chord so convincingly for the reader. George and Lennie's dream is the American dream. Their desires are both very particular to the 1930's but also universal.

Martha Neill has examined *Of Mice and Men* from the perspective of Steinbeck's special focus upon characterization. The contrastive mode of character portrayal has fascinated Neil. Neil has recognized other dimensions of this novel. She has given equivalent importance to almost all the aspects of the novel. But of all the aspects the mode of character portrayal has occupied the foremost importance. The following citation captures the main idea which Martha Neill wants to represents:

Steinbeck's narrative voice is seemingly simple in his descriptions of nature of as well as the details of the bunkhouse. His characterizations of the people are magnificent. This novel represents workers, all loners, and appreciates the beauty of the unique friendship between Lennie and George. *Of Mice and Men* is the story of a two lonely and alienated men who work as farm laborers, drifting from job to job in California (33)

Martha Neill subscribes to the conviction that Steinbeck, like Robert Burns, extends a grain of sympathy to the poor peasants. That is why he borrowed Burns' line "The

best laid plans of mice and men” to entitle his novel. Lennie is gentle giant, physically strong but mentally retarded. George guides and protects Lennie but also depends on him for companionship. Together, they have a dream to someday buy a little farm where they can grow crops and raise rabbits and live happily ever after. Candy, the old man, is outliving his usefulness. Crooks, the black stable hand, is shunned by the men and therefore turning to books for companionship. This novel shows how these characters fall victims to the politics of dispossession.

Helena Carolina has interpreted the text *Of Mice and Men* from somewhat unique perspective. Regarding to this work she has offered the following remarks:

Of Mice and Men is a tale of friendship that triumphs over the odds.

But the novel is also extremely telling about the society in which it is set. Without becoming dogmatic or formulaic, the novel examines many of the prejudices at the time: racism, sexism and prejudice towards those with disabilities. The power of John Steinbeck’s writing is that he treats these issues in purely human terms. He sees society’s prejudices in terms of individual tragedies and his characters attempts to escapes from that prejudices.(14)

Zerar Sabrina has analyzed the writings of John Steinbeck from the perspective of humanism. He is widely recognized as the writer who fosters sense of humanism in the midst of the helplessness of human existence. In a way, *Of Mice and Men* is an extremely despondent novel. The novel shows the dreams of as small group of people and then contrasts these dreams with a reality that is unreachable, which they cannot achieve. Regarding to the unique oeuvre of Steinbeck, Zerar Sabrina has made the following statement:

One outstanding feature of John Steinbeck stems from the fact that he

cultivates a quite optimistic conception of man. He believes in man's goodness and places him in a high pedestal. His respect and love for human beings are not verbal. Steinbeck is entirely acquainted with poverty and he wants his writings to be an expression that leads to salvation for the masses. Being basically optimistic, he does not share the pessimism of the writers who find man resourceless, weak and doomed to failure forever. (6)

Steinbeck emphasizes on the poverty of the underclass and the underprivileged. But he does not hesitate to promote the sense of humanism and fellow-feeling. Although he has represented the poverty and ugliness of the displaced and dispossessed, the note of optimism has added vigor to the thematic dimension of *Mice and Men*. The genius of Steinbeck is proverbial.

Mary Whipple has noticed the elements of the failure of American dream in Steinbeck's representative fictions. The share of American dream has not trickled down to the lives of the underclass and the underprivileged. Focusing upon these aspects of novel Mary Whipple has made the following revelation:

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck remains properly on the reading lists of high school students because of the regional imagery through succinct dialogue. Unlike *Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck brings us swiftly into each moment, never letting us linger too long before walking us to the next place. Lennie and George want this independence more than most men, but have less than most men to get there. In their case, it isn't a white picket fence, but a farm where they can raise rabbits. (21)

Depression era is largely accountable for the failure of American dream. Similarly, the depression era made the United States so busy that it had had no time to think

about bringing about programs of security nets and packages of welfare. The depression era sentiment of dispossession and social disaster is captured by Steinbeck in this novel.

Anthony Trendel studies *Of Mice and Men* in the context of depression era. He is of the opinions that this powerful novel depicts the lives of migrants workers-grim, pessimistic and offering little hope for an improved future. Focusing on two characters that arrive in the Salinas Valley during peak season, Steinbeck creates touching scenes between Lenny, a big, severely limited worker who does not know his own strength, and George, a wimple-thin man who serves as Lenny's constant companion and protector:

As Steinbeck brings the characters on the ranch to life, he shows how every person there. Giving vivid pictures of the natural surroundings while also creating vivid pictures of the interactions of these men, Steinbeck shows that even among those whose lives offer little hope, there is desire to take advantage of each other. Lonnie's puppy, Candy's dog, a heron capturing a water snake, and dreams of their own farm all become symbols which add to the drama of the conclusion.

(25)

In this powerful novel, as dreams of a different life but few opportunities to change the lives they already have. Some are physically handicapped from accidents on farms, while others are emotionally handicapped by lack of opportunity or their own personal limitations. Life is lonely, uncertain, and harsh but George tries to make life for Lenny more bearable by allowing him to have one of the new puppies in the barn. When Curley, the boss's son, brings his flirtatious wife to the farm, he introduces a new element which eventually leads to a tragic ending. Women are considered

dangerous to the status quo, as they reinforce the need for “soft” elements in lives that otherwise offer little softness. Steinbeck offers little hope that the lives of these men will improve and even less hope that they will ever be able to control what happens to them.

All these critics discuss about different aspects of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Some of the critics talk about the narrative voice of the author while the other focus upon Steinbeck's popular literary finesses to paint the natural landscapes of Steinbeck's birth place. Since Steinbeck is born in Chicago, he always brings regional references in his famous works including the novel, *Of Mice and Men*. Some of the harsh critics of Steinbeck aim at clarifying Steinbeck's optimistic conception of man. Many reviewers think that Steinbeck is implicitly sympathetic to the workers who are trapped in the deceptive politics of American dream. Despite their divergent viewpoints, it is clear that Steinbeck's

Work provokes controversy and furor in the circle of literary critics. None of the aforementioned critics have explored the issue of land and human identity in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

Applying eco-poetic paradigm. Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* depicts the exodus of migrant ranch workers due to environmental degradation, cruelties of agribusiness and corporate economy to the "Promised Land" of California. On the way to California and in California, the innocent migrants are helpless against the large growers and their minions, the vigilantes who enforce their power upon these innocent mass whom corporate culture has rendered powerless. Due to the loss of their homeland, the migrants are deprived of human dignity, animal satisfaction and even the means of survival amid natural abundance and vast ocean of property. The agribusiness and corporate culture make the connectedness of human and natural

worlds, collective survival of the members of biotic community, nature/land as organism get violated and everything is treated as commodity and means of accumulating capital. All the state agencies are seen as merely managing the decline and disappearance of the organicity of the land in the pursuit of the multiple use doctrines of the large growers for piling up materialistic profit.

John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* depicts the fact that love and ethical responsibility to the land are the prerequisites for a reciprocal and sustainable relationship between land and humanity which leads to a shift from anthropocentrism to biocentrism. As Fritjof Capra notes, the new ecological worldview represents "a shift from self-assertion to integration" accompanied by a "shift from the rational to the intuitive, from analysis to synthesis, from reductionism to holism, from linear to non-linear thinking" (24). Alexandra Bergson represents this shift and becomes able to maintain land dignity and human dignity.

This project intends to explore and analyze *Of Mice and Men* on the basis of how agribusiness and corporate economy treat the land as commodity, force people out of their home land and rob them off their dignity. I argue that agrarian culture treats the land as organic to human life strengthening the bonding between the humans and the land as one of respect and love. This research conceptualizes nature as organism, highlighting the ethics of respect for nature. This framework builds on land ethic, nature as organism and deep ecological approaches developed by A.N. Whitehead, Aldo Leopold, Arne Naess and explained by Paul W. Taylor, Edward W. Wilson, Dana Philips, John Hannigan and Robert D. Bullard who emphasize pervasive feeling, unconscious prehension, interdependence and co-participation among organisms of the ecosphere and environmentalism and social justice. This project offers a perspective that focuses on the role of attachment and feeling of

oneness with environment to appreciate the novels under discussion. It argues that readers' identification with nature is crucial to understanding *Of Mice and Men*. Given the nature of these texts only an eco-poetic approach can unravel the heart of the poetic imagination permeating them.

Ecopoetic paradigm is a literary and cultural criticism which analyses literary texts from an environmental view point and assesses texts and their overarching ideologies for their environmental implication. It is basically an earth-centered approach to literary studies. This research tries to analyze the symbiotic relationship between land and human identity depicted in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.

Environment is sum total of biotic and abiotic factors affecting an organism. There is continuous interaction of each and every organism with biotic and abiotic factors. "Things" and "thinness", "substance" and "quality", "matter" and "mind" are inseparable entities. They do not have independent existence and ontological values in isolation. For Leopold land is the basis of "biotic pyramid" (42) which includes "soils, waters, plants and animals" (39). Land is regarded as fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants and animals. According to Aldo Leopold "A land ethic . . . reflects the existence of ecological conscience, a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land. Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal" (45). Sound health of the land provides sound existence of ecological conscience. Things and human activities of the biosphere should be guided by the spirit of ecological conscience. Aldo Leopold concludes, "Thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community, it is wrong when it tends to do otherwise" (46).

So long as the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community is maintained, plants, animals and humans are to a large degree isolated from soil-borne

infections. Barry Commoner elaborates that the pathogenic microorganisms actually cause disease only rarely. Due to human intrusion and encroachment into the balanced ecosystem, ecological degradation occurs which makes pathogenic microorganisms active and hence different diseases get emerged (227). Surface water has intimate contact with soil. People come into equally intimate contact with water – by swimming in it, drinking it, or inhaling spray. Commoner further explains:

Soil-borne diseases ordinarily remain rare in human because in natural conditions, surface waters are very effective biological barriers to the movement of pathogenic microorganisms from the soil to the human. Water ordinarily contains insufficient organic matter to support the growth of the pathogens. (227)

The snapping off the reciprocity between land and human beings due to anthropocentric civilization, the water pollutants make the natural biological barrier between soil and human beings break down and thereby intensify environmental hazards.

The anthropocentric attempt of establishing forceful, unnatural distinction between inseparable, indivisible, indestructible entities of biotic unity has deteriorated land community, and hence the usual fragmentation is going on in individual life and cosmos. A.N. Whitehead explaining "Nature as Organism" mentions, "Things are separated by space, and separated by time, but they are together in space, together in time, even if they be not contemporaneous. I will call these characters like "separative" and "prehensive" character of space-time" (401). The things of the biotic community are quite sensitive to the existence of others save human beings. All things take account of each other. The "pervasive feeling" between and among things automatically creates natural sympathy for the whole. It is a general connectedness

and unity of the universe which things reveal. According to Whitehead "Nature is conceived of prehensive unification. Space and time exhibit the general scheme of interlocked relations of this prehension" (401). By realizing and actualizing the "pervasive feeling" and "prehensive unity" of things, one can truly understand the placeness and thingness of thing in nature, and maintain land dignity and human dignity as well. Such issues of general connectedness among beings and things, sensitivity to each other as well as co-participation between land and human beings are also stressed by deep ecologists.

Deep ecology, as envisioned by Arne Naess, is in opposition to both advanced industrialism and shallow environmentalism. It goes beyond the so-called factual level to the level of self and earth wisdom. Deep ecologist, as Arne Naess pointed out, "Stresses a post-anthropocentric biospherical egalitarianism to create an awareness of the equal right of all things to live and blossom" (qtd. in Luke 5). It holds the idea that all things have an equal right to live and blossom and to reach their individual forms of unfolding and self-realization within the larger self-realization. It focuses on becoming a whole person rather than an isolated ego struggling to accumulate material possession. In course of cultivating ecological consciousness and protecting the ecological integrity of the place, deep ecologists advocate for spiritual growth, unfolding inner essence, identification beyond humanity to include non-human world, shifting of human satisfaction to appreciating the quality of life rather than adhering to higher material standard of living and human beings are part and parcel of the large community, the land community. Human identity and dignity is directly proportional to the identity and dignity of land community.

Similarly, in "The Ethics of Respect for Nature" Paul W. Taylor states "the interdependence of all living things in an organically unified order whose balance and

stability are necessary conditions for the realization of the good of its constituent biota communities" (75). Taylor argues that the ethics of respect for nature is symmetrically with a theory of human ethics, which, he writes, is "grounded on respect for persons . . . conception of oneself and others as persons . . . respect for persons as persons . . . every person as having inherent worth or human dignity" (76). Taylor personifies nature and naturalizes the persons. In order to translate the ethics of respect for nature into practice, Taylor suggests the following four major components of biocentric outlook on nature:

- (1) Humans are thought of as members of the Earth's community of life, holding that membership on the same terms to apply to all non-human members, (2) the Earth's natural ecosystems as totality are seen as a complex web of interconnected elements, with the sound biological functioning of the others. . . . (3) Each individual organism is conceived of as a teleological centre of life, pursuing its own good in its own way. (4) . . . the claim that human by their very nature are superior to other species is groundless claim. . . . (76)

Once the groundless claim of human superiority is rejected, the doctrine of species impartiality is actualized and the dignity and identity of both human being and land community can be maintained. The more human beings claimed to be claimed to be civilized and advanced due to modern science and technology, the notion of human supremacy over other species become stronger which gives birth to prideful consumerist prosthetic culture.

Modern science and technology is accelerating agribusiness and corporate economy ignoring "land ethic", "nature as organism" and "human ethics", and has given birth to, in the words of Edward O. Wilson, "prosthetic environment . . .

terminus of the philosophy of exemptionalism” (157). This simulated ecosophical culture has introduced the era of plastic garden, the city of iron bars and cement, the chemical countryside and consumption of inorganic goods. It sees humanity is in a new order of life, let species die if they block progress, scientific and technological geniuses will find another way. It illustrates the intellectual failure of modern technocrats of being ignorant about the origin of species in the nature. In words of Wilson, the root cause of human intellectual failure “is ignorance of our origins. We did not arrive on this planet as aliens. Humanity is part of nature a species that evolved among other species” (157). Human being is the youngest member of biotic community.

In postmodern era, nature is tried to be replaced by commodified representation. Due to simulacra and simulated products, the natural world has been claimed to be substituted for artifice. In Dana Phillips words, “In the post modern world, nature no longer seems necessary” (215). In the anthropocentric and urbocentric postmodern world, need of green nature is supposed to be obsolete. But highlighting the necessity of green nature, Wendell Berry argues, “Nature is necessary . . . it is necessity itself . . . the use value of breathable air and drinkable water is not socially produced nor can either be “simulated” once they are all gone”(qtd. in Phillips 220-21). Explaining the importance of soil and keeping it healthy, Berry further says “the soil is our heritage, our history, that is the soil is also to be read, interpreted, taught, learned from, handed down to the next generation, and keep from becoming mere dirt . . .” (ibid 221). Berry strongly opposes the simulated prosthetic culture and favors natural organicity of the land community. He suggests, instead of dirtifying the soil, we should preserve its organicity, beauty, purity and vitality through deep studies and hand down the nature’s gift to our successors in intact form.

By the middle eighties, the environmental movement was an elitist movement. Robert D. Bullard states that the “poor and minority residents saw environmentalism as a disguise for oppression and as another ‘elitist’ movement” (328). There was no concern for lower class, down trodden and poor class people. Their dwellings were ghettos and slums. In Bullard’s words, “Environmental eliticism has been grouped into three categories: compositional eliticism . . . ideological eliticism . . . and impact eliticism . . .” (329). The focus was primarily upper-middle class elites, rather than in social justice terms. Environmentalism in the 1980s and 1990s underwent another transformation that is Environmental Justice. Only then environmental movement started including the problems of grassroots level domestically and globally in “Gramscian perspective” (Hannigan 48) only after the establishment of Grassroots Environment Justice Organization in the U.S.

Hannigan states that the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit which was held in October, 1991 in Washington D.C. identified three strands of environmental equity: procedural equity, geographical equity and social equity (50). The delegates of this summit, guided and spirited by the ecocentric principles espoused by Aldo Leopold, John Muir, George Marsh, the pioneers of environmental movement ratified a document “Principles of Environmental Justice.” In Hannigan’s words “the principles also argue that the people have a right to clean air, land, water, and food and the right to work in a clean and safe environment” (50). This statement clarifies the fact human beings disregarding their race, gender, culture, economic status; nationality has equal right to have clean air, land, water, food and right to work in a clean and safe environment. These rights are also included as basic civil rights.

I have taken the aforementioned theoretical concepts, comments and remarks so that their ideas interact with the narratives I have chosen for analysis. In an interaction between theory and narratives, they both can inter-animate each other. These theories propose anthropo-bio-centric culture by which the human identity and dignity can be actualized only by maintaining the identity and dignity of the land community. Therefore, human identity and dignity is directly proportional to the identity and dignity of land community.

II. Land and identity in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

The destiny of human beings is intimately related to the destiny of land. The healthier the land community, the happier and more harmonious human survival is. The deterioration of land endangers the existence of human beings along with other species which inhabit the land. Association with the land makes human being feel sense of protection, security and safety for surety. Working with the land realizing its bio-rhythms energizes human beings. After spending a number of years in one place, it is very natural and human to become attached to the land. This is especially true with farmers. They spend their lives cultivating the land around them. The land becomes a friend to them, a subject of human value. People develop inseparable tie to their land, and that connection sustains their physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

Land is the first and foremost condition for survival and identification of people. Wendell Berry views "If you do not know where you are, you do not know who you are" (qtd. in Anderson, Slovic and O'Grady 163). The placeness, rootedness and belongingness to the land are the foundation of human identity. The very notion of human self is inseparable from the imprints the physical world presses upon human imagination. The concept of land or place is, therefore, associated with the physical and psychological experience of being in a specific location. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan has even defined place as "a centre of meaning constructed by experience" (163). Land or place is not merely a means of human survival; it is a determinant of human's holistic personality. Describing the correlation between place and shaping of human holistic personality Anderson, Slovic and O'Grady state: "place determines not only our external lives but also our inner selves our patterns of thought" (164). Human beings' physical as well as internal personality is shaped, guided, sharpened, and developed as per the place where s/he was born, brought up and educated. Therefore,

every human being struggles to find a particular place to ground the self physically, emotionally and intellectually. Humans need to know where they are, so that they may dwell in their place with a full heart, holding their heads high without any kind of fears.

Without the sense of being connected with a place or a particular location, no human being can feel and enjoy independent identity and dignity. Ram chandra Guha holds the opinion that the right to land is viewed as basic human and natural right (3307). This right to land suggests maintaining close connection with the land through sustainable agrarian farming but not by conquering the land and commodifying it to multiply wealth. Connection and belongingness to the land provides enfranchisement. Supporting Guha's argument, Adam Kuper opines " . . . true citizenship is a matter of ties of blood and soil" (395). Citizenship is regarded as the authentic document that guarantees human identity. Explaining the connectedness between land and human identity, David N. Cassuto argues "birthing and dying on the land created a blood right of succession that no financial transaction could negate . . . working the land formed the litmus test of possession . . . the laws of the country conflict with the laws of the land" (60-61). Laws of the country are mechanical and plutocratic guided by so called reason and rationality. They do not respect the physical and emotional proximity of the farmers with the land but just mechanically produced non-sentient evidences. The sweat, blood, toil and moil with the soil are the real, natural and sentient evidences for allowing rights of ecological possession over the land. These arguments substantiate that people who work and love the land should have natural right to own it and maintain its organicity and intrinsic value.

The agribusiness and modern mechanization of farming do not respect the true, natural, ecological connection between land and human identity. They regard

land as commodity; manipulate land, and workers as modes of production and means of production for their sheer materialistic gains. Banks and corporations translate land into assets on a balance sheet. Reverence for the land becomes obsolete with the ascension of factory farming. The real possessors that are the workers on the land are enmeshed in a cycle of wage slavery. The large growers, factory farmers establish their right of ownership through displacing the real lovers of the land. They feel pride of conquering the land from the real and natural citizens of the land and objectify the land for accumulating property. Elaborating their cunning intention of grabbing the land from yeoman farmers as an instrument of their unrestricted use, Mahesh Chandra Regmi views:

Land has . . . represented the principal form of wealth, the principal symbol of social status and the principal source of economic and political power. Ownership of land has meant control over a vital factor of production and, therefore, a position of prestige, affluence, and power. (1)

Regmi's remark justifies the fact that the larger the areas of landownership, the richer, more powerful and more prestigious the landholders feel. The large landholders have control over the state mechanism. The politicians, bureaucrats, technocrats make policies and decisions as per the interests of the landlords. Therefore, they try their best to occupy more and more land, and hence make others landless.

Slaveholders, capitalists, bureaucrats, technocrats, and land monopolists try their best to make the workers landless and hence mobile wage laborers having no human identity. Adam Kuper argues, "Landlessness is a process of alienation from the land by people who have been living there over the generations" (399). In a consumerist society a man, a laborer is alienated from himself. By exploitation, his

individuality, as well as his sense of ownership is lost. He is dehumanized, fragmented, alienated, disenfranchised and frustrated mobile vagrant. The norms and values of democracy are not given due respect.

Political democracy can be democratic both in substance and form only with the sound foundation of agrarian democracy where every citizen has ownership over a certain piece of land. Individual have their land to till for sustenance with deep association with the land. Such association guarantees and confirms autonomy and stability of any particular identity as it claims to define and interpret a subject's existence. Nature's personhood is also realized and nonhuman agents of ecosphere are treated as bonafied members of the biotic community. Kinship and reciprocity between land and human beings is actualized. Highlighting the reciprocal relationship between land, human identity and political system of a country, George W. Julian notes:

Laws regulating the ownership and disposition of landed property not only affect the well being but frequently the destiny of a people. The land system, in fact, directly determined the political system of a country. Real political democracy depends on democratic landholdings. (qtd. In Roark 29)

Julian's remarks focuses on small farms, thrifty tillage, compact settlement, free schools and equality of political right help in strengthening democratic institutions. Large states, slovenly agriculture, widely-scattered settlement, lording over the land and people change democracy into plutocracy. People living in agrarian culture love and respect the unity of the biotic and a biotic worlds whereas industrial urban anthropocentric civilization manipulates the land and ecosphere to satisfy immediate thirst for materialistic gain. Exposing the exploitation of the nature through the

runaway technology, Barry Commoner writes, "The affluent society has become an effluent society" (7). Here, Commoner clarifies the fact that the rich people poison air, ravage soil, strip forest bare, and pollute water resources and corrupt human mind as well. Affluent people are ecologically poor and harmful whereas economically poor people are ecologically rich, friendly and sound.

Different scientists, ecologists and creative geniuses have been warning about the burning global problems of environmental crisis, spiritual bankruptcy deterioration of the symbiotic relationship between land and human beings and hence loss of land dignity and human identity in their treatises and creations. Among them, I have concentrated my study upon John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* to analyze the reciprocal relation between land and human identity applying eco-critical perspective.

John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* depicts the consequences of landlessness as well as enjoying stability plus identity due to strong faith on the land, working with the land with patience respectively. This novel illustrates the fact that the life of the land and human life at their best are inseparable. Humanity is integrally tied to the land.

John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* is the saga of ranch migrant workers after they were uprooted from the soil and robbed of their possession to the Promised Land of California with a dream – a dream for a better and prosperous life. But their hope changes into a nightmare since they experience hatred and violence of the large California landowners and destined to survive under the most difficult circumstances.

In John Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men*, the theme of person's quest for identification is present. The two main characters build a strong friendship in search of work so they may purchase some land of their own. Land is one of the main factors in *Of Mice and Men* that drive the ambition of the main character to set out on a quest in

search of a place to call their own. Lennie and George are best friends travelling together in search of work on northern California farms. They are farm workers who are on the lookout for jobs. They are seduced by the false glory and glamour of American dream. Their lives never get stability and permanent settlement. They hope to get settled in one place permanently. But situation runs counter to their collective dream and aspiration. They have a dream of owning their own idyllic farm someday. A little bit of land, their own crops and animals-this is all they want. It is a simple American dream. They want to be self-reliant: Their perfect world is one of independence. Workers like Lennie and George have no family,

No home and very little control over their lives. They have to do what the boss tells them and they have little to show for it. They only own what they can carry. Therefore, this idea of having such power over their lives is a strong motivation. This type of condition is hinted in the following citation:

George's voice became deeper. He repeated his words rhythmically as though he had said them many times before. "Guys like us that work on ranches are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place. They come to a ranch and work up a stake and then they go into town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch. They ain't got nothing to look ahead to." (18)

In spite of that, the couple have a dream, they have a future, they dream of a home, of a secure place where they could not be touched by the evil in the world. In this form of the American Dream, we find the symbolism of the house, of the home every person is looking for. A form of shelter is the cave where Lennie would run in case George

wanted to get rid of him. Here the cave is an archetype of the motherly womb, a return to the rivers of life and rebirth, thus a secure place in Lennie's vision.

He unconsciously desires regression to the motherly womb, in case the Garden of Eden should not receive him and George. A similarity between the house in the dream of Lennie and the Garden of Eden occurs in the Edenic description while they imagine it: "We'll have a cow, [...]. An' we'll have Maybe a pig and chickens...and down the flat we'll have a...little piece alfalfa[...]. For the rabbits![...] An' live on the fatta the lan' [...]. You an' me. "33 This manifestation of desire of well-being and Peace, characteristic for people in general, takes this form of the American Dream here in "*Of Mice and Men*"

The destiny of human beings is intimately related to the destiny of the land. The placeness, belongingness and rootedness to the soil encourages human beings to toil and moil for their sustenance along with maintaining harmonious relationship with the biota of land community. The dissociation from the soil brings pain, penury and pathos for human beings that causes placelessness, rootlessness and hence leads to be dispossessed, dehumanized, disenfranchised mobile vagrants. The novel *Of Mice and Men* illustrate the fact that land is the source of physical, spiritual, economic, emotional and intellectual force. It is home, the foundation of livelihood and human identity. If there is no connection with the land and no sense of placeness, no individual can freely feel and enjoy identity, dignity and sense of individuality. Association with the land guarantees and confirms stability of any particular identity as it defines a subject's existence. This sort of dreams of possessing own farmland for the affirmation of the conforming identity is realistically becomes manifest in the following citation.

"Well," said George, "we'll have a big vegetable patch and a rabbit hut and

chickens. And when it rains in the winter, we'll just say the hell with goin' to work, and we'll build up a fire in the stove and set around it an' listen to the rain comin' down on the roof—Nuts!.(50)

George unlike other men, has a companion and friend in Lennie. Because of this, Lennie makes George feel special. They are different from all the other guys, and George realizes only too well that they have a special bond. George went on. "With us it ain't like that. We got a future. We got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about us. We don't have to sit in no barroom blowin' in our jack jus' because we got no place else to go. If them other guys gets in jail they can rot for all anybody gives a damn. But not us." Lennie broke in, "But not us! An' why? Because . . . because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you, and that's why."(14)

At the ranch, George often plays solitaire, a game for one. Without Lennie, George would be a loner. Even though George gets frustrated by Lennie's mental weakness, he also feels compassion for his friend. Lennie offers George the opportunity to lay plans, give advice, and in general be in charge. Without Lennie, George would be just like the other hand but with Lennie, George has a strong sense of responsibility. In the end, he even takes responsibility for Lennie's death. George also understands that Lennie does not have an adult sense of guilt and does not understand death or beyond it a "bad thing." George makes it possible for Lennie—sometimes—to understand at least partial consequences of his actions. Unfortunately, George does not realize how dangerous Lennie can be, and this lack of foresight adds to the downfall of their dream.

Their dream also sets George apart from the others because it means he and Lennie have a future and something to anticipate. Unlike Lennie, George does not see their dream in terms of rabbits; instead, he sees it in a practical way. Their farm will be

one where they can be independent and safe and where he will not have to worry about keeping track of Lennie's mistakes. They can be secure and in charge of their own lives. However, Lennie is the one who adds the enthusiasm because George never really believes they could swing their farm of their own. He mostly uses the story to give Lennie something to believe in for their future. Only when Candy offers the stake does George actually begin to see that this dream could come true. But, realist that he is, George tells Candy over the lifeless body of Curley's wife, "I think I knowed from the very first. I think I know'd we'd never can her. He usta like to hear about it so much I got to thinking maybe we would be able to have the farm."

Candy represents what happens to everyone who gets old in American society. They are let go, canned, thrown out, used up. Candy's greatest fear is that once he is no longer able to help with the cleaning he will be "disposed of." Like his dog, he has lives beyond his usefulness. Candy also plays a significant role in the dream, providing the money needed to make the down payment. Because of Candy, the dream almost becomes real. Candy's down payment causes George to believe that, perhaps, the dream can be realized. Candy still thinks he has a safe haven, a place where no one will throw him out when he is too old. The dream is so strong to him that he pleads with George, to no avail, to have their farm despite Lennie's death. In the following passage, Candy's dream for his secure future about the getting of the certain place i.e. land is reflected in an obvious way:

Candy said, "I ain't much good with on'y one hand. I lost my hand right here on this ranch. That's why they give me a job swampin'. An' they give me twohunderd an' fifty dollars 'cause I los' my hand. An' I got fifty more saved up right in the bank, right now. Tha's three hunderd, and I got fifty more comin' the end a the month. Maybe if I

give you guys my money, you'll let me hoe in the garden even after I ain't no good at it. An' I'll wash dishes an' little chicken stuff like that. But I'll be on our own place, an' I'll be let to work on our own place." He said miserably, "You seen what they done to my dog tonight? They says he wasn't no good to himself nor nobody else.(71)

Without the sense of being connected with a place or a particular location, no human being can feel and enjoy independent identity and dignity. Ramchandra Guha holds the opinion that the right to land is viewed as basic human and natural right (3307). This right to land suggests maintaining close connection with the land through sustainable agrarian farming but not by conquering the land and commodifying it to multiply wealth. Connection and belongingness to the land provides enfranchisement.

Supporting Guha's argument, Adam Kuper opines " . . . true citizenship is a matter of ties of blood and soil" (395). Citizenship is regarded as the authentic document that guarantees human identity. Explaining the connectedness between land and human identity, David N. Cassuto argues "birthing and dying on the land created a blood right of succession that no financial transaction could negate . . . working the land formed the litmus test of possession . . . the laws of the country conflict with the laws of the land" (60-61). Laws of the country are mechanical and plutocratic guided by so called reason and rationality. They do not respect the physical and emotional proximity of the farmers with the land but just mechanically produced non-sentient evidences. The sweat, blood, toil and moil with the soil are the real, natural and sentient evidences for allowing rights of ecological possession over the land. These arguments substantiate that people who work and love the land should have natural right to own it and maintain its organicity and intrinsic value.

One Saturday night, universally the time for drunken visits to the

whorehouse, opens with Slim and Lennie alone at the ranch with crooks, the black stable hand. Lennie shows up in Crook's private (that is segregated) little room. Crook is not allowed in the bunk house with white ranch hands. He has his own place in the barn with the ranch animals. Crooks slowly warms up to Lennie's company, moved by how dense and earnest the man is. Hearing from Lennie about the dream farm, Crooks take the opportunity to say that the same foolish goal is on the mind of every ranch hand and no one ever follows up on it.

“I seen hundreds of men come by on the road an' on the ranches, with their bindles on their back an' that same damn thing in their heads. Hunderds of them. They come, an' they quit an' go on; an' every damn one of 'em's got a little piece of land in his head. An' never a Goddamn one of 'em ever gets it. Just like heaven. Ever'body wants a little piece of land. I read plenty of books out here. Nobody never gets to heaven and nobody gets no land. It's just in their head. They're all the time talkin' about it, but it's jus' in their head.”(33)

Crooks begin to soften to the idea. He timidly suggests that if they got the place, and wanted someone around to help out for nothing but room and board he'd be Ok disjoining them. That he becomes part of the dream farm is an indication of crooks' loneliness and insecurity. He like Candy, realizes that once he is no longer useful he will be “thrown out” where, then, can he find some security for his future? The dream farm of Lennie's seems to be the place.

Crooks promises to work for nothing, as long as he can live his life out there without fear of being panic out. Like all the others, he wants a place where he can be independent and have some security. Crooks also have a pride. He is not the descendent of slaves, he tells Lennie, but of landowners. In several places of the story,

it shows Crooks dignity and pride when he draws himself up and will not “accept charity” from anyone. In the following citation, this fact of Crooks dignity of having the decent lineage is explicitly clear.

Crooks leaned forward over the edge of the bunk.

“I ain’t a southern Negro,” he said. “I was born right here in California. My old man had a chicken ranch, ‘bout ten acres. The white kids come to play at our place, an’ sometimes I went to play with them, and some of them was pretty nice. My ol’ man didn’t like that. I never knew till long later why he didn’t like that. But I know now.” (45)

Describing the importance of placeness and predicament of placelessness, Henderson argues, “Fixity translated into power, whereas uprooted was the best assurance of continued disenfranchisement” (214).

Most of the characters in *Of Mice and Men* admit, at one point or another, to dreaming of different life. Before her death Curley’s wife confesses her desire to be a movie star. Crooks bitter as he is, allows himself pleasant fantasy of hoeing a patch of garden on Lennie’s farm one day, and Candy latches on desperately to George’s vision of owning a couple of acres. George and Lennie’s dream of owning a farm which would enable them to sustain themselves, and most important, offer them protection from an inhospitable world, enable the farm that George and Lennie constantly describes to Lennie—those few acres of land on which they will grow their own food and tend their own livestock. It seduces not only the other characters but also the reader, who like men, wants to believe in the possibility of the free, idyllic life it promises. Candy is immediately drawn in by the dream, and even the cynical Crooks hopes that Lennie and George will let him live there too. A paradise for men who want to be masters of their own lives, the farm represents the possibility of freedom, self-reliance, identity,

and protection from the cruelties of the world. This is clear from the conversation between the characters in the fourth chapter of the novel:

“Go on,” said Lennie. “How’s it gonna be. We gonna get a little place.” “We’ll have a cow,” said George. “An’ we’ll have maybe a pig an’ chickens . . . an’ down the flat we’ll have a . . . little piece alfalfa—” “For the rabbits,” Lennie shouted. “For the rabbits,” George repeated. “And I get to tend the rabbits.” “An’ you get to tend the rabbits.” Lennie giggled with happiness. “An’ live On the fatta the lan’.” “Yes.” (59)

The people’s identity is closely assimilated with the identity of the land. For them land is vital part of their very existence, and everything to their life is tied to it, including birth, employment, protection, security, safety for surety and death. The tenants follow the idea of Jeffersonian agrarianism. Thomas Jefferson asserted in 1787 that “those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue” (qtd. in Smith 92). Thomas Jefferson believes that all people should have the opportunity to own landed property. Jefferson argues that even if people do not own land legally, they have a natural right to claim ownership if they live on it and cultivate it. Nobody can be free and independent citizen until and unless they have some acres of land to till. People having ownership over the land can be declared as enfranchised. Throughout long years of public service, Jefferson was motivated by the conviction that a firm foundation of agrarian democracy was the only basis upon which a political democracy could be sustained. In the political democracy, established on a firm foundation of agrarian democracy, people can enjoy freedom, independence and sovereignty holding their heads high without any fear.

III. Affirmation of Identity through Land

The novel *Of Mice and Men* illustrates the fact that land is the source of physical, spiritual, economic, emotional and intellectual force. It is home, the foundation of livelihood and human identity. If there is no connection with the land and no sense of placeness, no individual can freely feel and enjoy identity, dignity and sense of individuality. Association with the land guarantees and confirms stability of any particular identity as it defines a subject's existence.

Land is the first and foremost condition for survival and identification of people. The placeness, rootedness and belongingness to the land are the foundation of human identity. The very notion of human self is inseparable from the imprints the physical world presses upon human imagination. The concept of land or place is, therefore, associated with the physical and psychological experience of being in a specific location.

After spending a number of years in one place, it is very natural and human to become attached to the land. This is especially true with farmers. They spend their lives cultivating the land around them. The land becomes a friend to them, a subject of human value. People develop inseparable ties to their land, and that connection sustains their physical, social and emotional wellbeing. Human beings' physical as well as internal personality is shaped, guided, sharpened, and developed as per the place where s/he was born, brought up and educated. Therefore, every human being struggles to find a particular place to ground the self physically, emotionally and intellectually. Humans need to know where they are, so that they may dwell in their place with a full heart, holding their heads high without any kind of fears. Without the sense of being connected with a place or a particular location, no human being can feel and enjoy independent identity and dignity.

The core finding of this research is that the migrant ranch workers working at farms in California are subjected to the harmful condition like exploitation, displacement, and dispossession and alienation. They are indirectly deprived of accomplishing their dream. Due to the deceptive strategy of the upper class people, the migrant ranch workers are bound to live the lives of vagabonds and nomads. Such a displacement has brought inner pang in the migrant farm hands. It creates the situation of the nowhere, dispatched and dislocated. George and Lennie's dream of "a few acres" addresses this alienation. They speak of their dream in terms of planting and gardening - they are eager to perform the tasks necessary to live off the land. Their talk about raising cows and drinking their milk, about planting and tending a vegetable garden, contrasts starkly with their actual diet - cans of beans with (if they're lucky) ketchup. The research finally reaches to the conclusion that the land and its attachment with the people is of prerequisite for the existence of the humanity. But the present world of materiality tends to overlook this. However, the attachment with the land is essential for the affirmation of the identity and dignity of the person, and the sustainable development of the humanity and its whereabouts.