

Tribhuvan University

Resistance against the Subordinate Position of Women in Steinbeck's *East of Eden*

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Master of Arts in English

By

Balendra Khanal

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**Tribhuvan University**  
**Central Department of English**  
**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Kirtipur, Kathmandu**

**Approval Letter**

This thesis entitled “Resistance against the Subordinate Position of Women in Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*” submitted to the Central Department of English, by Mr. Balendra Khanal has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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\_\_\_\_\_

Internal Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

External Examiner:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Head

Central Department of English

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Tribhuvan University**  
**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Central Department of English**  
**Kirtipur, Kathmandu**

**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Balendra Khanal has completed his thesis entitled “Resistance against the Subordinate Position of Women in Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2070/01/15 B. S. to 2071/12/19 B. S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Maheswor Poudel

Supervisor

Date: 2072/10 /19

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## **Abstract**

The novel *East of Eden* is a depiction of the resistance of a woman from her subordinate position in the patriarchal society. Applying the women subaltern theory of Gyatri C. Spivak this research assesses the rebellion of the entire domination of the femininity in society. This thesis presents how the females are subordinated in patriarchy. The central story revolves around a woman who kills her parents and tries to abort her not-born children to be free from all kinds of feminine trap given by the male dominated society in the name of household task and responsibilities of a woman. The strong resistance has shown in her every activity shown for the male. She becomes like a woman who is a threat for patriarchy. Cathy is an example of women's resistance She is a woman who exercises her sexuality in brothel houses. The society and social norms and tradition make the women meek by imposing all kinds of family task such as giving birth and taking care of children, satisfying her husband and being loyal to him. But, the major character Cathy rejects all kinds of stereotypical roles. She resists the patriarchy's imposition that subordinated her.

## **Chapter I: Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and Female's Voice**

The current research named "Resistance against the Subordinate Position of Women in Steinbeck's *East of Eden*" probes into the theme of female resistance in a society where women should waste their life in household tasks and caring their children and husband. This thesis explores the ups and down in the life of a female because of the domination of the male dominated society. How a female is compelled to resist against the domination and she goes on to the extent of killing her family members. On the surface level this novel is a kind of analysis of a family problem and the harshness of a family ties. But on its deep analysis it is the thorough analysis of the resistance of a female against the domination, suppression, and violence upon the females by the deeply rooted traditional cultural boundaries which is based on the male ideology in society.

*East of Eden* is an epic story set in the narrow Salinas Valley, North California and tells the tale of the entwined destinies of two families, the Trasks and the Hamilton's. One of the major themes in the novel is the women's consistent struggle with their subordinate position. Steinbeck regards the struggle between male and female to be of utmost gravity in the world, since it is interminable. In *East of Eden*, Steinbeck has both depicted the unavoidable struggle between the subaltern position of the women and the ruthless rule of the males upon the women. These sorts of struggles take place within the society and the struggle that takes place deep within every family which is deeply rooted in male dominated cultural heritage.

Steinbeck is a social critic, a writer, and a story-teller. His task is to define social injustice especially upon the female. In his most of the writings he depicts women as docile and meek. He has the belief that one must define such injustices, illusion, mythic, archetype, depth psychology, and symbol in establishing women power in the society.

Half of Steinbeck's writings present ethnic characters whose identity is in crisis because of the conflict between cultures. His characters cannot escape past influences: be it biological, cultural, religious, or the collective activities of migration and war. The reader can not overlook the domestic conflict between men and women. Steinbeck tried to find an organic means of expression for each book that he wrote. He considered his work to be experimental. He often experiments with different styles of writing, like a play in novel format. As we know he has made use of fabular, picaresque, and documentary. The subjects of Steinbeck's books are based on the poor people, women and other subaltern group. What makes Steinbeck's style unique is his dual use of omniscient narration combined with a real empathy for his characters.

Steinbeck was a versatile writer. He has been described as a social-protest writer, a realist, a naturalist, a journalist, and a playwright. He has many strong themes running through his works, like the protest of Cathy in *East of Eden*. The most notable are the strengths of the family, the effects of the environment on man, and social protests. He experimented with many different writing styles and points of views. All of these factors combine to explain why Steinbeck is still a literary force today. His presence on the World Wide Web is great and he is the subject of many high school and college courses. Steinbeck had described his duty as a novelist in his acceptance of Nobel Prize acceptance speech:

The ancient commission of the writer has not changed. He is charged with exposing our many grievous faults and failures, with the dredging up to the light our dark and dangerous dreams for the purpose of improvement. Furthermore, the writer is delegated to declare and to celebrate man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit & emdash; for gallantry in defeat, for courage, compassion and love. (MacNicholas 272)



From his remark it is clear that he is a protest writer. Therefore he has used the resistance theory especially in terms of the resistance of the female Cathy. Here the character of Cathy and the techniques of Steinbeck are closure to each other. In most of Steinbeck's works there is the exploration of similar theme like *East of Eden*.

*The Grapes of Wrath* is a novel which is totally based on the theme of the women and their attempt of getting away from their existing situation. Ma Joad and Rose of Sharon graphically portray the theme of women as self-sacrificing and nurturing mothers in the migrant family during the great depression. *Of Mice and Men* is the famous and controversial American novel by award-winning writer, John Steinbeck. Here, he explores the lives of migrant agricultural workers in the Salinas Valley of California. The novel examines the relationship between two men, Lenny and George, but also touches upon mental illness, the role of the outsider, the American Dream, and murder. The book has been frequently banned on social grounds. Along with the relationship between two men it has also shown the female exploited in the name of household task and the responsibilities of the female inside a house.

*Cup of Gold* is a kind of lyrical fantasy which is Steinbeck's sole work of historical fiction where Henry Morgan ruled the Spanish Main in the 1670s, ravaging the coasts of Cuba and America. Here Steinbeck is trying to demonstrate the way women are being mysterious and like an unknown land. Here women are the puppet in the hands of the ruler who use them only to entertain. *The Pearl* is the story of a small child Coyotito who is bitten by scorpion and because of the lack of money the doctor refused to treat it. His father finds a pearl which is known as the world pearl. Kino tries it to sell in high price. While his wife tries to stop him from being greedy he beats and gives her torture. Here is the relation of *East of Eden's* Catherine and Juana,

Kino's wife. The novel is the story of the pearl because of which the Kino family is attacked several times by unknown people. Here Steinbeck is showing that how a woman can be brave to save her family from any kind of disaster and difficulties.

Jia Lynn Yang relating the text with the issues of murder and crime argues that the book is the presentation of the criminal mind of the people who can be an animal if they do not have freedom and free choice. As he comments:

*East of Eden* has it all: "love and betrayal and greed and murder and sex." But when the love has no resonance or dimension and the betrayal and murder seem deserved because a character has been written with such dullness, the book doesn't pass muster as a beach read, let alone a tome to stand the test of time. And the sex? Don't let Oprah fool you. She's mostly referring to the decidedly unsexy whorehouse that serves as a set piece in the second half of the book. (52)

The betrayal shown in the comment of Yang is the betrayal upon the women and their position in society by the male dominated society and culture. The comments about the whorehouse by Yang clearly show that the novel is the presentation of the compulsion of the women who are being compelled to be a whore. Here in the novel also Cathy is shown as she is being whore by the choice of herself. In fact she is compelled to do so she has to resist the rigid patriarchal culture and bias division of labor inside a house.

Lester Marks' in his "Thematic Design in the Novels of John Steinbeck" carefully examines the structure of the novel. According to him there is no any kind of difference between human being and the animal.

I find a coherence in themes, artistic control of the structure, and no proof that the narrator is anything other than a part of the fictional

construct. . . . Steinbeck has carefully wedded theme to structure. *East of Eden* successfully weaves together three themes that dominate Steinbeck's novels: the individual's creation of her own deity, the human being's dual existence as both group animal and individual, and Steinbeck's non-teleological view of life, his philosophy of understanding acceptance. (Marks 114)

According to Laser, human being have dual existence. They are both human being and animal. But he has not commented about the female here. Therefore indirectly he is trying to depict the theme that men are animal in the treatment of women. Though he is relating the text with the theme of the good and evil and the depiction of the true nature of human being, it is the depiction of the women's pitiful plight.

James Mumford argues that the novel is a kind of prime example of violence and terror. The narrator naturalizes the violence and comments that there is the cultural sophisticated character. As the narrator comments:

Any treatment of violence in Steinbeck must of course mention his taking of the Cain and Abel story as the basis for *East of Eden*. We have seen the way violence is naturalized by his detached, amoral narrator, as well as through Lee's philosophy of history. And the plot on the one hand compounds this, with the story of a father's rejection of his son's gift leading to the son's persecution of his brother and the story repeated down through a generation, creating a sense of violence as fate. (150)

All the violence in the text is linked with the domination and the resistance respectively. The violence is linked with the resistance of Cathy, who is a kind of rebel in the text. The novel creates the sense of violence means there is the use of violence by the female rebels from the subordinate position.

David Wyatt links the text with the issues of feminist movements and the sexual tension and argues that the text is the example of the re-imagination and the presentation of the cultural dynamics and the construction of limitations. As he goes on arguing:

Within the text of *East of Eden*, Steinbeck re-imagines the sexual tensions and cultural dynamics in America during the 1950s.

Specifically, he critiques the constructions and limitations society imposes upon women by basing their identity and femininity on domesticity. While busy fighting wars, both cold and hot, the 1950s invested its conscious energy in the domestic pursuit of happiness, and the structure of Eden reflects this. Portraying female characters that can be interpreted as either the traditional, conservative domestic figure of wife and mother, or the unconventional woman who strays from domesticity completely, Steinbeck reveals the restrictions that these norms of femininity place upon women and offers his readers a third type of woman who does not have to choose between the domestic/nondomestic extremes. (4)

According to Wyatt it is clear that the text *East of Eden* has domination and restriction for the women who are a subject in the hand of the patriarchal structure. The female are the domestic figures and the medium of decorating house and satisfying their husbands. He comments that the females are either docile, rebel, like our characters Cathy and Catherine.

From the remarks of all the critics described above it is clear that the novel *East of Eden* is a kind of protest novel in terms of the domination and submissiveness of female in front of the so-called male hegemony. *East of Eden* deals with themes of

intergenerational sin committed by a female, consequent guilt which should be faced by a women, redemption and forgiveness. At the end of the novel Adam suffers a stroke after hearing of Aron's death, and Cal feels overwhelmed with guilt. The negative family legacy is stopped dead in its tracks, however, when Cal is offered surcease from his guilt. His father Adam lifts his hand in a final blessing and utters the word "timshel", the Hebrew word for "thou mayest". Finally, Cal realizes that he is not predestined to live a life of evil, but has the free will to choose goodness and morality. The males are cruel but the female is described to be cruel at first. It is the nature of the male biased society which imposes their all vices upon the female when they get chance.

This thesis explores the theme of the victimized characters, especially that of women. It shows the resistance of a female from all kinds of dominations and exploitations. To excavate these elements of dominations the researcher has made a choice of analyzing the text through the perspective of the female resistance theory and the perspective of subaltern studies especially of Gayatri Spivak, Ranjeet Guha and many other writer and critics. While implementing this theory the thesis will not touch the concept of feminism and Marxism.

Through the theme of good and evil, the book is showing women the cruelest and the most evil in the society. According to the plot of the story, a woman is the cause of the doom of a man. The biased biblical tale is indirectly trying to show in the book. The imprint of this well known tale from the book of Genesis is made by explicit reference of the author itself, replayed twice (both by Adam and Charles and by Aron and Cal), with somewhat different results. The characters are extremely well developed. Cathy is most certainly the most evil character described in a novel. The author even introduces her with these chilling sentences:

I believe there are monsters born in the world to human parents. Some you can see, misshapen and horrible . . . And just as there are physical monsters, can there not be mental or psychic monsters born? . . . As a child may be born without an arm, so one may be born without kindness or the potential of conscience. . . . To a man born without conscience, a soul-stricken man must seem ridiculous. . . . It is my belief that Cathy Ames was born with the tendencies, or lack of them, which drove and forced her all of her life. (9)

Cathy is described as the most evil personality in the world. On the other hand, Sam Hamilton is an extremely positive and likable character. Lee, the Chinese servant, is also very well developed and is described as a disturbingly clever and prescient person. Another major subject Steinbeck spends quite some time on is the place of his birth and early life, and where most of the plot takes place - the Salinas valley in California.

Women Subaltern theorists tend to take the question of poor people as secondary to the question of woman; hence they tend to couch all arguments related to gender in class terms. Subaltern theories are establishing a new hegemony where even the history from below ignores the margins occupied by women. The subaltern theorists, as Spivak quotes Derrida, do not need to merely let “the other speak for himself but rather let quite-other (tout-autre as opposed to a self-consolidating other) speak and render delirious that interior voice that is the voice of other in us” (Derrida 89). Moreover they argue against the nationalists claim that “equality . . . would be achieved by transcendence [sic] or a repudiation of caste, community, and gender identifications” (238). This, however, veils the inequalities faced by historically marginalized classes. The casting of women is problematic since they are portrayed as “feminist subjects: assertive, non-submissive,

protesting against injustice done to them” (Tharu and Niranjana 237). Therefore, there is a need of a theory which deals only the women subaltern.

The power dynamic allows only one aspect to come through; it is a totalizing and homogenizing effect. Such as the debate of contraceptives in society, the voice of the women being talked about is drowned out. When only the woman question is taken in isolation it leads to solutions which expect changing the conditions of women “without changes in existing family relations or in society at large; in other words, the promise is of a technological fix that can bypass sexual politics and indeed the network of relations in which women are gendered and subjugated” (Tharu and Niranjana 246). Yet the so-called emancipators of women are termed as feminist since they “are presented as enabling and empowering women in conservative or religion bound contexts” (Tharu and Niranjana 245).

Therefore, the current research deals the theme of the powerlessness of a woman in the society. It depicts how a woman is compelled to be meek and fragile in the palm of patriarchy. How the religion and culture has trapped the women in their wicked paws. Female are trapped in the caged of the household duties and responsibilities. It shows how a woman is being outcast if she does anything in her own will. It means female does not have free choice in the society. The first chapter of the thesis is the introduction which gives general introduction, literature review, and some analysis. The second chapter is the textual analysis with the theory in its embedded form. Finally, the last chapter is the conclusion which gives the conclusion of the overall thesis.

## **Chapter II: Defiance of Subordinate Position of Women in *East of Eden***

The novel *East of Eden* demonstrates the negative color of women by patriarchal society. It shows how a woman is not allowed to have her free choice and resist against her domination. Throughout the novel, Cathy is made to display an evil that is so thorough that it borders on implausible, and the narrator makes several attempts to explain and understand Cathy's existence. Her husband says that although Cathy is physically beautiful; she is a "psychic monster," a being with a mental deformity analogous to others' external, physical deformities. Later in the novel, the narrator revises his opinion of Cathy and wonders whether he was right in calling her a monster. He seems to become somewhat more sympathetic toward Cathy, musing that "since we cannot know what she wanted, we will never know whether or not she got it" (265). Indeed, Cathy's motivations remain a mystery throughout *East of Eden*, as her schemes seem to have no concrete goal or aim a problem that critics have singled out in their writings on Steinbeck's novel.

The women described in the novel are very submissive and afraid to the male culture. They have to commit suicide because of the extreme pressure of the male chauvinist culture. It means they are not in the condition of enduring the pain given by the ruthless male cultural boundaries. Cyrus's devout wife commits suicide shortly after discovering her illness. "An unrelieved truth can hurt a man much more than a lie. It takes great courage to back truth unacceptable to our times. There's a punishment for it, and it's usually crucifixion" (138). Cyrus needs help with the children, so he marries a young woman named Alice, who lives in fear of her husband and even hides her tuberculosis from him out of worry that he might impose a harsh medical treatment upon her.



Cathy is the character who is the main factor in the resistance of women. Cathy made Adam to kneel beneath her knee. She revolts the household task of taking care and serving her husband. He becomes a kind of slave of his wife. Though it is an exceptional case there is a kind of strong revolt in the action of Cathy. As:

Adam was glad he was gone he moved about the kitchen, washed the breakfast dishes, and swept the floor. When he had put the kitchen to rights he went in and draws a chair up to the bed. The girl snored thickly through the morphine. The swelling was going down on her face but the eyes were blacken and swollen. Adam sat very still looking at her. Her set and splinted arm lay on her stomach, but her right arm lay on top of the coverlet, the fingers curled like a nest. It was a child's hand, almost a baby's hand. (115)

The above mentioned paragraph gives the detail about how a male thinks and feels if he has to be trapped in the boundaries of the household task. This shows how much the women are in the trap of the task. In spite of being equal distribution of the tasks the patriarchy has given all the responsibilities of the task to the poor women making them subordinate. They are in fact the true subaltern whose voice is not heard by anyone. But here is the revolt from their subordinate position.

A woman is strong in her birth as a man but, she is made weak by the hegemony of the so-called male chauvinist cultural restrictions which are like prisons for women who are alone in the midst of the crowd of men. They are made fragile and nervous in society to take any kind of strong action against their domination and subaltern position. In fact, they are men's equal as Steinbeck comments: "I believe a strong woman may be stronger than a man, particularly if she happens to have love in her heart. I guess a loving woman is indestructible." according to Steinbeck the women

are even stronger than the male but, the everlasting male hegemony makes the women weak and a kind of slave of the males by their birth. Woman is stronger than man only for the labor and exploitation. As Judith Lorber claims:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages  
and lifted over ditches, and to have de best place everywhere. Nobody  
ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or give me any best  
place! And ain't I a woman! Look at me! Look at my arm! I have  
ploughed and ploughed and gathered into barns. And no man could head  
me! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seem  
'emmos' all sold into slavery, and when I cried out my mother's grief,  
none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? (75)

If the women are strong for work and labor then only they are loved. There is a strong need of revolt and resistance in the society presented in *East of Eden* which Cathy fulfills.

There in the text the women are running away from the domestic boundaries which are only the cause of their subordinate position. As Byers and Heinlein in *Steinbeck's Feminist Thought and the Politics of Empowerment* state, "Sexual resistance researchers have established that long-term romantic partners believe that they can expect success when initiating a sexual encounter" (Byers and Heinlein 89). But it is totally different in case of Cathy in the novel. They cannot come to the mainstream cultural centre and to the decision making position. They are under the feet of the patriarchal structure of the society. As Steinbeck narrates:

When I said Cathy was a minster it seemed to me that it was so. Now I  
have been close with her with a glass over the small print of her and  
reread the footnotes and I wonder if it was true. The trouble is that since

we cannot know what she wants. We will never know whether or not she got it. If rather than running towards something she ran from something we can't know whether she escaped. Who knows but that she tried to tell someone or everyone what she was like and could not for lack of common language? (185)

Therefore the women are running away from the subordination position which is making them a kind of slave to get freedom. Here nobody knows for what Cathy is running away from the love and affection of husband. In fact she is running away to escape from the pitiful plight made by the various boundaries and the second class position inside her own home.

In the society, males are in fact fully dependent on women in every household chore. They become like a lame in the absence of their wives. "Societies prescribe gender roles based on sex hence the condition of the people arising from the gender division of labour result into practical gender needs" (Taylor 199). For example in the novel even though Adam is in complete subservience to Cathy, when they are living together, Cathy influences him the most after her departure. When she runs away after the birth of their twins, Adam is left depressed and despairing.

The seemingly good-natured Adam turns into a completely different man. He simply stops caring about things that mattered to him so much before. He even shows little to no interest in his sons, since they remind him of the loss of their mother. His lack of concern about them is also the reason why the twins do not have names throughout their first year of life. Since Steinbeck was aware that the patriarchal society who is deeply rooted in the ideology of male would not likely accept a woman who absolutely rejected her domestic and maternal obligations, Kate is ultimately killed off. While Kate's demise cautions postwar women from completely rebelling

against familial responsibilities, Liza's death stresses that postwar women should not absolutely conform and allow domesticity to completely shape their identity.

It is usually believed that there is sexual relationship and a kind of polite relationship in wife and husband whatever they fight and quarrel. But if there is domination there is the possibility of violence and resistance through the part of the female. We can see this argument in the following lines:

The presence of sexual activity in cross-sex friendships varied in impact according to both the violation valence ascribed to the behavior and the extent to which the friend's feelings and intentions after the sexual episode were known. Specifically, cross-sex friends tended to use positive politeness strategies to resist sexual advances, possibly both to maintain the friendship and communicate sexual disinterest. (Lee 201)

If we examine Cathy's case in the novel there is the extreme domination and torture through the part of the traditional cultural behavior. Her husband loves her very much but he cannot move out Cathy from the ruthless boundaries of the so called cultural domination. She has used violation method to avoid sexual disinterest.

Cathy's being prostitute is the resistance from the ill intention of the males.

There is the resistance of the women especially in the portrayal of the major character Cathy. Central to Steinbeck's *East of Eden* is the character of Cathy Trask. This wife turned prostitute was intended by Steinbeck as a personification of the portrayal of the women in a mean status. Her husband, a frivolous by the name of Adam Trask, is worthy of treachery, if not the gunshot wound she lands him with. This gun-shot wound, along with various assassinations and acts of villainy are designed by the author to alienate us from her as a character. Cathy Trask's single-minded pursuit of her own self interest should make her, in some of her aspects, a feminist heroine. Cathy

chooses prostitution as a business because she can not abide the thought of living as a blissful house-wife with her husband. She finds the thought of spending her life with her husband and his friends, with their gentle philosophical musings, unbearable. She enjoys prostitution. It is her profession. Female sexuality has been equated with evil since early times.

There is valorization in the characterization of the males while representing them. "It was the sweetness of his tongue and the tenderness of his soul. And there was just a cleanness about his body, so there was a cleanness in his thinking' (Steinbeck 11). However even the protagonist who is a female character is depicted as mean and fragile. This is the bias nature of the male's hegemonic culture. The character Lee, who is the maid of the Trask household, can be considered the most educated of the characters. After the twins are born, Lee takes up the discussion of the biblical story of Cain and Abel, which is hard to be understood by most of the men at that time. It is the example of the women having the capacity of being more powerful than the male. But their power is suppressed. In addition to its literary merits, *East of Eden* offers a wealth of social and historical information. In tracing the history of two families, Steinbeck depicts the waves of settlers passing through California, first the Mexicans, then the white Americans, and finally the Irish migrant. A community shrinks at the arrival of its first automobile and gets a lesson on how to crank-start a Ford.

Subaltern Studies occupies a subject position inside Indian continent, but is written for readers everywhere. Outside Indian continent, it is often the only brand of Indian history that readers know by name, but other brands are more powerful. National narratives, oriental's images, ethnic and feminist stereotypes, and Hindu major Italianism are vastly more influential. In opposition to these, subalterns have

made little headway. Readings of the Indian history contained in Subaltern Studies are inflected variously by national contexts in the world of globalization. Subaltern Studies deployed some of Gramsci's ideas at a critical juncture in historical studies.

By the late 1970s, a rapid decline in state-centered historical research had already occurred and social history "from below" was flourishing. E.P. Thompson's book, *The Making of the English Working Class*, is often cited as an inspiration for the growing number of "bottom up" studies of people whose history had been previously ignored. By 1979, women's history was popular enough in the U.S. to merit source books and guides to research. In 1982, Eric Wolf published what can be called the first global history from below. In South Asia, the history of subaltern groups was thriving, though they were not called that then. In the seventies, two new journals featuring studies of South Asian peasants had begun publishing in the US and UK. Hundreds of titles on rural history had appeared. In 1976, Eric Stokes announced the "return of the peasant" to colonial history. Guides to sources promoted more local research.

There is strong resistance of women in various activities and episodes related to the women character in the novel. Guns turn women in to men. The use of physical violence and abuse is almost universally used by men against women. In the novel, Cathy subverts this principle to her own uses, firing a shot at her husband when he seeks to restrain her escape. This "monster" that Steinbeck created wants only to pursue her own self-interest, even at the expense of others. She is the bitch-goddess, capitalism, at work. Her very allure lies in her evil nature. She does what she wants. The activities of the central character here is the prime example of the violent effort of the resist of the subordination of the women.

In *East of Eden* Cathy is the model of the rebel in the midst of fragile ladies in her community. She wants to move on her own plan and road map. Adam first meets

his new wife Cathy as she is recovering from a very bad thrashing by her previous beau who she had been pushing, as Cathy hustles everyone. As her scars begin to heal, Adam decides he's fallen in love with her, and they marry. Fully restored to health, Cathy also finds herself pregnant, and so she's further hampered in her effort to get on with her plans. As soon as she recovers from giving birth, she packs a bag and holds a shotgun on Adam as she takes off.

Cathy is presented as an evil minded in the novel because she has posed a threat to the existing male chauvinism. She has the consciousness regarding the subordinate position of her. Subaltern consciousness had always been a critical feature of subalternity; Ajit K. Chaudhury comments that, "The focus of *Subaltern Studies* is on the consciousness of the subaltern classes, specifically peasants" (108). Throughout the novel, Cathy displays an evil that is so thorough that it borders on implausible, and the narrator makes several attempts to explain and understand Cathy's existence. He hypothesizes that although Cathy is physically beautiful; she is a "psychic monster," a being with a mental deformity analogous to others' external, physical deformities.

Later in the novel, the narrator revises his opinion of Cathy and wonders whether he was right in calling her a monster. It seems that the action she has chosen is the need of the time to go out from the boundaries of the suppression of women. He seems to become somewhat more sympathetic toward Cathy, musing that "since we cannot know what she wanted, we will never know whether or not she got it" (132). The originality of *Subaltern Studies* came to be its striving to rewrite the nation outside the state-centered national discourse that replicates colonial power/knowledge in a world of globalization. But here in the context of *East of Eden* subalternity is rounded on female and their domination can be marginalized position and resistance.

According to Gayatri C. Spivak, subaltern means those of inferior rank who do not have power in the society like: female, dalits, indigenous groups etc. Her question followed on the work began in the early 1980s by a collection of individuals now known as Subaltern Studies group. She comments:

The stated objective of this group was to promote a systematic and informed discussion of Subaltern themes in the field of South Asian Studies. Further they described their project as an attempt to study the general attribute of subordination in South Asian Society whether this is expressed in term of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way. (Spivak 23)

Spivak's work of arts are helpful to understand the complex consequence arise from the work of art of subordination, the Subaltern studies group drafted out its wide ranging concern both with the visible 'history, politics, economics and sociology of subalternity' and with the occluded "attitudes, ideologies and belief systems- in short, the cultural informing that condition" (6).

In other words, Subaltern studies defined itself as an attempt to allow people finally to speak within the jealous pages of elitist historiography and in so doing, to speak for, or to sound the muted voices of, the truly oppressed" (1-2). The subaltern group are those who fall in the inferior rank or in a group who cannot speak for themselves. They are so weak that they cannot be strong in the mainstreamed power politics which always centered on the powerful people. The female are also the group who cannot speak for themselves. Subaltern studies are the theory that makes the people able to speak about their rights.

Spivak writes in her essay "Can Subaltern speak?" that it seems as if subaltern people lack history, they cannot speak; she claims: "The subaltern cannot speak. There



is no virtue in global laundry leads with 'women' as a pious item. Representation has not withered away, the female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not die's own with flourish" (104). For Spivak without history none can precede their voice for right, since, there is no history, those silent are always silent. Elites have their history so they are silencing the subaltern people.

The story of the Tarsk family is similar to that of Steinbeck's life where he has witnessed the subordinate position of the female and their uprising for the right; he attempts to write an allegory which may crystallize the marginalization of the women. The significance of his characters is made very obvious to the reader. The Biblical story of Adam and Eve is used to portray the evils of the world and how all humanity is sinful. Here in the context of female's issue the evils are deeply rooted in the bias male culture for women as "One perspective lays blame on Western Feminist theorists for silencing the woman in the very speech intended to liberate her from oppression" (Lyon 3). *East of Eden* reflects that story. Adam sets out to build his Eden with Kate (his Eve) but when she leaves him Adam is in a sense taken away from Eden, he falls into a depression. Adam is left with two sons whom he names Caleb and Aaron. "And Cain went out of the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod". In the story of Cal and Aron there is rivalry between the brothers over the love of their father. The ever-lasting competition to win his love can lead to direst consequences.

Regarding subaltern studies and the issues related with the marginalized group, it is always claimed that they are of low rank and their identity is linked with the inferior rank. However, from the remarks of various critics it is claimed that the consciousness of women are transmitted orally and written form. "The woman who strengthens her body and exercises her mind will, by managing her family and practising various virtues, become the friend, and not the humble dependent of her

husband” (Wollstonecraft 59–91). Cathy is the sole character by whom we can analyze the resistance and the subordinate position of women. Loving her not for what she is, but for what he imagines her to be, her husband, Adam Trask, deserves what he gets.

Steinbeck has claimed in the novel that the men are a kind of monster in the name of husband and father. They are those monsters who always suppress a try to kill the comfort and freedom of the innocent and docile women. "I believe there are monsters born in the world to human parents. . . . The face and body may be perfect, but if a twisted gene or a malformed egg can produce physical monsters, may not the same process produce a malformed soul?" (72). His weakness may seem forgivable but the consequences of his starry-eyed idealism towards his wife would be to condemn her to a life of falsehood. Cathy rebels against his fantasy with brute reality.

An upsetting view in the book describes how Cathy's parents died in a house fire. Cathy is being the cause of this event in the text. It is quite obvious from the text that Cathy was the culprit of the horrible tragedy. Among the other killing she committed included mentally torturing her English teacher to the point where he eventually took his own life and seducing a married man whom she subjected to severe emotional torment. It is the extent that Cathy can go on resisting the subordinate position in *East of Eden*. Such cold-blooded actions appear to be coming directly from a dark and evil soul. It is the biasness of the patriarchy that the female are being described as the evil in the text.

According to the established male ideology the female should be polite and submissive in front of the males. They are not allowed to participate in public activities and the program where they should be active. As:

Women were further required to be modest and to wield only indirect influence, and certainly not engage in public activities. So, when a woman spoke in public, she was, by definition, displaying masculine behaviors. She was even ignoring her biological weaknesses - a smaller brain and a more fragile physique - which she was supposed to protect in order to ensure her reproductive abilities. (Campbell 14)

According to the above remarks it is clear that the female are made meek and docile by the culture itself. The males in the society want the female to be submissive and hegemonies in front of the male dominated culture. Therefore, it is necessary to resist against the denominated cultural boundaries. So Cathy resist violently.

Cathy knows well the bitter reality of the patriarchal structure which always puts the women in marginalized position. She understands that life is rooted in power structures, with her at the bottom of the heap. To gain any power over her life at all, she uses her sexuality to gain the upper-hand. She works not in a mad fit of passion, but slowly, astutely and with patient workmanship. She waits for the right moment to make her moves. The violent resistance becomes an example in the history of women's resistance.

In the relation of Edward and Catherine there is extreme case of the exploitation and subordination of the women. Catherine becomes the extreme case of the subordination of the female gender. She is loyal to her husband. She should convince her husband in any kind of relationship. As Steinbeck comments:

In their sexual relations she convinced him that the result was not quite satisfactory to her that if he were a better man he could release a flood of unbelievable reaction in her. Her method was to keep him continually off balance. She was with satisfaction his nerves begin to go; his hands take

to quivering, his loss of weight, and the wild glazed look in his eyes.

And when she delicately sensed the near approach of insane, punishing rage, she sat in his lap and soothed him and made him believe for a moment in her innocence. She could convince him. (96)

If Cathy is the case of the resistance of the exploitation and the subaltern position of the women, Catherine is the true example of the subordinate women in the text. She is such a woman, who is confined within the boundaries of the household task and the task of satisfying her husband and children. She cannot exploit her freedom.

By contrast, any poignancy in the detail of Mrs. Trask soiling her shroud is quickly cancelled out by the context: the narrator is also seem bias toward female whose vicious voice, has just described Mrs. Trask as a “pale, inside-herself woman” who “used religion as a therapy for all the ills of the world and of herself, and she changed the religion to fit the ill” (18). Although there is poignancy in the description of Mrs. Trask there is the revolt and capacity to even change the religion to fit the ills of society. The ills are the ills of the patriarchal society and the subordination position of women.

Catherine is a kind of women whose family is all for her because she is in a loss if she lose her family and her husband. That's why she is living a life which is no more than a hell. Because of the loss of freedom and free choice she has remained in a kind of subordinate position. All kinds of subordinate position of Catherine have been represented by the following lines:

One thing Mr. Edward did not know, and could not know because Catherine would not permit it, was that she was faithful to him in the sense that she did not receive or visit other man. To Catherine, Mr. Edward was a cold a business proposition as his units were to him. And

he has his techniques so had she hers. Once she had him, which was very soon. She managed always to seem slightly dissatisfied. She gave him an impression of restlessness, as though she might take flight at any moment. (96)

From the example of Catherine and Edward it is clear that if any woman wants to be loyal she has to lose her freedom. Catherine should make drama and apply many kind of technique to limit her husband with herself forever. The females should be laborious to satisfy her husband. In the contrary the males are free to enjoy and go beyond the limitations of the love of their wives in patriarchal society where the women are always in subaltern position.

The society gives her a kind of tag of being a psycho pathetic character. But, she rebels from it and proves herself a kind of freedom fighter among the dominated women. Cathy rebels from the very beginning suggesting that she was born with psychotic traits. However, these unsavory traits are further honed and sharpened by society. For instance Mr. Edwards tries to own her which she will certainly not allow. Cathy hates control and spurns him. Edwards in turn beats her to a bloody pulp and leaves her to die. Cathy's hate for society and men grow. She knows how ugly men's souls can be. It seems Cathy cannot see the good in men nor can she understand it. Cathy only knows how she feels. For instance, Cathy cannot understand the good in Adam. She tries to dissect it and understand it but has no rationalization to good only to evil. She is afraid of good because of her lack in understanding it. Steinbeck is the narrator but may be unreliable because he has branded her as evil even before we can read of her.

Steinbeck narrates that it is Cathy who tried to seduce a grown man and drive him crazy. Cathy did not make him kill himself. Steinbeck is an untrustworthy

narrator in the case of the women. It means there seems a kind of bias toward the women and their status, who tells a story from memories. His description of evil Cathy is weak. Intentionally the writer has made the women weak and frail the author wants us to see her as the evil side of nature without question. Even the most evil sadist will tell you that there is a beginning to his madness a broken home-alcoholic parent-molestation-etc. Here Steinbeck gives us no reason at all as to why Cathy is evil. The women in *East of Eden* are so violent that they even do not hesitate to fire a house and kill people. There is the strong revolt against the domestic subordination and marginalization of females.

Shortly after Cathy marries Adam, she unexpectedly becomes pregnant. She tries to terminate the pregnancy, but her failed attempt leaves her gravely injured and in need of a doctor. The doctor threatens to turn her into the authorities for trying to illegally perform an abortion, and she agrees to keep the child for fear of local law enforcement delving into her past. This marks the first time that Cathy resigns herself to a situation in which she does not have complete control.

At the beginning of the novel, Cathy decides she wants to leave home, but not without eliminating any trace of her past. She realizes that without the burden of family, she can become whoever she wants and use people for her own personal gain. After meticulously plotting her getaway, Cathy kills a chicken and puts its blood in a jar. When her parents fall asleep, she pours the blood on the floor, leaves behind her trademark hair ribbon, and then lights the house on fire and escapes. The blaze kills them and convinces the townspeople that someone has murdered Cathy and then burned the evidence. This allows Cathy to work in a nearby brothel and steal money from its owner, without anyone coming to look for her or reprimand her for her unprincipled behavior.

It is difficult to imagine someone willingly executing such morbid acts on free will alone. Throughout the duration of the book, Cathy shows no regret for the people she had hurt and even killed. She is devoid of any respect for life. In these occurrences, nature appears to be the cause of Cathy's sinful deeds. Later scenes in the book appear to depict Cathy in a completely different light. When she is confronted by Adam, who merely wants to tell her that his brother bequeathed a heavy sum of money to her, she reacts in fear and anxiety. She racks her mind, attempting to identify what Adam really wants. Of course, she cannot pinpoint his underlying motive because it does not exist. Cathy becomes angry because he is no longer a fool she can deceive and trick anymore. Adam has learned to stand on his own feet and does not care about what Cathy thinks about him. She reacts in a similar way when Cal, her son, comes to visit her. Cathy realizes that many of her undesirable traits are present in Cal's personality and is turned away from him in fear and revulsion. These two incidents support the idea that Cathy was not born evil, but simply developed the personality as time progressed. Her deeds are the result of the subordinate position in patriarchal society. It is a kind of resistance.

The male who cannot be stable himself is the patriarchal agent who has a great role in the domination of women. For example, throughout the novel, Adam's character consistently lacks emotional stability, and his capability of connecting with others appears, disappears and reappears. The first twenty-five or so years of Adam's life is marked by emotional trauma as a result of his father's lack of affection, the fear of his brother, and his time spent serving in the military and in a chain gang. At this point, Adam's survival depends on some kind of epiphany that incites an emotional awakening. Adam "may have lived all his life in the grey, and the land and trees of him dark and somber. The events, even the important ones may have trooped by

faceless and pale,” but “sometimes a kind of glory lights up the mind of a man (130). That glory appears to Adam on his front porch in the form of a helpless and distressed girl named Cathy Ames. All of a sudden, Adam has someone who needs him. In the character of Adam, Steinbeck reveals how even positive emotional forces can make unclear judgment. Because Adam has never really known love before, and because no one is capable of loving the true Cathy Ames in any patriarchal society, he effectively fabricates his own idea of her and grows in love with that idea. Adam receives multiple warnings about Cathy. Samuel tells him to “look closer until [he] can see how ugly [she] really is” (169).

Cathy constantly assesses her environment as she attempts to dominate it, because she discovers that her success depends upon her ability to eliminate the domestic chain of exploitation. Her character never has the ability to physically manipulate her environment, but only the capability of getting others to do this for her. Her intentions were “never innocent. Their purpose was to escape punishment, or work, or responsibility, and they were used for profit.” Cathy is successful because “she developed the most effective method of lying. She stayed close enough to the truth so that one could never be sure” (73).

The Trask family is the prime example of the family which is the container of the domination and the restriction of the women from their freedom. One day a defectively beaten young woman appears on the Trasks’ doorstep. She is Cathy Ames, a beautiful but evil and manipulative prostitute according to the patriarchal cultural view point. She has been left for dead by her pimp. The brothers give her shelter and take care of her. Adam soon falls in love with her and wants to marry her. Charles is set against the marriage because he is aware of Cathy’s true character. Charles is aware that the position of masculine position may not be lost for Adam. His suspicions



are confirmed one night when she seduces him as his brother Adam lies sleeping. Here Cathy goes against the cultural restriction created by male hegemony. She gives a big slap to the notion of remaining limited with only one person and serving the person being like a slave by the female.

However, Adam and Cathy are married and she soon finds out that she is pregnant. Cathy does not want the child and she tries to induce a miscarriage. In the step of trying to miscarriage the children is the great resist against the notion of being a good mother and being a kind of domestic slave of her family. The attempt goes badly wrong and she becomes very ill. Adam decides to leave the family farm and start afresh with his wife and new baby. He looks for some land on which he can build a house and make a new life. But Cathy tells him she doesn't want this new life and that she will leave him when the child is born. Adam does not believe her, but soon after she gives birth to twin boys, Cathy packs her things and gets ready to leave. She becomes a kind of rebel here for Adam.

The matter of good and bad becomes shadowed here in front of the issue of women resistance. In fact the notion of good and bad is created by the patriarchal society to subordinate the women. When Adam tries to stop her, she coolly shoots him and leaves him wounded. She leaves and returns to her life as a prostitute. Here is the climax of her rebel against the male dominated cultural boundaries.

Taylor argues that women always should focus on the productive aspect of their life. They should do something so that they should not be dependant to their husbands and limit their freedom like Cathy does here in the novel by taking the way which is a kind of taboo in her society. He further notes that these agents can only succeed in addressing the practical gender needs.

The strategic gender needs could face resistance as they challenge the social structures and their involvement could be viewed as an outside interference. Women spend much of their time and energy in trying to address their practical gender needs at the expense of mobilizing themselves for change on strategic gender needs. Instead of aiming to be independent economic actors' women put much emphasis on their reproductive roles. (132)

In fact the women are limited within the boundaries of house to taking care of children, making food etc. Instead of focusing up on productivity the women are focusing on reproduction. They are being limited in the household tasks. This is the same in the context of the here in the novel *East of Eden* as Cathy faces. Therefore they must be powerful enough to make them able and for the achievement of their freedom.

If the women are trying to get their freedom and free choice with the help of treachery and any kind of fraud, they are considered as a monster and made the character to be abandoned. The first thing Steinbeck reveals about Cathy is that she is a "monster" (71), and that everything about her physical appearance effectively veils her inner grotesqueness. Throughout her childhood, Cathy effectually manipulates every one of her male targets because of her ability to conceal her virulent intentions. Her failed attempt to flee from her affair with Mr. Edwards leaves her viciously maimed and near death, and as she recovers in the Trask home, she notices something about Charles: "She saw that he touched the scar on his forehead very often, rubbed it and drew its outline with his fingers. Once he caught her watching. He looked guiltily at his fingers. Charles said brutally, 'Do not worry you're going to have one like it, maybe even a better one' (114). This occurrence somewhat enlightens Cathy as she

learns that she is not alone in her darkness – that there are others in the world like her. More importantly, this instance demonstrates that she will not always maintain the ability use her appearance as a deceptive tool, and furthermore, it instigates the process of Cathy's physical deterioration throughout the novel.

There people says that Cathy is a monster because of her act of resisting against the domination and subordinate position of women. But the fact is the she has been called monster because she has no any kind of freedom. Yes Cathy is a kind of monster if this is true that a man and a woman is a monster without freedom as the writer claims:

What freedom men and women could have, were they not constantly tricked and trapped and enslaved and tortured by their sexuality! The only drawback in that freedom is that without it one would not be a human. One would be a monster. At ten Cathy knew something of the power the sex impulse and began coldly to experiment with it. She planned everything coldly, foreseeing difficulties and preparing for them.

(77)

Here Cathy is a true monster for the male dominated society because she has revolted from the exploitation and subaltern position of women. She has utilized the power of sexuality and the female organs which is a kind of taboo for the patriarchal society. She has no any kind of feelings and emotions regarding the entire male scapegoat because she is a strong rebel for the society which is deeply rooted in the patriarchal cultural boundaries.

The males in the book have caught in the trap of the sexual exploitation of Cathy to some extent. They have lost their prestige and good position being slave to sexuality. In this way she is a successful women rebel. Therefore there is a strong

resistance from the existing women subordinate position in *East of Eden*. Steinbeck writes:

I believe that there is one story in the world and only one. . . . Humans are caught 'in their lives, in their thoughts, in their hungers and ambitions, in their avarice and cruelty, and in their kindness and generosity too 'in a net of good and evil. . . . There is no other story. A man, after he has brushed off the dust and chips of his life will have left only the hard, clean questions: Was it good or was it evil? Have I done well 'or ill?'(503)

The hunger here is the hunger of sexuality. For a man it is a question of good or evil only if he has committed mistake in life but for women it is the question of survival. It is the matter of her being in the earth and out of earth especially in the patriarchal structure.

The analysis of Cathy Trask, Liza Hamilton, and Abra Bacon makes known sexual tensions and cultural dynamics as well as how these exacting tensions and dynamics affected women of the era: “New dating partners find sexual resistance to be more unexpected than do either cross-sex friends or individuals in ambiguous male–female relationships” (Metts Cupach, & Imahori 192). While Liza Hamilton represents the traditional domestic figure, Cathy Trask represents a deviant woman who refuses to accept the roles of wife and mother. Ultimately, Cathy Trask, the woman who deviates from the cultural norm in *East of Eden*, is punished. Rather than illustrating the idea that women who stray from traditional gender roles be worthy of suffering the consequences, Steinbeck is actually portraying the limitations of postwar American society which is totally bias. The society Steinbeck has portrayed here is deeply rooted in patriarchal structure. Steinbeck offers the character of Abra Bacon as an alternative

type of female who defines a new idea of femininity. While Abra observes traditional gender roles and maintains a domestic outline, at the same time, she is assertive and does not allow her femininity to be defined by domesticity.

In the text Steinbeck characterizes the female in a comparative way. He tries to show that the women are not same all over the world. If there are deviant women, there are meek and docile also. The deviant women are somehow a kind of hindrance on the path of the revolt and resistance of the domination and suppression of patriarchy. Through his characterization of Liza Hamilton, a completely devoted wife, mother, and conventional Christian, Steinbeck demonstrates that the idea of the perfect domestic woman is only a front elevation. Though Liza appears to be the epitome of domesticity, Steinbeck illustrates that she is not a realistic or likable woman. In complete contrast to Liza, Cathy Ames, in an attempt to escape from the expectations of being a mother and a wife, refuses to live unhappily with her husband and two sons on their ranch, choosing instead to manage a brothel. It is the right choice for a woman to reject the unhappy position and situation and Cathy has done so. In doing so, she symbolizes the deviant woman who wanders away from traditional values. Ultimately, Cathy, the eccentric woman, is punished and killed off by the end of the novel by the deeply rooted patriarchal norms and values.

In *East of Eden* Steinbeck has fore-grounded the conflict between a husband and wife, a daughter and father. It means he has demonstrated the conflict between a male master and female slave. Directly and indirectly the women are servant and the male are masters in the name of relations, love, protection and affection. Within the text, Steinbeck depicts the sexual tensions and cultural dynamics in American patriarchal society. Specifically, he critiques the constructions and limitations society imposes upon women by basing their identity and femininity on domesticity. According to

Wyatt: “While busy fighting wars, both cold and hot, the 1950s invested its conscious energy in the domestic pursuit of happiness, and the structure of *East of Eden* reflects this” (xviii).

Portraying female characters that can be interpreted as either the traditional, conservative domestic figure of wife and mother, or the unconventional woman who strays from domesticity completely, Steinbeck reveals the restrictions that these norms of femininity place upon women and offers his readers a third type of woman who does not have to choose between the domestic and nondomestic extremes. Throughout the novel, Steinbeck focuses primarily on three women: Cathy Ames, Liza Hamilton, and Abra Bacon. These are the woman who has depicted the real culture and tradition placed between a male and female. They depict the labour division between a woman and man.

Annie G. Dandavati, a Latin American scholar, traces Chilean women’s uprisings in particular in her book, *The Women’s Movement and the Transition to Democracy in Chile*. According to Dandavati:

Women struggled to become independent agents involved in determining the direction in which their country would move. They not only protested the political, economic and socio-cultural domination of the military regime, but also sought to transform the existing situation and offered an alternative vision of society based on democracy, equity and horizontal social relations. (6)

Dandavati here argues that women’s resistance in Chile’s context is applicable to all over the world. The women revolt not only to the system of the country but also in their home if they revolt.

The resistance of Cathy is not only the resistance of a woman from her family rather it is a resistance of whole female of the entire American society. Rather than illustrating the idea that women who get lost from the traditional gender role are monsters and deserve to suffer the consequences, Steinbeck is actually portraying the limitations of American patriarchal society. Cathy is compelled by the brutality of the male dominated culture and tradition who always ties the female in the knot of suppression. Trapped in the false projection of her parents and husband, Cathy is forced by society to rebel. Not only does the unconventional woman die in *East of Eden*, but Liza Hamilton also dies by the end of the novel. By killing off both the conventional and unconventional women, Steinbeck illustrates that although contemporary American society is not willing to accept women who completely rebel from living the traditional, domesticated lifestyle, the widespread idea that all women are completely satisfied in a domestic role is also unrealistic.

Cathy, the protagonist, not only challenges American society's traditional idea of femininity through her physical traits, but she also defies feminine associations through her malicious actions. She portrays the actions from which the male hegemony is thrilled and challenged. When Steinbeck introduces Cathy, he calls her a "monster", saying that some monsters have the outward appearance of monsters, and others do not; Cathy being one of the latter type. He seems to be saying that it was a natural process that created Cathy's lack of humanity. Over the course of the novel, Cathy ruthlessly murders her parents, tries to abort her babies with a clothes hanger, shoots her husband, and abandons him and her sons, and tortures and blackmails men of prominent social status who regularly visit her whorehouse.

This is the extreme example of the resistance by a woman through her own might. While these actions are shocking, Steinbeck, rather than merely leaving Cathy to be

defined as an evil monster, questions whether society is actually the monster at burden. It means he questions the society who is responsible in making Cathy a monster. He mean to say that the woman is not responsible in her all actions to commit such kind of evil act, but the norms and values of the evil social cultures.

The one profession of dignity opens to a girl of a good but not well-to-do family. . . If rather than running toward something, she ran away from something, we can't know whether she escaped. Who knows but that she tried to tell someone or everyone what she was like and could not, for lack of a common language? . . . It is easy to say she was bad, but there is little meaning unless we know why. (184)

From the above mentioned remark of Steinbeck in the novel. It can be claimed that Cathy is good for herself. She is success in removing all kinds of ills upon the female in patriarchy imposed by the society. Her death is a kind of martyrdom. She seems to fight for alone but, she is fighting for the entire femininity. Her actions are not only the matter of good or bad, but also the matter of why? Why she has done so is the question the entire society has to think of. She leaves the patriarchy to ponder upon these questions.

At the age of fourteen, Cathy announces that she would like to be a teacher, Two years later, to the dismay of her parents; Cathy decides that she no longer wants to continue her education or become a teacher. Since the Ames family are not wealthy, they know that Cathy must be able to support herself financially, and one of the few respectable professions available to Cathy is teaching. In order to force Cathy to continue her education, Mr. Ames resorts to physical punishment. Despising her parents for forcing her to choose a career and lifestyle she does not want, Cathy rebels against her parents' authority by robbing and murdering them.



Several years later, Cathy still does not regret killing her parents: “When I was a little girl I knew what stupid lying fools they were—my own mother and father pretending goodness. And they were not good” (321).

In Cathy’s mind, instead of trying to do what was best for her, her parents were attempting to do what was best for them. She is a kind of subordinate class in her family. It means that she is a subaltern in her family in particular and a subaltern race in general as: “The concept of subalternity ‘registers how the knowledge we construct and impart is structured by the absence, difficulty or impossibility of representation of the subaltern’” (Beverly 40). She believes that they wanted her to be a teacher both to free themselves of the burden of supporting her, and to take pride in her respectability. Besides ridding herself of her authoritarian parents, Cathy also defies their expectations by becoming a prostitute.

### **Chapter III: *East of Eden*: A Narrative of Women's Resistance against Patriarchy**

Through the analysis of the novel from the perspective of the female resistance theory it is proved that the various activities done by Cathy is the outcome of the domination and suppression of not only her but the entire femininity by male dominated society and culture. Cathy's being harsh and cruel is the deliberate description of the writer which is deeply rooted in the mind of the male. The negative quality is given to the male. The social ties are so harsh that she has to be a prostitute to rebel against the domination of the female. She has been given many adjectives when she rejects all kinds of role given to her and be a prostitute according her will.

Cathy the major character is a figure of infertility and destruction according to the patriarchal cultural network that kills her parents and attempts to kill her own unborn children, Cathy is compared to biblical character who compels male to be evil. The biased comparison makes it clear that how the women are being voiceless in the society. There is nobody to speak in favor of them. They also do not speak about the injustice upon them because as Spivak says "Subaltern doesn't speak themselves" (132). She is a debased version of the biblical Eve, whom the Christian tradition sees as the mother of all humankind. Like Eve, Cathy is associated with sin, but whereas Eve is deceived into committing sin, Cathy embraces it wholeheartedly and commits evil simply for its own sake. Cathy has an overwhelmingly pessimistic view of humankind: she believes that there is only evil in the world and therefore surrenders herself to it fully.

Cathy's upbringing did not seem to be a likely place to promote rebel and hostility in the young girl. Her parents were loving and eager to educate and entertain Cathy.

Unfortunately, Cathy was not a standard child. She was quite different from other children because all kinds of injustices and domination of female by the male dominated society. This fact was very obvious to Cathy's parents and the townspeople. Similar to other children, she learned how to use certain facts and pieces of information to her advantage. However, Cathy's vast cleverness set her apart from other children in that she used much more sensitive information dealing with adult issues for her manipulative purposes. Whatever she did as a child was cold and calculated. Cathy's actions as a youngster seem to point to the conclusion that her sinfulness came from nature and not nurture. And the nature has come from the exploitation of women in patriarchal society.

The main character in the novel Cathy wants to abort her child when she knows that she is pregnant. This is the act of being free from all kinds of social boundaries given to female. She is rebelling from the ties of maternity. It seems that she does not have soul. She becomes cold to the patriarchal network of injustice. Even though she does not want to give birth, she gives birth to her child. But she resists the maternity by not caring her children. All kinds of act of Cathy are for the resistance of the male dominated society and culture. Her act of killing her parents, her try of aborting her children, the indifference of her infants, and the disloyalty to her husband are all for the resistance of the so-called patriarchal domination. Therefore there is female resistance in the text *East of Eden*.

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