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ABSTRACT

존 스타인벡의 『긴 계곡』에 나타난 인간의 정체성 과 개인적 성취의 추구

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이 논문의 연구 목적은 존 스타인벡이 단편소설이라는 매개체를 사용해 글을 쓴 이유, 『긴 계곡』 (*The Long Valley*)」에 들어있는 각각의 단편소설의 특징과 성격, 그리고 단일한 주제의 탐색이라는 세 가지 논제를 다루는 데 있다. 첫 번째 논제는 스타인벡이 글의 매체를 소설에서 단편소설로 전환한 것과 관련이 있다. 소설 작품으로 잘 알려져 있는 작가였기에, 소설에서 단편소설로 전환하고자 한 스타인벡의 결정은 한동안 논란의 대상이 되었다. 「긴 계곡」을 쓰기 불과 2년 전인 1932년에 셀리나스 계곡을 배경으로 한 단편소설집 「하늘의 목장(*The Pastures of Heaven*」이 이렇다할 반응을 얻지 못해 그 결과 출판업자에게서 가불을 한 250달러도 갚지 못했던 처지에 있었다. 비평가들은 스타인벡이 다시 단편소설을 쓰고자 한 이유에 대해서 자주 여러 가지 억측을 해왔다. 이 논제에는 두 가지 해석이 가능하다. 첫째는 스타인벡의 불안정한 재원결핍을 들 수 있다. 그는 부모님 집에 기숙하며 창작 생활을 지속하기 위해 심지어는 부친의 사무실에서 문구류를 가져다가 사용할 정도로 생활이 궁핍했다. 따라서 단편소설이 소설과는 달리 빠르고 상대적으로 쉽게 돈을 벌 수 있는 수입원이었다는 것이다. 둘째는 단편소설은 소설의 제한된 틀 안에서 함께 엮어내기가 힘들었던 다양한 개념과 아이디어들은 전달할 수 있는 이상적인 도구가 되었다는 점이다.

이 논문의 두 번째 목표는 스타인벡에게 중요한 여러 가지 주제들이나 동기들을 발견하고자 하는 노력의 일환으로 『긴 골짜기』에 실려 있는 개개 단편소설들을 비평적으로 분석하는 것이다. 첫 번째 주제에서 스타인벡은 “The Chrysanthemums", “The White Quail," 그리고 “The Snake"에 등장하는 여성들의 비전통적인 역할을 남성지배적인 세상으로부터 피난처를 찾고자 하는 사회의 지배집단이긴 하나 특권이 없는 여성들의 욕구로서 다루고 있다. 두 번째, ”The Snake" 에서 스타인벡은 미지의 것을 설명하지 못하는 과학의 무능력을 분석하고 있다. 과학

자이자 친구인 에드 리케츠와의 과학적 대담에서 기인된 듯 보이는데, 스타인벡은 점차 과학에 회의적이 되었고, 공공연하게 과학이 완벽하게 설명해 낼 수 없는 것이 아주 많다고 밝힌바 있다. 세 번째 주제에서, 스타인벡은 “The Red Pony”와 “Flight"에서 개인들의 성년으로의 통과의례와 탐색의 권리를 조사하려고 어린시절의 기억으로 되돌아간다. 사회뿐만 아니라 그 구성원들인 개개인들에 깊은 관심이 있었던 스타인벡은 "The Raid)"이나 “The Vigilante"에서 군중심리나 공동체 의식을 다루고 있다. "The Harness", "Johnny Bear", 그리고 “The Murder"에서 나타나 있는 마지막 주제는 신의 은총으로부터의 타락과 고결함에 대한 환상이다. 이러한 주제들이나 동기들은 스타인벡에게 있어 묘사는 하고 싶지만, 전통적인 소설로는 묘사가 불가능한 아주 중요한 개념들이다.

이 논문의 마지막 목표는 통일적인 주제의 탐색과 관련이 있다. 이 논문은 『긴 계곡』에 실려 있는 단편소설들을 서로 연결해 주는 통일적인 주제가 실제로 있다고 주장함으로서 전반적인 비평계의 주장과 맞서고 있다. 통합적인 주제의 틀이 있다는 것을 부정하고, 『긴 계곡』의 단편들 중 오로지 6편만이 셀리나스 계곡을 배경으로 하고 있으며, “Saint Katy the Virgin”가 14세기 유럽을 배경으로 하고 있다는 것을 고려해, 이 작품이 지리적인 측면에서 조차도 일관성이 없다고 주장을 해온 비평가들은 그렇지 않아도 복잡한 단편소설집에 통일된 주제를 붙이려는 시도들을 비판해 왔다. 그러나, 이러한 주장들에도 불구하고, 이 논문은 『긴 계곡』을 통일시켜주는 요소는 바로 시간과 장소가 아니라, 사회와 문화라는 따뜻한 테두리 바깥에서 의미와 성취를 추구하고자 하는 특권이 없는 남성과 여성의 욕구임을 주장한다. 만족을 주지 못하는 사회로부터 피난처를 찾고자 하는 개인의 욕구, 새롭고 더욱더 유익한 사회집단을 발견하고자 하는 탐색, 의미를 주지 못하는 자기 패러다임의 무능력, 그리고 성장과 발전을 진흥시키지 못하는 사회의 무능력을 분석함으로서, 스타인벡은 인간의 의미 및 자기실현화의 추구라는 기치 아래 『긴 계곡』의 단편들을 함께 연결하고 있다. 작가의 의무란 “많은 중대한 결점이나 실패를 드러내고, 우리의 어둡고 위험한 꿈들도 향상이라는 목적을 위해 표현(노벨상 수상기념 강연 1962)함”으로써 사회를 책임감이 있는 것으로서 유지시키는 것임을 굳게 믿은 스타인벡은 「긴 계곡」에 들어있는 단편소설들을 그저 무작위로 모아 놓은 것이 아니라, 사회가 인간의 조건들을 지지하고 보호해야 하는 필요성에 대한 증거로서 엮어 놓은 것이다.

I Introduction

During the early years of the Great Depression, John Steinbeck began work on one of his least known but arguably finest works of fiction. During these dark years of economic and personal turmoil, Steinbeck crafted fifteen [1] superbly written short stories under conditions that he himself described as the most difficult imaginable. With his mother permanently incapacitated from a stroke, a young John Steinbeck, having no financial resources of his own, spent his days living in his parent's house where he tended to the needs of his infirm mother – all the while continuing to write a series of individual short stories that would ultimately be published in a single volume as *The Long Valley*[2]. Ironically, while this collection has been well received by critics and scholars alike, it is also one of the least understood. R.S. Hughes correctly points out therefore, that *The Long Valley* is somewhat of an anomaly for John Steinbeck. As an author renowned

[1] Although 15 stories were originally written, the four stories that comprise *The Red Pony*: "The Gift", "The Great Mountains", "The Promise", and "The Leader of the People" were eventually combined into one publication and subsequently re-released as the final chapter of t*he Long Valley* as *The Red Pony*.

[2] It should be noted that although *The Long Valley* was published in 1938, "Flight" was the only story to not be previously published as an individual short story. See Appendix 1: *The Long Valley Dates of Composition and Publication*.

for chronicling the evils of "the Great Depression and its effects on California's rural valleys" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony,* 54), "The Raid" and "Breakfast" are the only entries within *The Long Valley*, to address Steinbeck's repeated calls for social reform. It ironic, therefore, that Steinbeck's stinging criticism of the Great Depression and society's ill-treatment of the migrant labouring class in the 1930's – a dominant feature in so many of his larger works – has remained, "the exception rather than the rule in *The Long Valley*" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony,* 54). Furthermore, as an author renowned for writing novels, Steinbeck's decision to produce a second collection of short stories has remained deeply perplexing. Particularly when *The Pastures of Heaven* – a previous collection of short stories published some six years earlier in 1932 – failed to gain either monetary or critical success. Yet, the most fascinating departure from his other works, and the one most troubling to critics, concerns *The Long Valley's* absence of thematic unity. Compared to *The Pastures of Heaven*[3], a collection that is hardly cohesive, *The Long Valley* seems strangely wanting. Located just

[3] Sharing little more than a vague semblance of geographic symmetry, *The Pastures of Heaven*, is at best a loosely connected series of short fiction, set against the backdrop of the Monterey and Salinas Valleys.

outside Castle Rock[4], where a young "John and Mary Steinbeck used to play as children" (*Corral de Tierra*, 2005), *The Pastures of Heaven* takes place in a fertile agricultural valley[5] "midway between Salinas and the Monterey Peninsula" (*Corral de Tierra*, 2005) and has, therefore, a geographical cohesiveness that *The Long Valley* does not. Furthermore, in suggesting that even *The Long Valley's* "title is misleading; with only six of [its] twelve stories set in the Salinas Valley" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 54), critics have openly speculated that it is incorrect to view this entire collection as "taking place in the Salinas Valley proper[6]," (Hughes, *John Steinbeck: A Study of Short Fiction,* 20). With "Flight" beginning on the Pacific coast and ending in the Santa Lucia Mountains, "The Snake" being set on Cannery Row in the town of Monterey, "The Murder" and *The Red Pony Stories* set near the Santa Lucia Mountains, and "The Raid" and "The Vigilante" taking place in nondescript towns[7], it is far more accurate to describe Steinbeck's collection of short stories – with the obvious exception of "Saint Katy the Virgin" – as being representative of

[4] Castle Rock, or Corral de Tierra as it is known in Spanish, is a natural formation of sandstone adjacent to the Salinas and Monterey Valleys, established in 1836 by then Governor of Spain, Guiterrez and later given to Francisco Figueroa of California.
[5] First named Las Pasturas del Cielo by the Spanish settlers in 1770, this fertile agricultural landscape was later re-named the Pastures of Heaven by the American pioneers of the 1800s.
[6] R.S. Hughes' *John Steinbeck: A Study of Short Fiction*, will be further cited as *S.S.F.*
[7] For a greater understanding of the specific locations of the individual *The Long Valley* stories, see R.S. Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*.

various geographical locations set in and around the California landscape. Citing its lack of geographic symmetry, many of Steinbeck's most respected critics have suggested therefore, that "it may be a mistake to attempt to attach a unifying theme to *The Long Valley* stories" (Owens, 108).

In addressing this criticism, this thesis will challenge the prevailing theory that *The Long Valley* is a haphazard collection of unrelated short fiction by critically examining the individual stories in *The Long Valley*. By investigating the role of women as represented in "The Chrysanthemums", "The White Quail" and "The Snake"; Steinbeck's questioning belief in science as reflected in "The Snake"; the right of passage in *The Red Pony* and "Flight"; the group versus individual dynamic in "The Raid" and "The Vigilante"; and finally, man's fall from respectability as applied to "The Murder", "The Harness", and "Johnny the Bear", this thesis will challenge the prevailing critical opinion concerning *The Long Valley's* lack of thematic unity. In challenging these previous critical interpretations, this thesis proposes that the unifying theme of *The Long Valley* is not geographic relativism, but the need of otherwise disenfranchised men and women to look outside the normal confines of society in order to find the emotional and spiritual fulfillment that their society has either been unable or unwilling to provide.

II Limitations of Study

While *The Long Valley* has long been credited with representing some of the most powerful, intriguing and disturbing writings of Steinbeck's long and distinguished career, one would simply be utterly amiss to view all fifteen short stories as being representative of a single geographic locale. As previously mentioned, with so many stories set outside the Salinas Valley, and "Saint Katy the Virgin" taking place in 14th century Europe, being therefore removed by both time and place, *The Long Valley* is not so much Salinas Valley fiction, but California fiction. Yet even if one accepts such a broad geographical linkage, there remain two glaring anomalies: "Breakfast" and "Saint Katy the Virgin".

A. "Breakfast"

In "Breakfast", which likely occurs in "the San Joaquin or Sacramento Valley, California" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 20), Steinbeck depicts what can perhaps most accurately be called a vignette of a family of migrant farmer workers. In what is the shortest and simplest of his fifteen narratives, "Breakfast" conveys, "feelings of warmth and beauty" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 49), in depicting an unexpected interaction between a family of poor, but otherwise kind and generous migrant farm workers who invite an unnamed visitor to

share their breakfast and hospitality on a cold morning. In this first person narrative, which likely occurred during Steinbeck's research of the migrant farm communities of the 1930's – research that ultimately became represented in far greater detail in *The Grapes of Wrath* and *In Dubious Battle* – Steinbeck pursues his belief in the nobility of man. Examining a sense of generosity and the brotherhood of man, themes that Steinbeck saw as lying just below the surface of society, "Breakfast" serves as the lighter side of Steinbeck's dark characterization of American society in the 1930s. Describing this belief in the nobility of man as the need, "to celebrate man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit - for gallantry in defeat - for courage, compassion and love in the endless war against weakness and despair" (Steinbeck Nobel Lecture, 1962), "Breakfast" emerges as Steinbeck's dream or *ideal type*[8], of what society should aspire to become.

It should be noted, that while critics James A. Hamby, Edwin M. Moseley, and Antoni Gajewsky argue that the themes of generosity and brotherhood of man provide adequate justification for the inclusion of "Breakfast", others openly reject its inclusion. Citing its limited scope, arguing that it "lacks a developed plot and characterization" (Holman, 500),

[8] The 'ideal type' represents a theoretical construct conceptualized by historian and sociologist Max Weber who held that no scientific system is ever capable of reproducing reality, nor can any conceptual apparatus ever do full justice to the infinite diversity of particular phenomena.

some of Steinbeck's more vocal reviewers have been extremely critical of "Breakfast". Arguing that by its very nature – being a mere sketch – one that even Steinbeck himself described as being "out of sunken memory" (Steinbeck, 61), "Breakfast" is at best a snapshot representing a series of thoughts and impressions, and not a viable short story. Furthermore, as an obvious testing ground for a much larger work, appearing some three years later in Chapter 22 of *The Grapes of Wrath*, "Breakfast"[9] is unable to stand on its own merits, and should therefore, never have been included in *The Long Valley*.

B. "Saint Katy the Virgin"

The second anomaly, and the one story that critics overwhelmingly agree has no place in *The Long Valley*, is Steinbeck's farcical caricature of Medieval Christianity. Being far removed from the Salinas Valley by both time and distance, "Saint Katy the Virgin" whimsically chronicles the life of a miraculous pig in 14th century Europe, who becomes converted from her evil and sinful past to cure diseases, perform miracles and become posthumously added to the "Calendar of the Elect" (Lisca, 94). With its deep biting satire and comical tone, "Saint Katy the Virgin" is unlike any other *The Long Valley*

[9] Like "Breakfast", "The Snake" (1935) was also published as part of a larger work, ultimately re-appearing in *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (1941). Unlike "The Snake", however, "Breakfast" has been unable to stand on its own as short story.

story, having nothing whatsoever to do with the Salinas Valley or its people. With Joseph Fontenrose calling it a "maverick", Brian Barbour accusing it of "lacking critical judgement" and Warren French's assertion of it being "conspicuously different in content and tone" – its inclusion in *The Long Valley* has been problematic since the beginning. This fact is perhaps best illustrated by Timmerman, who states, "by and large critics have dealt with the story by ignoring it" (Timmerman, The Dramatic Landscape of Steinbeck's Short Stories[10], 142). Louis Owens and Joseph Fontenrose, both of whom have made extensive contributions to the critical interpretations of both John Steinbeck and *The Long Valley*, concur with Timmerman's assessment that most critics and scholars give the story little more than a passing footnote, pausing only to accuse "St. Katy" of being of the same ilk as "Breakfast" in that it offers no significant thematic importance whatsoever.

Amid such criticism, however, there have been scholars and critics who have chosen to examine this unique tale. At the forefront of this minority are John H. Timmerman and R.S. Hughes, both of whom suggest that the primary theme emerging from "Saint Katy the Virgin" concerns Steinbeck's frustration with institutionalized religion.[11] Arguing that, "[i]nstitutionalism

[10] This source will be further cited as Timmerman, "*Dramatic Landscape"*

[11] It should be noted that although Steinbeck was a Christian, and did become quite sensitive to religious practices later in life, in his Stanford days of the 1920s, living apart from his parents and childhood community, he routinely shrugged off his faith.

had been the target of college satires, in "Saint Katy the Virgin", Steinbeck turns his attention from the university administrators to the Christian clergy. Chief among his indictments of the clergy was their tendency to ignore facts which contradict their view of reality" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 90). Further re-enforcing this theory is the fact that although "Saint Katy the Virgin" was first published in 1936, its origins go as far back as 1925, when a young John Steinbeck was still attending Stanford University. According to Frank Fenton, "[Saint Katy the Virgin] was first written as a bawdy poem inspired by a lecture on canonization during the Middle-Ages" (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape*, 143). Inspired by Professor E. M. Hume's humorous remarks on the often absurd practices of canonization in the Middle-Ages, the real question is whether this "bawdy tale represents a tale in good fun or [whether] it is on some level, to be taken seriously." (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 58) The answer to this question, while by no means unanimous, appears to be that "Saint Katy the Virgin" represents a whimsical mixture of religious and institutional sarcasm coupled with hilarious buffoonery. In adopting a "casual familiarity with the reader marked by [excessive repetitions of] *you see*" (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape*, 144), Steinbeck demonstrates whimsical tone conspicuously absent in his other *Long Valley* stories, all of which suggest that Steinbeck himself attached little importance to "Saint Katy the

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Seeing religion as being at odds with the reality of daily living, he became openly intolerant of the perceived hypocritical cantons of orthodox religion (Timmerman, 144).

Virgin". For as Peter Lisca points out, as early as 1932, Steinbeck appears to have washed his hands of the matter, telling his publisher to, "keep her if you want, she was a pleasant afternoon to me" (Lisca, 93), advice that was evidently taken to heart as the decision to include "Saint Katy the Virgin" into *The Long Valley* was made not by the author, but by Steinbeck's publisher, Pascal Covici, who urged that the story be included.

Because of its limited scope and development, being little more than a sketch for *The Grapes of* Wrath – "Breakfast" is unable to stand on its own merits, and as such, it will not be included in this study. Similarly, with "Saint Katy the Virgin" lacking even a geographical, thematic, or chronological connection to the Salinas Valley, being more representative of *The Short Reign of Pippin IV,* it too will be excluded. And while critics have overwhelmingly agreed that it, "might better have been left in a private collection" (Hughes, *S.S.F.,* 58), many of whom have openly questioned the wisdom of both Steinbeck or his publishers for their inclusion, it is perhaps best to simply acknowledge "Breakfast" and Saint Katy the Virgin" as atypical anomalies and move on to the remaining works that represent more typical themes of John Steinbeck.

III Thematic Aspects of *the Long Valley*

A. The Non-Traditional Role of Women

As one of the most dominant authors of 20th Century American fiction, John Steinbeck has greatly influenced the American literary landscape. Yet despite crafting some of the most powerful stories in American literature – *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *East of Eden*, to name but a few – his most dominant characters tend almost always to be men. This absence of a strong female protagonist has often led critics to find his work "shockingly misogynistic by today's standards" (Parini, 2003). Indeed when one thinks of Steinbeck's female characters, concepts of feminism and equality rarely come to mind. This is not to suggest that Steinbeck's female characters are weak or unimportant, but rather, "that Steinbeck's female characters are often strong characters who "guide their husbands through their moments of instability" (Falkenberg, 2003). *The Grapes of Wrath's* Ma Joad, *East of Eden's* Cathy, *Sweet Thursday's* Flora, and Curly's wife in *Of Mice and Men* portray women of tremendous strength and influence, yet somehow these women tend to be rather narrow in scope. "There's always a problem with women in Steinbeck's books. He could only do the Madonna or the whore. He didn't have much middle ground" (Parini, 2003). And while this view of Steinbeck's female characters as either mothers or prostitutes has become commonly accepted in

his novels, Steinbeck's short stories present compelling evidence to the contrary. Unlike the women in most of Stienbeck's larger fiction, Elisa Allen, in "The Chrysanthemums", Mary Teller in "The White Quail", and the mysterious woman in "The Snake" illustrate a feminist conflict absent throughout much of Steinbeck's more popular works. By examining the struggle of disenfranchised women to seek shelter from the emotional wasteland inhabited by their husbands; the use of light versus dark imagery, and the challenging of sex-stereotyped roles, it will be possible to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of not only "The Chrysanthemums", "The White Quail", and "The Snake", but Steinbeck's view of women in early 20th century America as well.

1 "The Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail"

a. The struggle to find meaning in a hostile world.

Given Steinbeck's traditional portrayal of women as either prostitutes, or mothers who provide emotional support to their husbands and children in times of crisis (Fitsanik, 1990), "The Chrysanthemums" and "the White Quail" have the *prima facie* appearance of any normal piece of Steinbeck fiction. Both are set in the Salinas Valley, with clearly defined gender roles, and appear at first glance to chronicle the lives of basic, decent, hard working

people. Beyond this *prima facie* appearance, however, the reader soon discovers that both “The Chrysanthemums” and “the White Quail” are by no means the norm for Steinbeck, and that their protagonists, Elisa Allen and Mary Teller, do not easily fit into Steinbeck’s typical portrayal of women. Initially appearing to have very normal, traditional roles within society, the reader soon discovers that these women are quite unhappy in their traditional roles and are struggling to find meaningful, creative and fulfilling lives by sheltering themselves from the hostile male-dominated world in which they live. In “The Chrysanthemums”, Steinbeck portrays Elisa Allen as a farmer’s wife who spends her time working on her garden cultivating chrysanthemums and geraniums until one day by a chance encounter she meets a travelling repairman. Unmoved by his standard sales pitches, the repairman engages Elisa in a conversation regarding her flowers. Sensing an obvious weakness, the repairman manipulates Elisa into giving him some work by feigning an interest in her much adored chrysanthemums. The story ultimately concludes with the repairman callously dumping Elisa’s beloved flowers on the road after he leaves, leaving Elisa emotionally and psychologically isolated.

Portrayed in much the same way that any farmer’s wife would be, “working in her garden looking down across the yard at her husband talking to two men in business suits” (Steinbeck, 2), Elisa initially appears as a typical housewife, calmly keeping to herself while her husband handles all

matters of business. As the story progresses, however, it becomes clear that her flowers, particularly the chrysanthemums, hold a special meaning for Elisa. In “Suggesting that Elisa is talented and energetic – as well as frustrated, cutting her chrysanthemum stalks with excessive energy” (Hughes, “The Chrysanthemums”, 244), Elisa takes on a persona unseen in much of Steinbeck fiction by using her flower garden as a means to give her life greater meaning and to shelter herself from the fruitless and unfulfilling life of a rancher’s wife. “You sleep right in the wagon? It must be nice. It must be very nice. I wish women could do such things” (Steinbeck, 148). It is evident therefore, that Elisa sees the social constraints which govern her life as unfulfilling and suffocating, often leading critic’s to interpret the central conflict of “The Chrysanthemums” to be that of, “a woman trying to find a creative, significant role in a male-dominated society” (Hughes, “The Chrysanthemums”, 243). “The Chrysanthemums” then, emerges as an atypical piece of Steinbeck fiction, one that “illustrates the frustrating limitations placed on a woman by sex-stereotyped roles and traditional attitudes about ‘normal’ female and male behaviour” (Hughes, “The Chrysanthemums”, 249). And while not known for his feminist rhetoric, it appears that Steinbeck saw a clear gender conflict and gender discrimination existing within America. “You might be surprised to have a rival some time. I can sharpen scissors too. And I can beat the dents out of little pots. I could show you what a woman can do” (Steinbeck, 148). Thus Steinbeck portrays

Elisa as strong woman, independent of her husband, challenging many of the socially accepted norms governing gender behaviour in an effort to find a meaningful place for herself in an otherwise dull, hostile society dominated by men.

"The White Quail" is the second story to appear in Steinbeck's *The Long Valley*, that portrays a strong, independent and non-traditional woman struggling to find a creative and meaningful means of expression in an otherwise hostile society. And although "The White Quail" has not received the kind of critical acclaim that "The Chrysanthemums" has, it nonetheless portrays a strong independent woman taking control of her life. In its most basic form, "The White Quail" chronicles the life of a young woman who imagines a wonderful garden while little more than a teenager. Then, finding the right man to fit her garden, proceeds through sheer force of will, to physically construct the garden until one day it meets fruition. Pleased with what she has created, Mary proceeds to spend all her available time tending to her garden, until one day she is horrified to see a stray tom-cat invading her sanctuary. Fearing that her birds will attack be attacked, the most beautiful of which is a white quail, Mary makes her husband promise to get rid of the cat. Deciding to scare the cat away with an air gun, the story tragically ends with her husband killing his wife's beloved white quail instead in a reckless fit of jealousy and loneliness.

What emerges from “The White Quail”, is a woman so at odds with the society in which she lives, that she spends her entire adult life constructing the ultimate artificial sanctuary to shelter herself from the unsatisfying world in which she lives, a fact best illustrated by her husband who says, “You’re a funny little bug. The lot isn’t even bought, and the house isn’t even built, and the garden isn’t even planted and you’re already worrying about oak leaves on the lawn” (Steinbeck, 17). As the story progresses, the life of Mary and that of her garden, become virtually indistinguishable from one another. “You’re kind of untouchable… Probably, you don’t even know it yourself. You’re kind of like your own garden—fixed and just so” (Steinbeck, 17). Throughout “The White Quail”, Mary’s garden takes priority over all things great and small, a truth graphically re-enforced by the fact that she rarely speaks about anything other than her garden, and when she does, she attaches very little importance to it. In speaking to her husband about the nature of his bank’s lending practice, a practice of which she does not approve, Mary makes the following observation, ”I suppose it isn’t really unfair. It just sounds as though you are taking advantage of people when they are down… [but then again] I don’t know anything about loans. How can I tell what’s fair” (Steinbeck, 20)? Thus to Mary, matters dealing with the outside world are of very little consequence. Mary, therefore, “has willed her garden into a barrier between herself and all contact with the world outside.”(Owens, 253) Mary’s

garden then, much like Elisa Allen's in "The Chrysanthemums", gives these disenfranchised women the opportunity to seek meaningful and creative lives by limiting their contact with an uncomfortable, unwanted, and suffocating outside world.

b. The Search for Sanctuary from an Unfulfilling World

A second feature that separates "The Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail" from other Steinbeck fiction concerns the isolation of the heroine from the rest of society. "The Chrysanthemums" like "The White Quail" offers a portrait of an emotional wasteland without any certain hope for spiritual fructification [sic]"(Owens, 256). It is, therefore, this need to seek shelter from this emotional wasteland that has led to the heroine's self-imposed isolation. By portraying Elisa Allen and Mary Teller as having very separate lives from their husbands, Stienbeck depicts a type of self-imposed isolation as a means of protection from the dull, bleak, male-dominated society. In "The Chrysanthemums", Elisa Allen exists as a woman languishing in an environment that only stifles her creativity and potential. Confined to the tedious routines of a rancher's wife, Elisa seeks to separate herself from the "artists' frustration with an unappreciative society" (Hughes, "The Chrysanthemums", 243). Seeing the outside word as an emotional, spiritual and creative wasteland, Elisa Allen seeks an escape, from what "Richard

Astro, Robert Benton, and Elizabeth McMahan suggest to be a poor marriage" (Hughes, 243), by seeking shelter in her garden, finding sanctuary among the chrysanthemums and geraniums. This private world of Elisa's is one where she and she alone can reside, thrive and flourish. Routinely referring to the garden and flowers as hers, Elisa is portrayed as having a life that is quite separate from her society, one that her husband neither understands, nor desires to. "You're at it again. You've got a strong new crop coming… I wish you'd work out in the orchard and raise some apples that big" (Steinbeck, 2). It is evident therefore, that Elisa's garden is something very special: a place where she alone is in control; free to seek refuge from an otherwise unfulfilling life; and one where her husband is little more than a casual observer. "Henry Allen, whether from lack of interest or obtuseness, never enters the special world of his wife's garden… [s]pends only a few minutes conversation with Elisa" (Hughes, "The Chrysanthemums", 243). Thus by portraying Elisa as having a life apart from her husband, Steinbeck depicts a clear gender conflict within America, one where women of creativity and passion must live in a different world, far removed from the emotional wasteland of their husbands if their passion, creativity, and emotional integrity are to survive.

Similar to "The Chrysanthemums," "The White Quail" is a story about a woman constructing a garden to shield herself from the ugly

intrusiveness of the outside world. In describing Mary Teller's garden in 'The White Quail', Steinbeck describes what is easily the most powerful Eden in all of his writings " … for Mary has willed her garden into being as a barrier between herself and all contact with the outside world"(Owens, 253). Seeing the outside world as a barren wasteland, devoid of any spiritual or emotional fulfillment, Mary takes great pains to protect both her garden and herself from the evils of the outside. Seeing her garden as the essence of beauty, purity, and order, Mary views any encroachment into her garden as an attack on her sovereignty as creator of the garden. "That's the enemy, Mary said one time. That's the world that wants to get in, all rough and tangled and unkempt [sic]. But it can't get in because the fuchsias won't let it" (Steinbeck, 18). And while it could be argued that what Mary fears the most is a cat entering her garden and disturbing her birds, "if there's a cat I'll put out poisoned fish, I won't have a cat after my birds" (Steinbeck, 18), it is more likely that the cat is a manifestation of the outside world seeking entry into Mary's forbidden sanctuary. This self-imposed isolation is further pronounced when Mary speaks to her husband about the white quail, describing the mysterious bird, and possibly the garden as well as a manifestation of herself. Upon seeing the quail, "Mary cried to herself, 'she's like me!' A powerful ecstasy quivered in her body. She's the essence of me boiled down to utter purity. She must be the queen of the quail. She makes everything lovely thing that happened to me one thing" (Steinbeck, 22-3). Depicting her as the symbol of the frustrated and

isolated artist[12], Steinbeck portrays Mary as a woman completely cut off from society, trying desperately to avoid the ugly intrusiveness of the outside world. "After she was in bed in her own little bed room, she heard a faint click and saw the door-knob turn, and then turn slowly back. The door was locked. It was a signal; there were things Mary didn't like to talk about, the door lock was an answer to a question, a clean, quick, decisive answer (Steinbeck, 21). It is evident, therefore, that Mary uses her garden as her primary means of protection and isolation from the outside world. "The Chrysanthemums" then, much "like 'The White Quail', is a story about human isolation" (Owens, 255). As creator, guardian and protector of the garden, Mary sees great beauty in wonder in her own creation, one who's sole purpose is to protect her from the hallow emptiness of the barren wasteland that is the outside world.

c. The Imagery of Colour as a Means of Re-Enforcing Feminist Isolation and Alienation

The final way in which Steinbeck highlights the isolation and alienation of the feminist heroine in "The Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail" is through the use of dark and light imagery. In both stories, Steinbeck portrays women of great strength and character who attempt to resist the hollow

[12] This view of the frustrated and isolated artist was first suggested by Brian Barbour in "Steinbeck as a Short Story Writer," p. 118.

emptiness of a male-dominated society they are forced live in. Standing as the gatekeepers to a private and personal world, infinitely more comforting and supportive than the ones in which their husbands reside in, Steinbeck depicts both Elisa Allen and Mary Teller as the primary sentries attempting to keep out the sinister forces of the outside world. In emphasizing this theme of an invading force set against an isolated and alienated heroine, Steinbeck uses the imagery of colour to contrast the dark emptiness of the outside world against the bright, vibrant life that exists inside the gardens of "The Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail".

In "The Chrysanthemums", Steinbeck portrays two worlds: the world of Elisa Allen, which is described with a richness of colours and textures, and a second larger world which is dark, empty, and devoid of life. As the story opens, the Allen ranch is described as one that is completely enclosed by, "a grey-flannel fog of winter, closed off the Salinas Valley from the rest of the world"(Steinbeck, 1). Yet amid this dark, empty and barren existence, lies Elisa's garden: a world of great colour and vibrant life. "Behind her stood the neat white farm house with red geraniums close-banked around it as high as the windows" (Steinbeck, 1). It is through this contrasting of dark and light imagery that Steinbeck portrays the private world of Elisa as being colourful and full of life set against the dark, hollow emptiness of the Salinas Valley which winter has cloaked in a dark, lifeless, empty fog of winter. The primary

target of this symbolism is the isolation of the heroine. By isolating Elisa's garden against the relentless onslaught of a cold Salinas winter, Steinbeck seeks to separate Elisa from an equally cold and forgiving society that seeks to stifle and gnaw away at her creativity, passion and zeal for life. "The bright sunny yellows (of Elisa's chrysanthemums) in the midst of winter, suggest Elisa's hope for a better life" (Hughes, "The Chrysanthemums", 248). Set against Steinbeck's use of light and colour, is the equally powerful imagery of darkness, which suggests the outside world's invasion Elisa's garden. As the tinker approaches the Allen Ranch, he is described in the dark, almost biblical imagery of the snake's entry into the Garden of Eden. Steinbeck isolates Elisa therefore, by representing her as the "innocent Eve, who falls prey to the wiles of the deceptive tinker[,] dressed in Satanic or reptilian black, with dark eyes, full of brooding and with hands that are calloused and cracked – and in every crack a black line" (Hughes "The Chrysanthemums", 248). Steinbeck uses this imagery of light to equate the life and vibrancy of Elisa's garden with her desire for a more meaningful life amid an unforgiving, male-dominated world. This darkness, whether from the approaching winter or the malicious and deceptive tinker, is a clear reference to the outside world's attempt to destroy Elisa's peace, serenity, and quest for a better life. "Far ahead on the road Elisa saw a dark speck. She knew. She tried not to look, but her eyes would not obey. He might have thrown them off the road. That wouldn't have been much trouble, not very much. But he kept the pot" (Steinbeck, 12). The dead

chrysanthemums, lying strewn on the highway, represent the betrayal of Elisa by the tinker and her complete isolation and alienation from the society in which she lives.

Similar to "The Chrysanthemums", "The White Quail" portrays a frustrated and alienated heroine attempting to stave off the ugliness of the outside world by creating and maintaining a private world that is more comfortable and more conducive to personal and emotional fulfillment. In his portrayal of Mrs. Mary Teller as the creator and protector of a pristine and immaculate garden, Steinbeck uses the imagery of light, goodness and purity to describe Mary's garden as the last bastion of defence against a hostile and intrusive outside world. In describing the quail as, "white as snow"(Steinbeck, 23), and seeing the quail as a manifestation of herself, "the essence of purity boiled down… the queen of the quail"(Steinbeck, 23-4), Steinbeck portrays Mary's garden and the quail that lives within it as Eden incarnate, a world so beautiful and pure, it can be appreciated only by Mary herself. Violently countering her husband's belief that the quail is an albino[13] Mary asserts that the quail's purity is a manifestation of her deepest most private and personal self. "You don't understand. That quail was me, the secret me that no one can ever get at, the me that's way inside" (Steinbeck, 25). It is through this use of

[13] Unlike her husband's assertion that the Quail is an albino, a genetic anomaly resulting in a deficiency of pigmentation, Mary sees the Quail's while appearance as representative of its purity and pristine character.

symbolic imagery that Steinbeck portrays Mary's garden a Platonic refuge, one so pure that it can never be attained. Pitted against this world of purity, a world that only Mary can comprehend is the dark, violent, and foreboding and intrusive world beyond the confines of Mary's garden. "That's the enemy, that's the world that wants to get in, all rough and tangled and unkempt" (Steinbeck, 24). The enemy to all that Mary has built, which is later described as, "a grey cat that crept like death out of the bush toward the pool and the drinking birds" (Steinbeck, 24), stands as the antithesis to all that Mary has built. Through his use of dark and light imagery, Steinbeck masterfully compares the grey cat's invasion into Mary's garden, to the larger issue of the outside world's invasion of Mary's inner self. Thus, "The Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail" emerge as atypical works of Steinbeck fiction chronicling the feminist isolation from a society that does not provide personal fulfillment for women choosing to live non-traditional lives separate from men. This existence of Elisa Allen and Mary Teller as "Steinbeck 'strong women' who have a strength of will usually associated with men" (Hughes, "The Chrysanthemums", 243), suggests a stream of feminist consciousness within Steinbeck's writing not found in his larger and more popular works.

2 "The Snake": Challenging the Stereotyped Gender Roles of Society

If the "Chrysanthemums" represents Steinbeck's most critically acclaimed short story, then "The Snake" is his most obscure. In suggesting that, "[t]hose who choose to discuss the narrative have suggested a variety of interpretations, and many pass over it quickly, preferring to concentrate on other more widely acclaimed stories set in the Salinas Valley (Benton, 26), "The Snake", emerges as a true enigma. Described by a local librarian, "as the worst story she'd ever read anywhere" (Girard, 35), "The Snake" has lived up to its billing as a frightful and deeply perplexing piece of fiction – a story Steinbeck himself referred to as, "so damnable, frightful and terrible that it had to be written" (Girard, 38). Claiming that he wrote it just as it happened[14], Steinbeck's motivation in crafting "The Snake" has remained a highly contentious issue. In detailing the events surrounding a mysterious woman's visit to a biology lab to observe a male rattlesnake's killing and eating of a white rat, Steinbeck depicts a fascinating juxtaposition of the stereotypical gender roles within society. In creating a story that has come to exemplify characters living outside the normal confines of society, "The Snake", along with "The Chrysanthemums', and "The White Quail", "focus[es] on marginal

[14] Countering the claim that the "The Snake" just happened, critics have suggested that Steinbeck's revisions to the original manuscript, indicates that "The Snake" was in fact, a deeply personal story that represented "a host of ideas concepts and beliefs held by Steinbeck at its time of writing" (Girard, 39).

characters, those outside the boundaries of the American Dream"(Owens, 160). It is therefore, this portrayal of another non-traditional woman that Steinbeck uses to challenge the masculine-feminine divide within America that serves as one of the key motivating factors in Steinbeck's crafting of "the Snake". Seeking to expand the role of the feminist heroine, "The Snake" takes on particular relevance given its portrayal of non-traditional or *strong women*, "who ha[ve] a strength of will, usually identified with men as well as an ambiguous combination of masculine and feminine traits" (Mitchel, 27). And while both "The Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail" exhibit strong women – given their resistance to the male-dominated societies in which they live – "The Snake" is significant in that it is the only *Long Valley* story that portrays a woman aggressively challenging the very foundation of gender-defined roles within the modern world.

In examining society's stereotypical masculine-feminine dichotomy, Steinbeck presents a character that presents a fantastic mix of masculine and feminine. In his description of "The Snake's" sole antagonist, Steinbeck presents a character that, while clearly feminine in appearance, possesses certain atypical characteristics not typically associated with the female persona. Contrasting the mysterious woman's overtly sexual appearance, "[d]ressed in a severe dark suit – her straight black hair low on her forehead, as if the wind was blowing it and her dark eyes glittering in the strong light"

(Steinbeck, 51), are the more masculine, snake-like features of a flat forehead, dark eyes and a low metabolic rate (Steinbeck, 52). As a result of this compelling mixture, Steinbeck consciously blurs the masculine-feminine divide, by endowing the woman with a convincing mixture of feminine beauty and masculine strength.

Contrasted against the woman's feminine appearance is the approach and demeanour of the mysterious woman: a demeanour best described as anything but feminine. Unlike the feminist heroine in "The Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail", the mysterious woman in "The Snake" does not hide, resist or seek shelter from an uncomfortable society, but rather directly seeks out and engages the male-dominated society which she views as the enemy. "May I come in? I want to talk to you…. Will you sell him to me? I want him to be mine. I want to come here and look at him and feed him and know he's mine... Here, now he's mine" (Steinbeck, 54, 59). In confronting Dr. Phillips, the mysterious woman demonstrates an aggressive nature strangely absent in both "The Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail". Referring to the snake as "hers", demanding to observe the snake kill and eat a rat, Steinbeck's portrayal of the mysterious woman openly challenges not only Dr. Phillips' scientific beliefs, but many of the societal norms regarding the masculine-feminine divide as well. Witnessing the woman's sexually driven response to the feeding of the snake, Dr. Phillips becomes visibly frightened by her sexual

voyeurism and mimicking of the snake's swallowing of the rat. In stating, "If she's opening her mouth I'll be sick. I'll be afraid" (Steinbeck, 58-9), Steinbeck depicts a fascinating masculine-feminine role-reversal. Portraying the traditional male scientist as the weak, cowering victim, and the non-traditional woman as the powerful aggressor, "The Snake" challenges many of the pre-existing stereotypical theories governing male-female relations. Afraid to observe the woman's mimicking actions of the snake swallowing the rat, fearing the woman's sexual voyeurism, Dr. Phillips completes Steinbeck's feminist role-reversal by seeking refuge in his scientific dogma. According to Hedeki, "The Snake" can be viewed as the treatment of conflict between the masculine and the feminine, [becoming] a dramatization of the male's frightening confrontation with the feminine" (Hideki, 2). This confrontation between Dr. Phillips and the sexual, elemental and metaphysical nature of the mysterious woman will be discussed in far greater detail by examining Dr. Phillips' eroding belief in the supremacy of science.

B. Questioning the Belief in Science: "The Snake"

First published in 1936, "The Snake" exists as an enigmatic tale that yields more questions than answers. In a story where "readers may not grasp

its meaning, but few ever forget it" (Benton 26), “The Snake” remains one of Steinbeck’s most disturbing and least understood works. With few critical opinions being offered – in comparison to his other works – “The Snake” has a remained a deeply troubling and disturbing piece of fiction. Adding to its mystique is Steinbeck’s repeated assertion that the story is based on a real life encounter: "I wrote it just as it happened. I don't know what it means and do not even answer the letters asking what its philosophic intent is" (John Steinbeck, “About Ed Ricketts”, xxii). Given this cryptic response, it is hardly surprising that a variety of theories abound concerning the meaning of this infamous tale. These theories, however, while varying in scope, invariably suffer from two separate myopic transgressions: the willingness to blindly accept Steinbeck's claim that "The Snake" really did "happen exactly as is written;"[15] and the narrow-minded assumption that the focus of the story must centre around the psychological, religious, and erotic nature of the mysterious woman, rather than the young doctor's inability to see beyond science when confronted with the unknown. It is, therefore, Dr. Phillips' inability to accept the inadequacy of science, and not the obvious psychological and sexual neuroses of a mysterious woman that emerges as the principle theme and major source of conflict in "The Snake". In chronicling the scientific malaise

15 Taken from the introduction of Steinbeck’s reading of "The Snake". Centre for Steinbeck Studies, San Jose State University, California.

of Dr. Phillips, Steinbeck investigates the inability of science to explain the unknown. By examining the natural and primordial forces of nature; the use of dark and light imagery; the emerging concepts of obsession and repulsion, and the use of sexual imagery, it will be possible to gain a more comprehensive understanding of not only "The Snake", but Steinbeck's own theories on the nature of science as well.

1 Debunking the Myth of Steinbeck's Frightful Story

Before any attempt to understand "The Snake" can be made, it is first necessary to examine Steinbeck's motive in crafting this infamous tale the way he did. For it is only by examining how and why this "frightful tale" (Girard 33) came into being, that a deeper understanding of "The Snake" can be achieved. Yet in order to do this, one must be willing to challenge a powerful and long standing myth: the belief that the events described in "The Snake" did in fact occur just as Steinbeck claims. It is, therefore, this fundamental question of whether "The Snake" really did 'just happen' or whether "The Snake" can be interpreted as something else: a disturbing piece of fiction heavily influenced by various scientific, meta-physical and unknown beliefs "deeply held by Steinbeck at its time of writing" (Girard, 39), that must be examined before any comprehensive understanding of "The Snake" can be achieved.

It should be noted that while Steinbeck has always maintained that the events described in "The Snake" did in fact occur, a claim that has clearly added to the mystique of his work, the historical evidence suggests otherwise[16]. In examining the differing eyewitness accounts and extensive revisions made to the original manuscript prior to publication, it is likely that "The Snake" meant much more to Steinbeck than an isolated event that merely happened. This is not to say that "The Snake" is devoid of historical accuracy, but rather, that the basic tenet of Steinbeck's claim - the emergence of a mysterious woman in a marine laboratory, the seemingly bizarre request to observe the feeding of a snake, and her equally mysterious disappearance – may very well be true, it is more likely that the overtly sexual and gothic characterizations of the woman in question are more the result of Steinbeck's rich imagination than any historical or factual event. At the very heart of this issue, is whether Steinbeck accurately reported the events of the night in question, or whether "The Snake" has become influenced by the author's unique personal perceptions. With this question in mind, one must remember, that while Steinbeck's version of events is certainly the most famous, it is not the only eye witness testimony on record. Indeed, if one is to give any

16 Contrary to Steinbeck's claim that "The Snake" was written just as it happened, historical records and eye witness accounts suggest the event in question, is as much a product of Steinbeck's own personal perceptions and rich imagination than any real life event Steinbeck sought to depict.

credence at all to R. M. Benson's claim that Steinbeck was not alone, stating that "about a half dozen people feel certain they witnessed the event" (Hughes 38), it becomes crucial to examine the testimony of other eye witnesses, people such as Webster Street, who observed the incident in question, but who came to very different conclusions.

> ...Two big rattlesnakes were in a cage in the lab, and he had a bunch of white rats running around. He went and got a white rat and put it in the cage. A girl who was one of the dancers from the local vaudeville team that was passing through Monterey was there. She was just fascinated with the whole thing but didn't say a word. The little rat went in there, and the snake waited and pierced the rat behind the ear. The snake pulled back and the fang caught and pulled him over to one side. The rat ran around for a little while, unconscious of the fact that he was mortally wounded, and finally died, and the snake took him. The girl never said a word and when it was over she just got up and we never saw her again (Astro 113).

Webster Street, a frequent visitor to Ed Ricketts' laboratory and the man who, along with Steinbeck himself, is most credited with witnessing the event, portrays the incident quite differently. Aside from describing the girl as, "a sexy looking dame who had taken a fancy to Ed [Ricketts][17]" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 38), Street depicts the event with the methodical and clinical detail of a scientist; describing the demeanour of snake, the feeding of the rat[18], and the

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[17] It is generally accepted by critics and scholars alike, that Ed Ricketts is the real life character of Dr. Phillips.

18 It should be noted that in the original manuscript it is a "white mouse and not a rat" (Hughes, *S. S. F.*, 38) that was fed to the snake.

mysterious appearance and disappearance of the girl, but makes no reference whatsoever, to the overtly sexual and gothic nature of the woman that Steinbeck does. Furthermore, in accepting the central tenet of Steinbeck's claim - conceding that the woman did appear, that the snake was fed, and that the woman disappeared never to be seen again – Street's testimony clearly suggests that "The Snake" had as much to do with Steinbeck's own personal perception than with anything else. In stating how, "John made a story out of it and gave it a lot of implications" (Timmerman 201), Webster Street's testimony suggests how Steinbeck took the incident in question and made a story out of it by embellishing the event with a host of connotations not necessarily associated with the actual event, "which you could not help doing if you had seen the girl" (Benton 26). Webster Street's testimony gives further credence to the argument that perhaps "The Snake" did in fact not occur as Steinbeck suggests. A point further supported by Astro, Benton and Timmerman, who claim that much of "The Snake's" exceedingly dark, sexually gothic implications came not from the actual event, but were "added [later] by Steinbeck" (Astro 113), confirming that "The Snake's" true genius lies not in the historical event itself, but in the host of impressions, observations, ideas, feelings" (Girrard, 39), held by Steinbeck prior to "The Snake's" completion .

A second and even more persuasive challenge to the claim that "The Snake" "just happened" concerns the extensive revisions made to the original manuscript by Steinbeck himself. In comparing the original manuscript to the published text, it becomes clear that Steinbeck made "several changes which altered the character of the mysterious woman and her relationship with Doctor Phillips" (Girard 36). These changes which portray the woman as being less mythical and more reptilian are significant in that they represent a clear attempt by Steinbeck to alter the readers' perception of the woman. In the original manuscript, Steinbeck describes the woman's eyes, as "feverish... penetrating... glittering with controlled excitement,"[19] that "emanate a light and an excitement within" (Steinbeck, *Ledger,* 127). In the published version, however, the woman is portrayed as having dark eyes "veiled with dust" (Steinbeck, 53) that "glittered in the strong light" (Steinbeck, 51). Further describing the woman's eyes as being like that of a reptile, completely black, with "irises as dark as her pupils, [with] no colour line between the two" (Steinbeck, 52), Steinbeck's alterations to the original manuscript appear to have had more to do with the substance of what he wished to convey - choosing to represent the woman as a dark, cold and distant force - than with any matters of style or editorial revisions. Conversely, while one could argue

[19] References from the original manuscript of "The Snake" are from John Steinbeck's *Ledger Book of Short Story Manuscript and Journal Entries*, and are cited as *Steinbeck Ledger.*

that such revisions merely reflect the author's prerogative in re-wording the text, it is more likely that these changes demonstrate a conscious decision by Steinbeck to portray the woman as being as far removed as possible from the human and scientific world of Dr. Phillips. This point is further echoed by Maureen Girard, who states that the description of the woman's eyes as "feverish" was done away with out of a concern for content, not style, citing that "a cold blooded creature is not perceived as feverish, and that it is evident that Steinbeck wished to render the woman more reptilian and less human with the alteration" (Girard, 36). Thus by portraying the woman's eyes in such a cold, distant and reptilian fashion, Steinbeck consciously sought to depict the woman as the absolute antithesis of everything scientific that Dr. Phillips stood for.

An equally significant revision made to the original manuscript concerns Dr. Phillips' faltering belief in the supremacy of science over nature. In the original manuscript, Dr Phillips seeks to reconcile his feelings towards the mysterious woman's bizarre behaviour by stating, "Mother biology, save me from this evil...Holy science protect me" (Steinbeck, *Ledger*, 127). This overtly emotional plea stands as a marked contrast to the published version in which Dr. Phillips is portrayed as a man who has lost his faith in science. In stating, "If I knew - no, I can't pray to anything" (Steinbeck, 60), the published version of "The Snake" depicts Dr. Phillips as a man deeply entrenched in

self-doubt; no longer believing in the supremacy of science over nature. It is this grudging acceptance of the limitations of science, rather than Dr. Phillips' emotional prayer to "mother biology" for protection from evil, that emerges as a one of the more significant changes to the original manuscript. In portraying Dr. Phillips' wavering belief in the supremacy of science as more clinical than moral; choosing to focus on his inability to explain the unknown rather than a struggle between good evil, it appears that Steinbeck had a clear understanding of what he wanted "The Snake" to be, and that any reference to "the prayer to Mother biology" (Girard, 39), was intended solely for "Steinbeck's own ledger" (Girard, 39). What's more, given Steinbeck's own deep personal feelings toward the story, a story he openly described as, so "damnable, frightful and terrible that [it] would eat him up if it were not put down on paper" (Steinbeck, *Ledger*, 127), it is clear that "The Snake" represents much more than the re-telling of a strange, albeit isolated event. Considering Steinbeck's own troubled feelings toward the story - given the dark and eerie manner he described it in, coupled with the differing testimony of Webster Street and the extensive changes made to the original manuscript, "The Snake's" true origins lie not in the mere chronicling of an isolated event, but in a, "complex of impressions, observations, ideas, and feelings that belonged to Steinbeck at the time of its writing" (Girard, 39).

2. The confrontation of Science by the Unknown

If one is to accept the argument that "The Snake" does indeed hold a deeper meaning, it then becomes necessary to examine the specific factors that influenced its crafting. And notwithstanding Maureen Girard's claim of "The Snake" being, "a complex of ideas" (Girard 39), it is likely that Steinbeck's growing scepticism concerning the supremacy of science and his active interest in marine biology played an equally important role. In fact, so influential were Steinbeck's theories on the limitations of science and the nature of the unknown, that they become represented not only in "The Snake", but in three other principal works: *Cannery Row*, *Sweet Thursday*, and *A Log from the Sea of Cortez*. Furthermore, since it is commonly accepted that Doctor Phillips is the fictional manifestation of Steinbeck's life-long friend and marine biologist Edward F. Ricketts, an individual with whom Steinbeck spent great amounts of time "discussing concepts of 'non-teleology'" (Benton 31), it is hardly surprising that the concepts of science and the unknown became so profoundly intertwined. It is therefore, this concept of non-teleology, or the nature of the unknown, "... a topic on which Steinbeck and Rickets widely disagreed" (Benton 26) that lies at the very heart of "The Snake". And while it is not necessary to understand every facet of Steinbeck's relationship with Ed Ricketts or the theories they discussed, an awareness of the existence of this relationship and a modest understanding of their views on

science, nature and the unknown are essential to properly understand Steinbeck's portrayal of Dr. Phillips in "The Snake".

a. Natural versus Scientific Forces

The physical nature of the laboratory and primordial nature of the sea is one of the ways in which Steinbeck examines the conflict between science and the unknown. The laboratory, standing half on land and half in water, is significant in that it represents a clear contrast and conflict between the worlds of science and nature. "It was a light little building, standing partly on piers over the bay water and partly on the land..." (Steinbeck 49). This depiction of the laboratory standing half in water, suggests Dr. Phillips' need for the ocean, the source of life and re-birth. However, its being half on land is also representative of Dr. Phillips' need to distance himself from the unknown forces of nature, almost as if the young doctor is more comfortable observing nature than being a part of it. Dr. Phillips emerges, therefore, as a man who "is content to look on, of one who does not live life but experiments with it, ... [of] not feeling completely safe in his tight little building" (May 327). This conflict between the laboratory and the sea, therefore, is essentially a contrast of the tangible versus intangible, that which can be scientifically defined, and that which cannot.

This conflict between the laboratory and the sea becomes further pronounced with the arrival of the mysterious visitor. The woman apparently comes from nowhere, almost as if coming from the sea itself. Her footsteps are heard entering and leaving the laboratory, but nothing is heard on the pavement outside, suggesting, as some critics claim, that the woman herself is from the sea. "She walked swiftly to the door and went out. He heard her footsteps on the stairs, but could not hear her walk away on the pavement" (Steinbeck 59). Ultimately, it is this calm, dark, mysterious, almost elemental nature of the woman that causes Dr. Phillips so much difficulty. "The room was silent. Dr. Phillips did not know whether the water sighed among the piles or whether the woman sighed" (Steinbeck 57). The woman creates significant unease in Dr. Phillips, not so much by what she says or does, but for what she represents, a dark and mysterious manifestation of the unknown. Thus, it is this emergence as "a calm unknown pool of consciousness" (May 328), coupled with her complete disinterest in all things scientific that creates significant conflict and crisis within Dr. Phillips.

Steinbeck further expands on the limitations of science to explain the unknown by detailing Dr. Phillips' failed attempts at controlling the natural forces of life and death. Upon his return to the laboratory, Dr. Phillips begins two scientific experiments: one, an experiment on the reproductive habits of starfish, and the second on the death and embalming of a cat. In the case of

the former, Steinbeck explains how the young doctor goes to great length to simulate the exact conditions necessary at each stage of the starfish's reproductive system.

> By taking them out of the water, I give them a condition of low tide. Now I've mixed the sperm and eggs. Now I put the mixture in each of these ten watch glasses. In ten minutes I will kill those in first group with menthol [then] a new group every twenty minutes. Then I will have arrested the process in stages, and I will mount the group on microscope slides for biologic study (Steinbeck 51-52).

Conflict ensues, however, when the mysterious visitor enters the laboratory requesting to speak with Dr. Phillips, thereby disrupting both experiments. The marine biologist no sooner begins to engage the woman in dialogue when he realizes that he has forgotten about his experiment on the starfish. "You've made me miss one of the series, he said bitterly. The set won't be complete... and then angrily poured the contents of all the dishes into the sink" (Steinbeck 59). This conflict over the failed experiment, concerns not so much the failure of the experiment itself, given that the study on the starfish's reproductive systems could have been ruined by any number of factors, but rather that it is Dr. Phillips' preoccupation with the unknown - in this case the mysterious woman - that has interrupted his attempts at controlling the forces of life and death, resulting in the experiment on the starfish's reproductive system being ruined and his embalming of the cat to remain incomplete. Hence it is the collision of scientific and unknown forces, and Dr. Phillips' inability to

effectively manage that collision, that emerge as one of the principal conflicts in "The Snake".

b. Dark and Light Imagery

Steinbeck further examines the conflict between science and the unknown through the use of symbolic imagery. In developing his views on the inadequacy of science – a belief first realized on a scientific excursion with Ed Rickets in *The Sea of Cortez* – Steinbeck employs a wide variety of symbolism, often taking the forms of dark and light imagery. One of the great misinterpretations of Steinbeck's work lies in viewing the use of dark and light symbolism as representing good versus evil. And while Steinbeck's gothic description of the woman makes it tempting to view her as an embodiment of evil, with her dark, snake-like features,[20] it would be a mistake to accept such a two-dimensional interpretation. This symbolic use of darkness in describing the mysterious woman does not to portray her as evil, but in stead depicts her as representing an unknown calm, detached, almost elemental pool of consciousness that Dr. Phillips can neither define nor accept. "Her eyes were bright but the rest of her was almost in a state of suspended

20 In describing the woman's "dark eyes being upon him", at times "not appearing to see him" (Steinbeck 52), Steinbeck gives the woman an appearance and demeanour that are at times more snake-like than human.

animation.... She seemed to awaken slowly [as] to come up out of some pool of collective consciousness" (Steinbeck, 52). It is this dark, mysterious, seemingly elemental depiction of the woman and her complete disinterest in science that directly confronts Dr. Phillips' scientific dogma. This lack of interest in the scientific, critics argue, is directly related to the mysterious, unknown, almost mythical nature of the woman. Critics such as Charles C. May, suggest that as a mythical being born out of the sea, the woman would have no interest in the marine biologists' narrowly defined, scientific explanations of life.

> She does not wish to look into the microscope because, as a mythical creature, an embodiment of manna, her vision is a mythical one that sees not narrowly but in large circles that are all-encompassing. It is these [unknown] images which identify her with the sea as well as those that identify her with the snake (May 328).

Linking the woman's dark snake-like appearance and mysterious demeanour to the elemental nature of the sea, Steinbeck sets into motion two separate conflicting worlds: the highly scientific world of Dr. Phillips and the mysterious world of the unknown.

Steinbeck further uses the symbolic imagery of darkness in examining the black tide pool surrounding the laboratory. In what is far more than a mere coincidence, Steinbeck sets the laboratory over a black tide pool rather than a

crystal clear or blue body of water. The darkness of the tide pool comes to serve two distinct functions. The first is to contrast the dark foreboding nature of the unknown against Dr. Phillips' brightly lit scientific haven. This dark, unknown nature of the tide pool serves as a stark contrast to the white light of Dr. Phillips' laboratory, which Steinbeck describes as "pouring out" (Steinbeck 50-51) into the unknown. It is therefore, the darkness of the tide pool, which is described as surrounding the laboratory, which represents the sum of all of the unknown forces surrounding Dr. Phillips scientific dogma that Steinbeck uses to foreshadow the emerging conflict between science and the unknown.

A second, more important feature of the darkness of the tide pool concerns Steinbeck's portrayal of the sea as the source of life and re-birth. The tide pool, which serves as the central reservoir for Dr. Phillips' scientific research, is significant because it serves as both the point of extraction for much of the doctor's marine samples, as well as the central depository for completed and terminated research. "The young man lifted a trapdoor at his feet and dropped the starfish down into the black water" (Steinbeck 59). By angrily depositing the remains of the failed starfish experiment into the tide pool, as opposed to discarding the failed experiment into a trashcan or similar receptacle in the laboratory, Steinbeck shows how the sea represents the mysterious forces of life, death, and re-birth. It is this primordial nature of the sea that has led

critics such as Charles C. May and Robert M. Benton to suggest that the woman herself is a product of the mysterious and unknown pool which surrounds the laboratory.

> Finally, when the woman leaves, the doctor hears the footsteps on the stairs, but 'could not hear her walk away on the pavement'.... The doctor does not hear her walk away on the pavement because she does not walk away: she goes back to the tide pool that she came from, back to the 'deep pool of consciousness' out of which she awakened (May 228).

Through this symbolic use of darkness, Steinbeck depicts the black tide pool and the mysterious woman that emerges from it, as being one and in the same, a single manifestation of the unknown forces of nature; further illustrating that it is the unscientific forces of life and re-birth that Dr. Phillips' highly organized scientific world can neither explain, define, or accept.

As mentioned earlier, one of the great misinterpretations of Steinbeck's work concerns the use of dark and light imagery. Just as it is misleading to view the mysterious woman's dark and foreboding nature as embodying evil, it is equally erroneous to view the symbolic use of light as representing goodness or purity. Steinbeck uses the imagery of light several times in order to describe the scientific nature of Dr. Phillips' laboratory. Describing the "glaring white light of the dissection table" (Steinbeck 49) as "pouring out" into the unknown, in an almost conscious attempt by the scientific world to

confront the darkness outside, Steinbeck foreshadows the attempts of Dr. Phillips to scientifically explain and define the unknown forces of nature.

Yet as powerful as this imagery of the white light "pouring out" into the unknown is, it is by no means Steinbeck's only reference to the contrasting of darkness against light. In detailing Dr. Phillips' conflict with the unexplained, Steinbeck demonstrates the erosion of Dr. Phillips' scientific beliefs at the hands of the unknown through the snake's symbolic killing and eating of the white rat. Using this imagery of colour, Steinbeck demonstrates how the snake's attack on the rat is symbolic of the woman wearing down the young doctor's scientific resolve. And while it may be tempting to view the snake's attack on the otherwise innocent white rat as the age-old struggle between good and evil, it is the erosion of science by the unknown that are the real targets of Steinbeck's symbolism. In sacrificing a white rat to a "thick, dusty-grey snake" (Steinbeck 52), Dr. Phillips and the scientific beliefs he holds so dear become the clear targets of the unscientific nature of the mysterious woman. During the events leading up to the snake's feeding, Dr. Phillips experiences a profound disintegration of his scientific detachment, while at the same time experiencing an unprecedented emergence of emotional sentimentality - all over the killing of a common laboratory specimen. Reflecting on his feelings of disgust in needlessly sacrificing life for the thrill of sport, Dr. Phillips comes to experience significant difficulty in complying

with the woman's request to feed the snake. "He felt that it was profoundly wrong to put the rat into the cage, deeply sinful; and he didn't know why" (Steinbeck 55)? The ensuing conflict, concerns not so much that the rat was sacrificed, but that it was sacrificed in such an unscientific way. "Only when she seems to make sport out of his science, does he bristle. He hated people who made sport of the natural process" (Timmerman 202). The swallowing of the white rat therefore, is a metaphor for Dr. Philips' world of science being sacrificed at the hands of the woman's sexually-driven emotional fancy. Consequently, the symbolic killing and devouring of the white rat represents not the historic struggle of good versus evil, but the complete erosion of Dr. Phillips' scientific beliefs at the hands of unknown. Just as the rat is ultimately engulfed by the snake, so too is Dr. Phillips' scientific objectivity overwhelmed by fits of emotion. "For some reason he was sorry for the rat, and such a feeling had never come over him before" (Steinbeck 56). It is these new felt feelings of remorse over that death of a common laboratory specimen that come to signal a significant shift in the young doctors' ideology, ultimately leading him to the conclusion that perhaps science cannot explain everything. Confused with his inability to explain the aberrant sexual desires and bizarre actions of the mysterious woman, Steinbeck's use of dark and light imagery represents not good versus evil, but Dr. Phillips' failure to scientifically define and explain the forces of the unknown

c. Obsession and Repulsion

As indicated by the erosion of Dr. Phillips' scientific objectivity, the ongoing conflict between science and the unknown directly involves the young doctor's feelings of obsession and repulsion towards the mysterious woman. These feelings are significant because they represent the marine biologist's scientific world being confronted, and to a large extent, overwhelmed by the unscientific and unknown forces of nature. A prime example of Dr. Phillips becoming obsessed with the mysterious woman concerns his need to shock the woman into accepting his scientific views. "Low metabolic rate, [he thought] almost as low as a frog's, from the looks. The desire to shock her out of her inanition possessed him again" (Steinbeck 52). As the story progresses, Dr. Phillips becomes increasingly threatened by the woman's calm, detached, almost elemental nature. The doctor tries on three separate occasions to shock or convert the woman into accepting the primacy of science: his invitation to view the starfish experiment under the microscope (Steinbeck 52); the dissection of the cat (Steinbeck 52); and the scientific explanation of the rattlesnake's attack (Steinbeck 57). However, on all three occasions, Dr. Phillips has no impact whatsoever on the woman's complete lack of interest in science. So powerful are these feelings of obsession that for months after her departure from the laboratory, the young doctor continues to look for her. "For weeks he expected her to return.... She

never came again. For months he looked for her when he walked about in the town. Several times he ran after some tall woman, thinking it might be [her]. But he never saw her again - ever" (Steinbeck 60). It is evident therefore that Dr. Phillips' scientific resolve is severely compromised by the unknown nature of the mysterious woman and the unscientific forces she represents. The consequence of which is Dr. Phillips being left completely confused, forced to "comb out his thoughts" (Steinbeck 59) on the relationship between science and nature.

Similar to his feelings of obsession, the young marine biologist also experiences profound feelings of repulsion towards the very same woman and the unscientific nature she represents. In complying with the woman's request to feed the snake, the marine biologist experiences considerable difficulty in sacrificing the rat in such an unprofessional manner, "Feeling sorry for the rat" (Steinbeck 56), Dr. Phillips soon finds his emotions growing from mild sympathy, into more resolute feelings of anger and repulsion at the senseless sacrifice of the rat. "He hated people who made sport of the natural process. He was not a sportsman but a biologist. He could kill a thousand animals for knowledge, but not a single insect for pleasure" (Steinbeck 56). Doctor Phillips becomes repulsed therefore, not so much because the rat is sacrificed, but that it is killed for such an unscientific reason. It is this killing for mere sport, that completely repulses Dr. Phillips. "From the start, Dr. Phillips is

particularly susceptible to revulsion, for the woman will make of his science [more] a sport than he ever dared imagine" (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape*, 202). Indeed, from the moment the white rat is chosen until it is devoured by the snake, Dr. Phillips experiences feelings of tremendous repulsion and outrage towards the woman for the circus-like atmosphere that has been created in his laboratory. "When the woman purchases the snake, then insists upon feeding it, Dr. Phillips feels his outrage growing. Something in his practice and attitude toward science is being violated" (Timmerman. *Dramatic Landscape,* 203). These feelings of repulsion then, are the result of Dr. Phillips being unable to accept the violation of science at the hands of the unexplained sexual and psychological desires of the of the mysterious visitor. Dr. Phillips' feelings of disgust and repulsion continue unabated, ultimately reaching their climax with the woman's mimicking of the snake's attack and swallowing of the rat. As the snake begins to swallow the rat, Dr. Phillips finds his repulsion and disgust towards the woman reaching a fevered pitch. No sooner does the woman begin to demonstrate her bizarre sexual response to snake's eating of the rat, that the marine biologist finds his repulsion and disgust towards the woman reaching new, unprecedented levels. During the snake's attack, "Dr. Phillips glanced again at the woman. He turned sick. She was weaving too" (Steinbeck 58). The doctor becomes even more shaken once the woman begins to mimic the snake's swallowing motions. "If she's opening her mouth, I'll be sick, I'll be afraid" (Steinbeck 58-59). So powerful

are these emotions of fear and repulsion that the otherwise objective marine biologist cannot bear to watch the woman, fearing he'll witness her bizarre sexually-driven swallowing motions. For Dr. Phillips, this struggle in "keeping his eyes away" (Steinbeck 59), clearly illustrates the full extent of his emotional involvement, and shows just how repulsed he is towards the mysterious woman. These feelings of repulsion emerge not merely from seeing his world of science being reduced to cheap sport and sexual voyeurism, but also from his inability to explain the strange events he has just witnessed. So profound are these new feelings of the inadequacy of science to explain the unknown, that the young doctor is not sure what to believe. "At the last moment, the story seems to switch to a non-teleological mode. Dr. Phillips refers to 'psychological sex symbols', but nothing there seems adequate to explain [his] experience" (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape*, 204). It is through these unexpected fits of obsession and repulsion that Steinbeck illustrates the ongoing conflict between science and the unknown, showing how even a seasoned professional such as Dr. Phillips, is left vulnerable and visibly shaken by the unknown and unscientific nature of the mysterious woman. Consequently, Dr. Phillips is left deeply confused and very much alone, forced to consider just how ineffective science is in explaining the forces of the unknown.

d. Sexual Imagery

No study of "The Snake" would be complete without examining Steinbeck's use of sexual imagery. And although it is not possible to examine in detail all of the sexual metaphors within "The Snake", it is necessary to examine how Steinbeck's use of sexual imagery impacts the ongoing conflict between science and the unknown. The central conflict that emerges from Steinbeck's sexual imagery is a juxtaposition of two very different worlds: the dark, mysterious and unscientific world of the woman, as demonstrated by her dark appearance and aberrant sexual desires; and the highly organized, sterile and methodical world of Dr. Phillips. The result of which sees Dr. Phillips' scientific world being confronted, and to a large extent overwhelmed, by a world so alien to his scientific dogma that he is completely unable to comprehend it. "Whether the woman was driven by sexual, religious, zoophilic, or gustatory impulses [he] never could figure" (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape*, 201). The consequence of this imagery is a profoundly confused and bewildered Dr. Phillips who becomes deeply troubled by the obvious inability of science to explain the unscientific nature of the mysterious woman and the mysterious forces she represents.

While much of the sexual imagery within "The Snake" concerns the mysterious woman's bizarre display of sexual voyeurism, demonstrated by her

lustful, vicarious enjoyment of the snake's eating of the rat, it is by no means Steinbeck's sole use of sexual allegory. Painstakingly describing the woman's dark snake like appearance and demeanour as being overtly sexual, the woman is portrayed as having a deeply mythical, almost androgynous, asexual nature. With numerous similarities between the woman's physical appearance and demeanour to that of the snake: given her flat forehead; dark eyes; sloping chin and nose; and low metabolic rate, the woman takes on an appearance and character that are at times more snake-like than human. In suggesting that the woman and the snake are not two separate entities but a single manifestation of nature, Steinbeck uses the similarities between the woman and the snake to reveal a completeness of nature by depicting a mythical creature that is at the same time not only male and female, but animal and human as well. Jungian interpretations in particular[21], suggest that whether it was a conscious attempt or not[22], by drawing such close similarities between the male rattlesnake and a human female, Steinbeck enables both the woman and the snake to emerge equally as androgynous symbols.

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21 For a further understanding of the Jungian interpretation of "The Snake" see Myth and Mystery in Steinbeck's 'The Snake': A Jungian View, by Charles E. May.

22 While critics such as Charles E. May and Reloy Garcia argue that the portrayal of the woman and snake as androgynous creatures was performed at an unconscious level, citing the influences of Freud and Jung. Observers of the actual event, such as Webster Street, argue that any references to the woman's sexuality were added later by Steinbeck and as such represent a very conscious addition to the story.

> Her likeness to the snake can be taken as a Freudian identification of the phallus. [Yet] in Jungian terms [the snake] is both phallic and vaginal, as the snake not only phallically emits venom but also swallows whole (vagina dentate)[23] the white rat. The snake then (and hence the woman) become paradoxically a symbol of both maleness and femaleness (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 40).

It is through this use of sexual imagery that the mysterious woman emerges with both phallic and vaginal features, many of which are borrowed from the snake. "Remember he's mine. Don't take his poison. I want him to have it" (Steinbeck, 59). The consequence of this profoundly mysterious asexual nature, as demonstrated by the woman wanting the snake to keep its venom[24], an obvious phallic reference, allows the woman to emerge as a mythical creature; one not merely limited to a male or female nature, but one comprising both.

As a result of this deeply mythical, sexual nature, the woman emerges from a completely different plain - a creature born out of the sea, one who temporarily co-exists in the physical realm of Dr. Phillips' laboratory; an

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23, Directly translated as a vagina with teeth, Vagina Dentata (May 332) represents man's fear of a woman's sexuality. The fear of the penis being devoured by the vagina, or more specifically, man's fear of being devoured by the woman.

24 For a further understanding of the simultaneous phallic and vaginal interpretations of the snake, see Charles C. May‘s Myth and Mystery in Steinbeck’s “The Snake” A Jungian View and Fugita Hidecki‘s Feminine Otherness in John Steinbeck’s “The Snake.”

unknown and unexplained force of nature that comprises a rich tapestry of male, female, human, and animal forces whose sole purpose is to challenge the scientific beliefs of Dr. Phillips. "In fact, the mysterious incident recounted in “The Snake” is a reaction of the mythic world against the efforts of science to obliterate it" (May 324-325). It is therefore, this use of sexual imagery that represents the mysterious woman’s completeness of nature, a completeness that Dr. Phillips remains utterly ignorant of. "Accustomed to dividing life into the two spheres of practical and theoretical activity, the doctor has forgotten the primitive substratum which underlies them both" (May 330). It is this view of the completeness of nature, one that is physical yet mythic, male yet female, human yet animal, that comes to shake the very foundation of Dr. Phillips' scientific beliefs. When confronted with the unknown nature of the mysterious woman, Dr. Phillips experiences great difficulty in attempting to explain who and what she is. This difficulty occurs, primarily because the world of science is infinitely less complete than the world of nature. "The doctor, embodying as he does a scientific and therefore detached existence, is simply intolerable in his one-sidedness, [whereas] the woman is a threatening force to the doctor because he refuses to recognize and integrate the archetypical contents of his unconsciousness which she embodies" (May 330). It is this inability of science to explain the unknown that causes Dr. Phillips so much internal conflict, ultimately leaving him alone and deeply confused, forcing him to reconsider his views on the supremacy of

science. In the end, Steinbeck's beliefs concerning the inadequacy of science to explain the unknown becomes all too clear. "Indeed there do seem to be those animals among humankind that no amount of psychology, theology, or science will ever be able to explain" (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape*, 204). It is evident therefore, that Steinbeck sees the superior, mythical world of nature, as being so completely removed from science that no amount of scientific study could ever fully comprehend it.

C. The Quest toward Maturity: The Right of Passage and Quest toward Adulthood

In a marked contrast to the garden and coastal marine motifs of “The Chrysanthemums”, “The While Quail” and “The Snake”, Steinbeck uses the rustic scenery of the Santa Lucia Mountains as the principal setting for both “Flight” and *The Red Pony* by depicting the costal mountains of California “as symbols of both death and the unknown” (Owens, 46). In demonstrating the harsh nature of this region, the reader is introduced to not only the rugged terrain of the mountains, but also to the equally rugged people of the region. Like *To a God Unknown*, “Flight” and *The Red Pony* are set in the Santa Lucia Mountains on the California coastline. While at first glance *The Red Pony* and “Flight” initially appear to have little in common beyond their

mountainous rustic setting – given their stark contrast in atmosphere, narrative tone, and character development; a deeper investigation reveals that the two works have much more in common than their rustic appearance would suggest would otherwise suggest. This chapter's focus will be that what emerge out of these stories are not two separate conceptual frameworks but a mirror image of a singular theme: a boy or young man's journey toward maturity. This theme of inner growth, which is perhaps more accurately defined as a "commitment and quest towards maturity" (Owens, 46) than a *Bildungsroman*[25], is significant in that it represents the protagonist's attempt to find his place within a largely unforgiving world that is not yet fully understood. This growth or quest towards maturity is perhaps best described by R.S. Hughes, who sees the initiation into adulthood as having three distinct lessons or phases: the awareness or understanding "that all humans are fallible; that nature is ultimately uncaring and therefore indifferent; and that the immutable law for all earthly creatures is death" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 92). These phases of the initiation process, coupled with the emerging feelings of self-sacrifice and concern for others will be used to illustrate that it is *The Red Pony* and "Flight's" unfulfilled quest towards maturity that emerge as the dominant theme of both works.

[25] Stemming from the German *Buildung*, meaning education and *Roman* meaning novel, *Bildungsroman* refers to "a novel of formation." It has commonly become accepted as "a novel depicting the moral and psychological growth of a main character from childhood to maturity." Jack Lynch, *Guide to Literary Terms.*

While many critics agree that *The Red Pony's* depiction of a young boy forced to confront the adult realities of death, loss, and responsibility has all the trademarks of a coming of age, there has also been considerable debate over whether or not *The Red Pony* constitutes a true *Bildungsroman* novella. This debate, principally offered by Lisca, Benton and Owens, suggests that while the traditional *Bildungsroman* or rite of passage theories are not completely without merit, given "the progress of Jody's initiation into the reality of death" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 91), there is considerable evidence suggesting "it would probably be a mistake to see the whole of *The Red Pony* as illustrating the rites of initiation step by step and in sequence" (Owens, 47). Arguing further "That Jody does not grow up in these stories morally or emotionally in any way comparable to Ike McCaslin in "The Bear" or Nick Adams in *The Hemmingway Stories*", Owens suggests that in *The Red Pony* "the most we can find is a rather faint suggestion of moral growth in expanding awareness and understanding of death" (Owens, 47-8). Benton supports this challenge by arguing that those who support the rite of passage theory, have done "little more than call the novella a *bildungsroman*" (Benton, 91), and have therefore, fallen well short of proving it. In suggesting that it is more accurate to view *The Red Pony* as a "passage from naïve childhood to the threshold of adulthood" (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape* 122), both Timmerman and Owens point to Jody's lack of emotional development and

incomplete growth into manhood as proof that *The Red Pony* does not meet the standard of the *Bildungsroman* novella. Portrayed as a young boy whose quest toward maturity is at best left incomplete, Jody is described as "a little boy, [of about] ten years old" (Steinbeck, 145). Further stating that, "Gabilan's death has not taught Jody to value life or to act more responsibly toward that life [and that] morally he has not matured between stories" (Owens, 50), *The Red Pony* does not constitute a true Bildungsroman since Jody does not mature significantly beyond what one would expect of a boy his age. With his blind obedience in never once disobeying his parent's wishes (Steinbeck, 146); his lack of ambition in "look[ing] listlessly about the ranch for something to do (Steinbeck 174-5); and his remorse over killing a small bird, leaving him "ashamed of [his parents'] potential opinion" (Steinbeck, 176), it is clear that Jody is not yet ready to undertake the burdens and responsibility of adulthood. Owens suggests therefore, that it is far more realistic to depict Jody's development in *The Red Pony* as a quest towards maturity rather than a completed journey into adulthood. In acknowledging that Jody does not complete the maturation process, he does nonetheless take steps toward maturity: in caring for and training Gabilan (Steinbeck, 154); worrying and being concerned for its welfare by keeping the pony warm and dry during the weeks of rain (Steinbeck, 161); in caring for and tending to the sick pony in waning moments of its life, and "not bothering to ask for permission to sleep with pony" (Steinbeck, 169), it becomes clear that while

not yet a man, Jody does take definitive steps toward maturity. Thus while Jody's quest or journey into adulthood is indeed incomplete, there are definite signs of growth and maturity. In attempting to address the harsh realities of death, loss and responsibility, Jody not only adjusts to the demands of caring for his young colt, but also begins to understand life's bitter lessons of loss in observing the death of Gabilan and Nellie. It would appear then, that since Jody's quest towards adulthood remains incomplete, *The Red Pony* exists not as a rite of passage, coming of age, or *Bildungsroman*, but as an unfinished journey towards maturity.

1. *The Red Pony*

In examining the degree to which *The Red Pony* constitutes a quest or journey toward maturity, it is necessary to examine the three laws or components of the maturation process. As previously mentioned, the first of these three laws or components according to R.S. Hughes concerns the sudden and often brutal realization that human beings are ultimately fallible. It is this realization of inherent fallibility that serves as one of the principle stepping-stones in Jody's tortured journey towards maturity. As the story begins, it is all but impossible to miss the childlike innocence of Jody Tiflin, given the tender age and docile appearance that Steinbeck assigns to him. And while his age, being a boy of only ten, is a major factor in his immaturity, his character

is also heavily influenced by the unswerving obedience, faith and trust that is placed in both his parents and Billy Buck, the resident cowhand and surrogate father figure.[26] "It didn't occur to him to disobey … his father was a disciplinarian. Jody obeyed him in everything without questions of any kind" (Steinbeck 146). As the story begins, Jody is not merely innocent but also completely obedient and accepting of the rules imposed upon him. Even when confronted with the pony's failing health, an event certain to be the most traumatic in his young life, Jody remains completely obedient, not daring to leave school to check on the pony. Understanding all too well that the punishment for truancy "would be prompt both at school and at home" (Steinbeck, 162), Jody emerges as a completely trusting and obedient child towards the adult world around him. And while Jody's blind obedience is focussed primarily towards his father Carl Tiflin, it is the resident cowhand Billy Buck that emerges as the focal point of Jody's trusting nature. "It is in Billy Buck, whom Jody reveres above all men, [for Jody] finds a wisdom of experience that transcends his fathers sternness" (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape*, 135). This unswerving obedience, which for good or for ill has resulted in Jody placing Billy as being beyond reproach, comes to an abrupt end with the illness and death of his beloved pony. Repeatedly assured by his mentor that the colt will be well cared for while at school, Jody returns home

[26] Jody's father Carl Tiflin, being the master of the ranch and stern disciplinarian, leaves the training of Jody's pony and much of his moral and emotional development to the trusted Cow Hand Billy Buck.

to find his pony forgotten, shivering and soaked in the driving rain. This unfortunate event, which results in the "tarnishing [of] Billy's hero image" (Benton, 86), ushers Jody into the sudden realization that all humans, even those as trusted and wise as Billy, are indeed fallible. As the story progresses, Billy's stock as the all powerful adult, knower, and seer of all things great and small, becomes permanently damaged in the eyes of Jody as the pony's health becomes increasingly compromised. With his worst fears realized, Jody soon finds Billy unable to cure the sick pony. Jody becomes numb to Billy's hollow words of assurance and promises that the pony will get better, "Don't you worry, I'll pull him out of it. I've seen them get better when they've been worse than Gabilan is" (Steinbeck, 166). No longer assured by empty words of encouragement, Jody observes Billy's failed attempts at nursing the pony back to health. What's more, in seeing Billy's inability to cure Gabilan, Jody comes to recognise his own inadequacies as well. In falling asleep and letting a near-death Gabilan out of stable in a driving storm, Jody soon sees his failings, as well as those of the otherwise dependable Billy as proof that mankind – regardless of intentions – is wholly and completely fallible. In recognising and accepting this flawed nature, Jody takes his first steps towards maturity by recognising not only his own imperfections, but those of others as well. Thus, it is "through this tragic experience that Jody discovers that he cannot always control his actions. Consequently [in] realizing his own

flaws, he begins to accept human fallibility in others too that takes first steps toward maturity" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 93).

Having learned the first lesson of maturity, that humanity is deeply fallible; Jody soon becomes confronted with the second, and arguably the most deeply troubling lesson: that nature is both uncaring and indifferent and that the immutable unchanging law that binds all creatures is that of death.[27] With the sudden, unexpected illness and untimely death of his beloved colt, Jody is introduced to the most severe laws of nature – laws that Steinbeck himself was experiencing during the writing of *The Red Pony*[28], that nature is completely indifferent to the pain and suffering of individuals and that the universal law in which all of humanity must endure, is death.

> *The Red Pony* was written… when there was desolation in my family. The first death had occurred. And the family, which every child believes to be immortal, was shattered. The first tortured question was "why?" and the acceptance of the child becomes anew. (Steinbeck, "Wings", p. 4)

With his beloved Gabilan's health becoming progressively worse, Jody watches helplessly as the young pony is mercifully taken by death. In much

[27] It should be noted that while R.S. Hughes originally examined these components separately, holding to the belief that the indifference of life and the inevitability of death must be examined independently, they are, upon a closer examination, indivisible when applied to Jody's quest toward maturity.

[28] It is well documented that during the writing of The Red Pony Steinbeck was experiencing the slow deterioration and death of his mother Olive Steinbeck, an illness and death, which affected him deeply.

the same way that Steinbeck himself was forced to watch his mother's health steadily deteriorate in the months following her stroke[29], Jody must bear witness to the uncaring nature of life, all the while trying desperately to find meaning in the hollow emptiness of death. Finding that Gabilan has escaped during the night, Jody desperately searches for the pony only to discover the horrifying sight of a group of buzzards feasting on the fallen pony. "When he arrived it was all over. The first buzzard sat of the pony's head and its beak had just risen dripping with dark eye fluid" (Steinbeck, 173). What makes this sequence of events so significant is that, in spite of Jody's numerous interactions with death, the loss of Gabilan affects Jody in a deeply personal way that his previous experiences in observing death have not. Indeed as numerous critics have pointed out, growing up on a cattle ranch, Jody was certainly no stranger to death: from his earlier experience in observing buzzards feasting on the lifeless carrion of a fallen cow or rabbit (Steinbeck, 148); to the excitement over watching the pig killing – a sensation so intense "that it made his chest ache" (Steinbeck, 200); to the routine sale and slaughter of cows (Steinbeck, 147) Jody is by no means a novice to the world of death. Yet in spite of these experiences, or possibly because of them, Jody has yet to confront death as a deeply personal and emotional experience. Ironically, while "the opening pages of the story suggest that Jody's world is

[29] In his personal correspondence, Steinbeck explains how deeply affected he was by his mothers death, stating that. "*The Red Pony* was attempt, an experiment if you wish, to set down this acceptance and growth." (Swisher, v)

permeated with death, it is a death [that] exists only as an impersonal force" (Owens, 48). This impersonal separation, which has thus far shielded Jody from emotional realties of death, becomes fundamentally and irrevocably altered with the buzzards' attack on Gabilan. It is here, at the sight of seeing his most hated of all creatures, that Jody sees the group of buzzards not as legitimate creatures but as a manifestation of death[30]. In witnessing the Buzzards' attack on Gabilan, "Jody discovers nature's blank indifference to man – his second lesson – when he sees a buzzard devouring the carcass of his beloved colt. [Unable to] fathom how this winged predator of death has a legitimate place in nature" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 93). Horrified by what be sees, Jody attacks the group of buzzards, seizing the slowest of the lot and bludgeoning it to death with a rock only to discover the cold, impersonal and detached face of death. "He struck again and missed. The red, fearless eyes still looked at him, impersonal and unafraid and detached" (Steinbeck, 174). It is at this critical juncture that Jody takes his first real steps toward adulthood by developing a deeply personal awareness "that death is final and immutable" (Levant, 77-85). Gabilan's ultimate tragic end, says Howard Levant, propels Jody towards adulthood. Wearily acknowledging that he knows it was not the buzzards that killed his pony, Jody comes to the graphic realization "that nature is an impersonal respecter of no humans' wishes"

[30] Unable to accept their legitimate place in nature, remaining ignorant of their much-needed role in the eco-system, Jody sees the buzzards not as legitimate creatures but as giant, black-winged harbingers of death.

(Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 93) and that death is the inevitable consequence of life, "reigning invincible and final" (Fontenrose, 64). This uncaring and immutable law of nature, a law that governs both life and death, continues to torture Jody's quest towards adulthood as he once again discovers the precariousness of life in experiencing first hand the passing of one life and the beginning of another. Seeing Nelly die while giving birth to her colt, Jody bears witness to Billy ultimately deciding "which shall live, Nellie or the colt." (Owens, 54) It is this awareness of life and death that marks Jody's second step toward maturity. In seeing first-hand the cold impersonal nature of death alongside the joyful promise of new life, Jody gains a maturity that is both deep and profound. No longer the immature, destructive boy who occupies his time avoiding chores, smashing muskmelons and terrorizing animals in fits of boredom, Jody emerges with a new sense of maturity. Having learned that nature is both uncaring and indifferent, understanding that no living thing can escape the icy grip of death, Jody shows a newfound maturity and respect towards others – a respect that is bestowed to not only the mysterious Indian, Gitano – who has come to his ancestral home to die (Steinbeck 179-80), but towards his grandfather[31] whose spirit has died out along with the *westerning* drives of the past.

[31] Referring to his crossing of the Great Plains, Mrs. Tiflin describes *westerning* as "the one big thing in [her father's] life and how, when it was finished, his life was done… as though after he finished it, there wasn't anything more for him to do but think about it and talk about it" (Steinbeck, 213).

The final lesson in Jody's maturation process concerns his development of self-sacrifice and concern for others. In what is quite possibly his most significant step in his quest towards maturity, Jody learns a respect and compassion for others that even his father has not attained. Ironically, while Carl Tiflin is obviously much older and wiser, he nonetheless lacks the maturity of his son Jody. Portrayed as a staunch disciplinarian who "hated weakness and sickne0ss and held a violent contempt for helplessness" (Steinbeck, 163), Carl Tiflin openly displays his insensitive and selfish nature. Showing nothing but open contempt for both Gitano[32], the aged Indian who has returned to his ancestral home to die; and his own father in law who arrives unexpectedly to visit, Carl Tiflin openly displays his insensitive nature. Demonstrating a deep resentment of all things old and weak, seeing both Gitano, and his 30 year old horse "Easter" as being old and therefore useless, Carl Tiflin states that, "Old things ought to be put out of their misery." (Steinbeck, 183) And while the intrusive Indian, Gitano, is the principal recipient of this insensitive cruelty, Jody's visiting grandfather, who appears in the final chapter, becomes the primary target of Carl's abusive nature. Irritated with his aged father-in-law's stories of crossing the plains and fighting Indians, seeing no value in the nostalgia of the past, Carl continues to attack the uselessness of his father-in-law and his repeated recounting of the

[32] Meaning Gypsy in Spanish, Gitano represents the adventurous spirit within Jody, a spirit that his father neither has nor understands.

of pioneering days of old. "How many times do I have to listen to the story of the iron plates, and thirty-five horses? That time's done… Now it's finished. Nobody wants to hear about it over and over" (Steinbeck, 222-3).

Serving as a stark contrast to his father's mean spirited, selfish and immature behaviour- Jody emerges at the end of "The Leader of the People" noticeably matured. Having learned the lessons of responsibility in caring for Gabilan, and having experienced first- hand, the horror of Nellie's violent death and the promise of new life through the miraculous birth of her colt, Jody's appearance in "The Leader of the People" is one of a young boy who has clearly learned the value of life. "No longer mischievous and destructive, Jody has learned to respect and nurture [which] he previously destroyed." (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 99) This newfound appreciation of life takes on an even greater significance as Jody makes one more remarkable step toward maturity by foregoing his selfish ambitions in order to assist others. In developing a greater sense of maturity by placing the needs of his grandfather before his own, Jody demonstrates a clear sense of maturity and growth. The first of his selfless acts, concerns Jody abandoning the mouse hunt that he has been planning for days in order to spend time with his grandfather. Sympathetic to the needs of his grandfather, "seeing his grandfather sitting on the porch, looking small and thin and black" (Steinbeck, 224), understanding all too well the cruel words used by his father, Jody decides to save the mouse

hunt for another day, choosing instead, to spend time with his dejected grandfather. Timmerman suggests that this sudden change of heart, "in relinquishing something, that he has looked forward to for days, something entirely self-serving, in order to cheer up his grandfather [represents] his selfless compassion by serving others before himself" (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape*, 134-5). This concern for his dejected grandfather, who has clearly been injured by the hateful words of Carl Tiflin, is further demonstrated by Jody's proposal to carry on the *westerning* of his grandfather by leading the people across the ocean. "Maybe I could lead the people [across the ocean] someday" (Steinbeck, 225). In proposing to continue the westerning quest where his grandfather left off, Jody "recognises the futility of Grandfather's predicament." (Owens, 57) Learning that there are no more places to go and that westerning "has died out in the people, [that it] isn't a hunger anymore" (Steinbeck, 225) Jody comes to share his grandfather's pain, understanding his grandfather's deep sense of loss in having nowhere to go. Taking it upon himself to ease his grandfather's pain, Jody offers his grandfather a glass of lemonade while refusing one himself. In committing this purely selfless act aimed exclusively at cheering up his dejected grandfather, Jody demonstrates a newfound compassion and concern for others not found in any of the previous *Red Pony Stories*. As his grandfather accepts Jody's request, Jody's mother is astonished to discover her son's actions. Learning that Jody's actions are not yet another selfish attempt to gain a glass of lemonade, "she is

dumbfounded by the realization that her little boy has grown up"(Heart, 4). It becomes evident, therefore, that although a boy of only twelve – having not yet fully passed the rites of initiation into adulthood – there can be little doubts that in accepting the realities of death, loss, responsibility and compassion for others, that Jody has taken several fundamental steps towards the threshold of maturity.

2. "Flight"

In the third of his *Long Valley* stories, Steinbeck delivers what is perhaps his finest short story in the harrowing account of a young Mexican boy's attempted escape into the Santa Lucia Mountains following the murder of an abusive townsperson. Ironically, while "Flight" initially "aroused surprisingly little critical comment" (Walker, 698), it has since become one of the most studied pieces of Steinbeck's short fiction with "only "The Chrysanthemums" and "The Leader of the People" receiving more critical attention" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 64). The reason for this success, argues Peter Lisca, is "its crisp rendering of factual details." (Lisca, 99) In citing the influence of Hemingway's prose and structure, "Flight" has often been praised or its realistic portrayal of a young boy's quest towards maturity. This realistic depiction of Pepé's maturation, while having obvious similarities to Jody's quest towards maturity in *The Red Pony*, is infinitely more complex. Unlike

The Red Pony's depiction of a young boy who merely observes the death of his beloved horses Gabilan and Nellie, and whose quest toward adulthood remains well short of fruition, Pepé's quest in "Flight" is not only more complex, but is of much darker and ominous nature. Through his killing of an abusive townsperson, his flight into the mountains, his subsequent dehumanization and ultimate death, Pepé's journey is not only more complex, given the emotional intensity of the subject matter, but also a has sense of completion that *The Red Pony* does not. Yet in spite of these differences, and with great simplicity, Steinbeck draws several comparisons between these two quests for maturity by forcing Pepé to confront the same lessons of maturity that beguiled Jody in *The Red Pony.*

In understanding the first trial of maturity that Pepé must endure – the recognition that mankind is inherently fallible – it is necessary to first examine the character and nature of Pepé prior to his ill-fated trip into town. Initially, Pepé emerges as little more than an overgrown child. Described by his own mother as "a big sheep… a peanut [and]… a foolish chicken" (Steinbeck, 30), Pepé is more like a child or adolescent than a man. Confirming his childish innocence and immaturity, Pepé is portrayed as being completely unaware of the world around him, remaining utterly ignorant of any adult responsibilities whatsoever. A fact graphically illustrated by Mama Torres who states, "All day you do foolish things with that knife… She took

him by one loose shoulder and hoisted him to his feet. Pepé grinned sheepishly and came half-heartedly to his feet" (Steinbeck, 30). In confirming Pepé's immaturity, Momma Torres states, "a boy gets to be a man when needed" (Steinbeck, 32), a clear reference to the fact that Pepé has yet to earn the mantle of manhood. This childlike innocence, however, reaches an abrupt end when Pepé tells his mother of his conflict in town: "Mama I must go away into the mountains… The man said names to me I could not allow" (Steinbeck, 33). In recognising the hateful nature of the Anglos in town, many of whom see the poor Mexicans as inherently inferior; Pepé matures considerably by realizing, perhaps for the first time, that the world is indeed deeply flawed. In accepting responsibility for taking the man's life, Pepé comes to understand not only the flaws of society, but the consequences of his actions as well, and in so doing takes his first step towards maturity by choosing to stand alone against that which he cannot accept. Unlike *The Red Pony* where Jody equates the fallibility of mankind with the inability of Billy Buck to cure Gabilan, Pepé sees the fallibility of mankind as being much broader in scope. Recognising an unequal treatment within the Anglo society, a society that "considers Pepé to be just another Mexican whose life and death is unimportant" ("Understanding 'Flight'", 1), Pepé sees his unjust treatment within society and subsequent persecution for defending his family's honour as being deeply unjust. In accepting that the world he lives in is deeply flawed, Pepé no longer sees the world with the innocent acceptance of a child, but

with the jaded eyes of an adult, an adult whose only wish is to uphold his family's honour and dead father's memory by dying bravely and not "waiting to be caught like a chicken" (Steinbeck, 35).

In accepting his own imperfections as well as that of the world around him, Pepé soon come to terms with the lessons of maturity: the acknowledgement that nature is both uncaring and indifferent and death is both final and complete. In chronicling his flight into the mountains, Steinbeck shows the uncaring and indifference of nature by chronicling Pepé's progressive dehumanization and free-fall into "primeval darkness" (Antico, 45). Confronted by the very worst that nature has to offer, Pepé's humanity is consistently and methodically eroded until only a vague semblance of the human condition remains. Deprived of his possessions; his horse shot, his rifle lost, and his father's hat and coat discarded in a futile attempt at escape, Pepé is ultimately reduced "to the state of a wild animal" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 65). In this animalistic state, unable to speak from a swollen tongue and suffering from gangrene, Pepé resorts to the most primitive form of behaviour. Using a spider's web to clot a wounded and bleeding shoulder and sucking the moisture from mud to prevent dehydration, the uncaring hand of nature leaves Pepé nearly indistinguishable from the animals he reluctantly seeks shelter with. In being "reduced to a state so close to that of the beasts that he is mistaken by a mountain lion for another four-

footed animal" (Wilson, 784), nature's indifference towards Pepé is complete, having torn away the last semblance of Pepé's humanity. Yet amid this dehumanization, having learned nature's indifference, Pepé confronts his last trial of maturity – and in so doing finds his greatest strength and human dignity. Arguing that it is here, in the darkest hour of his tortured existence, Lisca sees Pepé finding his greatest strength and courage "to face his inevitable death not with the headlong retreat or futile death struggle of an animal, but with the calm and stoicism required by the highest conception of manhood" (Lisca, 100). With the realization that "only by standing up on his own two feet and facing death will he become a man" [33] (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape*, 196-7), Pepé regains a nobility of spirit in claiming his moral victory over death. In remembering his mother's wish that he should die well, like that of a man and not a chicken (Steinbeck, 35), Pepé ultimately redeems himself by standing tall and accepting his fate. Thus, in the end, Pepé emerges to claim his "ultimate triumph over death" (Owens, 29) by no longer fleeing as child, but by willingly accepting his own death as a man. In realizing that his family's honour and dead father's memory is more important than his own life, Pepé "draw[s] a shaky cross and slowly struggle to his feet" (Steinbeck, 48) and willingly embraces the death he tried so valiantly to avoid.

[33] Timmerman points out in *Dramatic Landscape,* that that "Flight" was originally entitled "Manhunt" but was changed "from a simple narration of a posse's manhunt to an exploration of one individual's flight into unknown regions" (191) of a man's subconscious.

It is therefore, this selfless act of self-sacrifice that places Pepé on the threshold of maturity – for although he is dead "he has triumphed, he has done a man's thing" (Owens, 34). It is this acknowledgement and acceptance of the uncaring indifference of nature, coupled with the finality of death and the ultimate sacrifice of his own life in order to protect his family's honour that marks Pepé's tortured journey into maturity.

While *The Red Pony* and "Flight" initially appear quite dissimilar, given Jody's quest to be accepted as an adult and Pepé's ill-fated escape and ultimate acceptance of death, they are, upon closer examination, different only in the sense that Pepé's journey is closer to completion. And although "Flight" comes closest in meeting the criteria for a *Bildungsroman*, it would be incorrect to interpret either *The Red Pony* or "Flight" as constituting a rite of passage or coming of age. The central problem in accepting either of these works as a *Bildungsroman* is quite simply that neither Jody Tiflin nor Pepé Torres truly succeeds in completing their required journeys into manhood. Given that *The Red Pony's* Jody Tiflin is both too young and too immature to be even remotely considered a man, being no more than twelve years old at the completion of the story, it is Jody's journey towards maturity rather than his arrival into manhood that is conveyed in the *Red Pony Stories* – an obvious reference to Steinbeck's deeply held belief that life's journey should takes precedence over its outcome. Similarly, while it has been argued that

Pepé Torres' final act of accepting his own death at the hand of his pursuers represents his ultimate passage into manhood, equally compelling arguments have been offered to suggest the contrary. Arguing that perhaps it would have been braver[34] to "give himself up and pay for his crime" (Vogel, 261), critics have argued that it remains unclear whether Pepé's final act of self-sacrifice truly constitutes the kind of "man's thing" (Vogel, 261) required in crossing the final threshold into maturity. In citing that Pepé's premature death may very well have prevented him from completing the kind of self-discovery and personal growth necessary for him to be considered a man, Vogel, Lisca and Owens argue that Pepé has yet to cross the threshold into adulthood. Given these inconsistencies, and bearing in mind that neither Jody nor Pepé complete the journey into adulthood, it is evident that neither *The Red Pony* nor "Flight" meet the standard set in a *Bildungsroman* novella. Yet, at the same time, it would be equally incorrect to portray either story as complete failures in the *Bildungsroman* tradition. Considering Jody and Pepé's personal growth in understanding that mankind is inherently fallible; that nature is indifferent; and that the immutable law of all life is death – all the while making genuine efforts to alleviate the suffering of others – it is more accurate

[34] It should be noted that this interpretation of bravery, believing that it better to pay for your crime than to exact revenge, represents a North American or Eastern European cultural relativism, and as such fails to take into account Pepés Iberian cultural influence concerning the importance of family honour and the need for revenge.

to view *The Red Pony* and "Flight" not as failures as rites of passage, but as quests toward maturity that remain incomplete.

D. The Phalanx: Group versus Individual Behaviour

Turning his attention toward the more contemporary issues of the 1930's, Steinbeck makes a significant thematic departure from the previous *Long Valley* stories. Examining the themes of labour unrest, social discord, and the dynamics of group behaviour, Steinbeck moves beyond the themes of isolation, scientific malaise, and rites of passage, and sets the "The Raid" and "The Vigilante" against the backdrop of the Great Depression and man's role within the larger social context. In examining the more contemporary issues of his day, Steinbeck turns his attention to the themes of social injustice and inequality – themes he would investigate in far greater detail in *Of Mice and Men; In Dubious Battle;* and *Grapes of* Wrath – by examining the bitter years of labour conflict, social upheaval, and vigilante justice that dominated California's orchard growing regions during the 1930's. Considering that with the exception of Breakfast", "The Raid" and "The Vigilante" are the only "stories in *The Long Valley* which deal ostensibly with the topical issues of the 1930's" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 72), an era dominated by socio-economic and political upheaval, the abovementioned works provide invaluable insights into Steinbeck's perception of both the individual and his

interaction within society. Deeply aware of mankind's need for acceptance and social inclusion, Steinbeck saw the group dynamic not as a separate entity but "an individual with desires, hungers and strivings of its own, [that] actually controls the behaviour of the unit men who comprise it" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 79). This phenomena, which would ultimately become known as the Phalanx, emerges as the dominant theme throughout not only "The Raid" and "The Vigilante", but "The Leader of the "People" as well. And while critics have often proposed that it is the elements of fear, religion, racism and social malaise that lie at the heart of Steinbeck's depression era fiction, Hughes correctly points out that "the stories' political ideology is less important than Steinbeck's psychological portrait" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 72) of the individual seeking protection and acceptance within society. In an effort to address this ideological divide, this chapter will investigate the individual's need to be part of a larger social group by contrasting the use of nostalgia in "The Leader of the People", against the themes of mob mentality in "The Raid" and "The Vigilante".

1. The Impact of Nostalgia on Group Identity: "The Leader of the People"

Eventually included in *The Red Pony* in 1938, "The Leader of the People", first published some two years earlier in 1936, marks a significant

thematic departure from the previous *Red Pony* stories. Unlike "The Gift", "The Great Mountains", and "The Promise" – which deal primarily with Jody's quest toward maturity, "The Leader of the People" seems less concerned with "Jody's initiation into the mysteries of life and death [than with] Steinbeck's emerging interest in group behaviour" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 66). Suggesting further that the first origins of Steinbeck's interest in the Phalanx can be traced back as far as 1934, "when inspired by his biologist friend Ed Rickets, [Steinbeck] began speculating about group behaviour" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 66). This interest in the group dynamic becomes a dominant issue in

> the Leader of the People", as Jody's grandfather makes a surprise visit to the Tiflin ranch. Seeking to re live the glory of the western march across the prairies by re-telling the "westering" tales of old – tales that Jody, his parents and even the resident cowhand Billy Buck have heard many times before; Jody's grandfather emerges as one of the "archetypal unit m[e]n who lives only fully when part of a group (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 66).

As a unit man, Jody's grandfather is depicted as a hollow, empty, and broken individual whose life has lost all meaning since being divested from the group. In confirming his lost identity, Jody's grandfather repeatedly demonstrates his lost identity by systematically reliving his past experiences in the crossing of the plains and fighting the Indians. These feelings of nostalgia are significant because they represent a desire to return to the collective stability of the "westering" Phalanx that he once belonged to. Furthermore, given Steinbeck's

definition of the Phalanx as an entity with specific goals and desires that ultimately controls the individuals who constitute it (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony* 79), Jody's grandfather's longing for the "westering" days of old represents not only an old man's feelings of nostalgia towards a bygone era, but more importantly, the lost feelings of belonging and group identity made possible through participation in the Phalanx.

Throughout "The Leader of the People", Steinbeck uses the nostalgia of Jody's grandfather to illustrate two separate elements of the Phalanx: the supremacy of the collective's goals over the needs of the individual, and the collective's role in defining the identities of the individuals that comprise it. The first of these characteristics concerns the supremacy of the Phalanx's collective goal over the needs of the individual unit men within the group. In describing the collective identity of the group as having "no interest in the individual when [their] function differs with the direction of the Phalanx" (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape*, 218), Jody's grandfather describes the westward march of the wagon trains as a massive organism with a collective will of its own irrespective of the needs of its members.

> It wasn't Indians that were important, nor adventures, nor even getting out here. It was a whole bunch of people made into one big crawling beast… it was westering and westering. Everyman wanted something for himself, but the big beast that was all of them wanted only westering (Steinbeck, 224-5).

What emerges out of this nostalgia therefore, is not a sense of individual successes, pride, or even accomplishment, but of membership in the collective mentality. “I was the leader, but if I hadn’t been there, someone else would have been the head. The thing had to have a head” (Steinbeck, 225). Thus, even though he lead the great crawling beast, Jody’s grandfather emerges not as a hero or leader of the people, but “a mere figurehead” (Hughes, *Beyond the Red* Pony, 102) or unit man who simply filled a vacant cell. This existence as a unit man or cell within the Phalanx is further re-enforced when the aged pioneer concedes that “It wasn’t getting there that mattered, it was movement and westering” (Steinbeck, 225). Consequently, by placing his nostalgia not in the individual accomplishments of the group’s membership, but in the collective goal of the group itself, “The Leader of the People” re-enforces the dominance of group mentality and collective identity within the Phalanx.

The second element of Steinbeck’s Phalanx theory concerns the character and nature of the “unit men” within the group and how the identities of these unit men evolved out of the collective experience of the Phalanx. In examining the supremacy of the group over the individual, Steinbeck illustrates how the collective not only controls the actions of the individuals within the group, but also defines the very nature of the unit men it represents:

> That [westering] was the one big thing in my father's life. He led a wagon train clear across the plains to the coast, and when it was finished his life was done. It was a big thing to do, but it didn't last long enough… It's as if he was born to do that, and after he finished it, there wasn't anything more for him to do but think about it and talk about it (Steinbeck, 213).

Stating that it was his representation within the Phalanx that forged her father's identity, acknowledging that the westering movement was the quintessential formative event in her father's life, Jody's mother concedes that her father's identity – like all unit men – is a by-product of their representation within the collective in which they served. Acknowledging that it is only through the group that the individual unit men achieve their identity, Jody's grandfather emerges not as the larger than life leader of "the big crawling beast" (Steinbeck, 224), but as a mere "figurehead who did not so much lead the people as merely front their column" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 67). Consequently, at the end of the story, Jody's grandfather emerges as the quintessential unit man, a man whose identity and entire self-worth have been carved out of the Phalanx's collective mentality. Further depicting "the sorrowful plight of the group man… who has [since] been divested from the group" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 100), Steinbeck examines how once he is separated from the Phalanx, Jody's grandfather's life ceases to have any significant meaning. In fact, so widespread is this lost identity – an identity completely predicated on his groups' membership that the so-called leader of the people describes the other unit men of his era as "standing along the shore,

hating the ocean because it stopped them" (Steinbeck, 225). Thus, Jody's grandfather, like all who came before him, finds his life cold, empty and without meaning or purpose now that he has been severed from the collective identity of the Phalanx.

2. Mob Theory and Group Identity

Like "The Leader of the People", "The Raid" and "The Vigilante" also examine the hollow emptiness of the unit man's life and the search for identity and fulfilment within the Phalanx. Unlike "The Leader of the People", however, the depression era stories of "The Raid" and "The Vigilante" are more concerned with the forces of mob mentality and collective identity than with nostalgia. And while nostalgia certainly plays a part, particularly in "The Vigilante's" depiction of Mike proudly recalling his feelings of empowerment during the lynching, it is the protagonists' social malaise – the realization that "everyday life no longer excites him" (Hughes, Beyond the Red Pony, 100), coupled with the genuine desire to be part of something larger and more meaningful, that emerge as the dominant themes. In identifying the group's influence over the individual, acknowledging full well the unit man's need to be included within the group, Steinbeck examines the interrelationship between mob mentality and the individual's need for representation within the Phalanx. What makes this comparison particularly relevant is that both sides

of the mob collective are examined. By contrasting “The Raid’s” victimization of the protagonists’ Dick and Root, with “The Vigilante’s” portrayal of Mike as mob leader, a story which represents “Steinbeck’s only attempt to delve into the mind of one of the common cells of the mob” (Owens, 127), it becomes clear that regardless of what side of the mob the unit man is on – be it victim or aggressor – it is the individual’s need for inclusion and representation within the group that emerges as the principal theme and major source of conflict.

a. “The Raid”

In setting “The Raid” against the backdrop of both the Great Depression and the seething wave of labour unrest that had gripped California’s orchard growing regions in the early 1930’s, Steinbeck uses the ongoing conflict between group and individual psychology as his principal means of examining the Phalanx. In its simplest form, “The Raid” chronicles the lives of two Communist Party organizers who arrive in a small southern California town amid the smell of “fermenting fruit” (Steinbeck, 65) and “strike-closed packing plants” (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 42) to conduct a recruitment meeting. Emerging from a lunch wagon on their way into town, the two protagonists proceed to a small abandoned store to make the final preparations for their meeting. Root, the younger of the two, is repeatedly described as an

untested and insecure ‘kid’, deeply concerned about his first assignment, spending much of the story measuring himself against his older and more seasoned partner, Dick. Growing increasingly anxious with the passage of time, wondering why no one has come to the meeting, the untested rookie becomes increasingly fearful that a raiding party is on the way. In contrasting the lives of two very different men, Steinbeck depicts Dick and Root as polar opposites. As a true veteran of the cause, Dick is portrayed as the venerable party worker, or unit man – an individual tightly cloaked in both the dogma and rhetoric of the Communist Party. Unlike the untested Root, who is filled with doubt and apprehension, wondering when the raiding party will arrive, Dick eagerly accepts his role as unit man and member of the party. Concerned not with the inevitable beating at the hands of an unruly mob, but with the growing fear that his young partner will attempt to run when put to the test, Dick remains the more static of the two. Ordered by the party to stay regardless of the consequences, the protagonists endure a horrific beating only to awake in a prison infirmary where they proceed to examine their role as cells, within the Phalanx. With obvious similarities to *In Dubious Battle* and *Grapes of Wrath* – where Steinbeck would continue his scathing attack on rampant social injustices of the Great Depression, Steinbeck uses the victimization of Dick and Root to examine mankind’s need for acceptance and inclusion within a larger social group. By examining their existence as mere cells or unit men, individuals who have been largely marginalized by

society, and are therefore, are only able to find meaning and fulfillment within a new collective, Steinbeck investigates the power and influence of the group over the individuals who seek representation within it. In setting their need for inclusion within the Phalanx against the larger theme of mob violence, Steinbeck uses the insecurity of the young Root and the unflinching communist dogma of the elder Dick – both of whom have been disenfranchised from by society and are therefore, outsiders – as his primary means for examining mankind's need for acceptance and inclusion.

In an effort to examine the complexity of the interrelationship between individual and Phalanx, Steinbeck portrays "The Raid's" protagonists as remarkably different individuals. As mentioned above, Root, being younger and less experienced, emerges as the softer of the two. As an individual who is not at all sure of his place within society, R.S. Hughes points out that "[e]ven their dress indicates differences in their character" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 43). Root's blue turtleneck sweater, which critics have unanimously interpreted as a sign of softness and insecurity, comes to represent the need of all unit men to find acceptance and inclusion. One of the earliest indications of this insecurity concerns Root's growing fear that the scheduled meeting will not take place and that a raiding party is on the way. Repeatedly inquiring why no one has arrived for the meeting, "the nervous Root asks for the time on at least four occasions" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 44). This

concern that the meeting has not taken place at the agreed upon time, represents Root's fear of being attacked. "You're scared, Root. Tell the truth. You're scared as hell" (Steinbeck, 65). As a neophyte who has not yet been fully accepted by the group collective, Root's underlying fear concerns not only the very real possibility of being beaten or killed, but also a far more secretive fear of being abandoned by the collective. A fact echoed by Dick who states, "…try running, and I'll turn your name in. We got no place for yellow bastards, you remember that kid" (Steinbeck, 67).

A second and more important factor concerning Root's need to be accepted and included within the Phalanx concerns his growing need to find a substitute family. Cast out by his father for his Marxist views (Steinbeck, 66), Root sees the communist party in general, and Dick in particular, as a surrogate family where he can find acceptance and inclusion. Repeatedly trying to prove his worth to his older and more experienced partner, the inter-relationship between Root and Dick appears more like father and son than mentor-student. "You're a good guy Dick. I don't know what I'll do when I get sent alone" (Steinbeck, 71). And while Root eagerly embraces his role as student and surrogate child, he is not alone in the surrogate father-son relationship. In stating "[y]ou'll be all right kid. You got stuff in you. I can tell that" (Steinbeck, 71), Dick encourages Root in much the same way as a father would encourage a child who has not yet come of age. Continuously labelled

as a ‘kid’, Root’s fear of the impending raid, coupled with his feelings of inadequacy – fears that he may not perform up to the standards of his mentor and surrogate father – dominate the story. Justifiably concerned about the physical beating he is certain to endure, Root is equally concerned that he will betray both the Phalanx and Dick by trying to run. “I don’t want to run, Dick. Honest to God I don’t. If I start to run, you hold me, will you” (Steinbeck, 72)? It is therefore, the surrogate father-son relationship between Root and Dick, a relationship in which “Dick is Root’s model for emulation” (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 73), that sees Root attach the feelings of family and social acceptance to both Dick and the Phalanx, which he serves.

Contrasted against the younger and inexperienced Root, Dick is described as the quintessential veteran of the labour movement, a seasoned activist whose appearance and demeanour suggests both physical and psychological toughness. With his worn pea jacket, aged features and gruff exterior, Dick is the polar opposite of Root – a hardened unit man who has whole-heartedly accepted his role within the collective. Accompanying these physical differences is the “psychologically tough outer shell” (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 43) of the hardened activist. Whereas the neophyte Root wears his heart on his sleeve, enabling all to his see fragile emotional state, the older and more experienced Dick has overcome his fears, a fact clearly supported by Hughes who sates, that “while both men are no doubt frightened by the raid, Dick has

learned to mask his fear beneath a façade of party slogans" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 72). In demonstrating his steadfast belief in the Phalanx's collective identity, Dick tightly cloaks himself in the collective's communist dogma and rhetoric. Irrevocably linking his life with that of the party, Dick sees his orders to remain at the meeting site as being far more important than any physical harm that may come to him. This unyielding resolve, coupled with his belief that "men of little spirit must have an example of steadfastness [and] that people at large must have an example of injustice" (Steinbeck, 72), Dick emerges as the quintessential unit man – a man whose individual life has little or no meaning outside of the group. And while Satyanarayana and Lisca's competing theories of coming of age and religion are not without merit, given Root's re-birth "into a staunch, unwavering supporter of the party" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 73) and subsequent religious epiphany of "forgive them for they don't know what they are doing" (Steinbeck, 76), Dick and Root's unwavering support for the Party is the result of their lost identity and desperate need to attach their otherwise empty lives to a larger and more meaningful purpose. In stating, "Remember, if someone busts you, it isn't him that's doing it, it's the system. And that it isn't you he's busting. He's taking a crack at the principal" (Steinbeck, 72), Dick's unyielding support for the Party clearly illustrates his need to be represented and included in the Phalanx just as Root's search for a father figure and surrogate family represents his need for acceptance and inclusion.

b. "The Vigilante"

As previously mentioned, "The Raid" is not Steinbeck's only attempt at chronicling the contemporary events of the 1930's, nor is it Steinbeck's only means of examining the inter-personal dynamics of group-individual behaviour. In perusing a deep personal interest in this group man or Phalanx theory, "The Vigilante" represents "Steinbeck's only attempt to delve into the mind of one of common cells of the mob" (Owens, 45). Whereas "The Raid" views the mob through the victimization Dick and Root, "The Vigilante" examines the issue of collective group violence "by focusing on one of its members" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 45). Owing much of its origins to the real life lynching of John Maurice Holmes and Thomas Harold Thurmond in San Jose, California, "The Vigilante", along with the unpublished "Case History" [35], depicts the all too frequent tragedy of lynching in 20th century America[36]. Clearly influenced by the San Jose lynching, having numerous similarities in plot, setting, and atmosphere, Steinbeck sets "The Vigilante" against the

[35] For a greater understanding of the 1933 San Jose lynchings and Steinbeck's "Case History", see John C. Timmerman's *The Dramatic Landscape*, pp 207-227; and R.S. Hughes *Beyond the Red Pony* pp. (77-80).

[36] In stating that the lynchings of John Maurice Holmes and Thomas Harold Thurmond were "the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of 1933 in the United States" (207), Timmerman suggests that lynching was by no means an isolated event.

backdrop of a sleepy California town in an effort to examine his growing interest in the psychology of mob violence and group-individual dynamics.

In depicting an angry mob incensed that a violent crime that has been committed against its citizenry, “The Vigilante” examines the individual’s need for inclusion by exacting revenge upon the accused murderer. Angry at the heinous murder committed in his town, the protagonist Mike, known only by his first name, joins a crowd of angry townspeople and storms the local jail to lynch the man suspected of killing one of their own. Knocking the prisoner unconscious, the angry crowd drags its victim outside, hangs him in a tree, and proceeds to set fire to the lifeless corpse. Later, with the euphoria of lynching subsided, Mike wanders into a local bar for a drink, attempting to collect his thoughts. Describing to the bartender that he feels both emotionally and physically drained, Mike returns home to his petulant wife feeling very much alone and deeply empty, realizing that he both looks and feels as if he’s been with a woman. As one of the shortest stories in *the Long Valley*, “The Vigilante” is a brief (only Breakfast is shorter) tightly-knit narrative” (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 77) that portrays the Phalanx as an all-powerful harnesser of energy, subverting the identities of its individual units to become something much larger then the individuals themselves. By examining the involvement of one of the unit men, or cells within the mob, “The Vigilante” depicts how the individual’s need to find identity and inclusion in something

larger and more meaningful than himself, supersedes all other societal norms. Filled with the euphoria of his participation within the mob collective, Mike explains that the lynching was "a good job, [that] it'll save the county a lot of money and that no sneaky lawyers [will] get in" (Steinbeck, 94). Described as a quintessential small town American, a man born and raised in the same town, married and known by everyone, Mike emerges not as a violent usurper of authority but as a mere unit man who longs to attach himself to a [larger] group" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 48). And while critics have offered other interpretations for Mike's participation within the mob, ranging from French and Benson's claim of Mike being bored and sexually frustrated, suffering from the lingering effects of an unfulfilling marriage; to Franklin E. Court's assertion of the town's racial superiority, and Gajewski's accusation of Mike being "an average American racist" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 47), it is Mike's need for inclusion in something larger and more meaningful than himself that emerges as the dominant theme. Suffering a deep emotional malaise following the aftermath of the lynching, having been separated from the collective's group identity, Mike – like most unit men – reverts to his previous insecure status as an outsider. No longer sure of his place, the former unit man exhibits an overwhelming loss of identity and acceptance previously found only within the Phalanx. Feeling both emotionally and physically drained in the moments following the lynching, Mike describes "feeling the letdown in himself… feeling as if he had gone without sleep for several nights" (Steinbeck, 93).

This letdown, which is later described as an absence of direction and reason, "like he was walking in his sleep" (Steinbeck, 95), identifies Mike as the stereotypical unit man, a man who, once separated from the Phalanx, finds his life without meaning or purpose. In describing how he was one of the first to storm the jail, voicing great pride and exuberance in the fact that he was one of the first to pull the rope, Mike, like the grandfather in "The Leader of the People", fully lives only for that time when he is part of the group" (Lisca, 97). Seeing his own life as being wholly and utterly incomplete when compared to the emotional richness offered by the collective, Mike becomes lost once separated and becomes unable to find fulfillment outside the group. Realizing the barren, emotional wasteland of his regular life, Mike, like every unit man before him, senses only loneliness and despair once removed from the collective. Feeling as if he were a part of something much greater than himself, Mike becomes deeply entrenched within the throngs of nostalgia. Longing for the emotional support of the collective, Mike's participation within the Phalanx takes on a deeply sexual nature. Finding himself emotionally and physically spent, almost as if he were describing the euphoric completion a sexual act, Mike describes his time within the Phalanx as being deeply cathartic, "like you done a good job – but tired and kind of sleepy" (Steinbeck, 99). Longing to return to the emotional comfort and security offered by the collective – an emotional state which Benson and Hughes describe as "the excitement of a sexual union of a man and a woman" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 47),

Mike soon realizes the emptiness of his own life when his petulant wife accuses him of being with another woman. Realizing how woefully inadequate his post-Phalanx life has become, Mike concedes, “By God she was right, he thought. That’s exactly how I do feel” (Steinbeck, 100). Thus, Mike becomes a vigilante “not primarily because he is sexually frustrated, bored, or a racist but that he longs to attach himself to the group” (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 80). Consequently, it is this longing to return to the collective security and emotional fulfillment of the Phalanx that serves as the principal theme and major source of conflict in “The Vigilante”.

E) Man’s Fall from Grace: the Illusion of Respectability and Freedom

Far removed from the themes of personal growth, group-individual dynamics, and lost identity lay Steinbeck’s tales concerning the illusion of respectability, the hidden cost of freedom, and mankind’s fall from grace. Deeply believing it to be the author’s duty to hold society accountable by “exposing [its] many grievous faults and failures… dredging up to the light our dark and dangerous dreams for the purpose of improvement” (Nobel Laureate Acceptance Speech, 1962), Steinbeck examines the illusion of mankind’s moral superiority. Seeing literature not as a weapon, but as a mirror or beacon that holds mankind accountable to its deepest secrets and desires, Steinbeck uses “The Harness”, “Johnny Bear” and “The Murder” to

shatter mankind's moral facade in hopes of advancing the human condition. This chapter will illustrate, therefore, that it is this illusion of mankind's respectability, coupled with his ultimate fall from grace that emerge as the primary theme throughout "The Harness", "Johnny Bear" and "The Murder". By examining Peter Randall's transformation from admired citizen to incorrigible letch to a reformed albeit imperfect man , Emily Hawkins' fall from aristocratic nobility, and the collapse of Jim Moore's chivalric code, Steinbeck demonstrates how mankind's illusion of respectability becomes systematically eroded when confronted by the reality of his actions, all of which suggest a nature that is neither singularly good nor truly evil, but intrinsically human.

1. "The Harness"

The first of Steinbeck's short stories that address the illusion of respectability and human despair is "The Harness". Aptly described by R.S. Hughes as "a psychological study of Salinas farmer Peter Randal" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 75), "The Harness", much like "White Quail", consists of two distinct themes: "deep sexual and spiritual starvation" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 30) and "psychological domination" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 77) of Peter Randall by his strong willed, albeit physically weak wife Emma. Beyond this domination and control – a control that even death can not fully

sever – are the hidden themes of false respectability, the unseen cost of personal freedom and mankind's ultimate fall from grace. As the story begins, Peter Randall is portrayed as a highly respected, conservative, and judicious member of the community. With straight shoulders and stomach like that of a soldier, Peter, is initially portrayed as an example "for young Masons of California to emulate" (Steinbeck, 77) and who commanded a unique respect within the community. This illusion of conservatism and respectability, however, soon vanishes with the death of Peter's sickly wife Emma. Following the death of his wife, Peter demonstrates an uncharacteristically violent display of emotion by tearing off his shirt and revealing a shoulder harness and stomach girdle that his wife forced him to wear. Vowing to be free of both appliances and his petulant wife once and for all, Peter swears to never wear either the harness or girdle again, to "slouch all over the place, track dirt into the house and get a big fat housekeeper with breasts as big as pillows" (Steinbeck, 85). Such changes, however, never come to pass. Ultimately confessing that he is still controlled by the memory of his wife Emma, stating that his memory of her "won't let him do things" (Steinbeck, 91), an obvious reference to his guilt in visiting the brothels of San Francisco, Peter seeks both atonement and forgiveness by promising to honour his dead wife's final wish in the hopes of one day being free of her domination and control.

As noted by most critics, “The Harness” features a unique blend of interconnecting plots and sub-plots, culminating in “a double surprise ending” (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 30). In an effort to examine mankind’s waning moral stature, Steinbeck portrays Peter Randall as a man concealing no less than four separate illusions. Initially described as being far above his peers by having unusually perfect posture for a farmer, with “shoulders held back as though they were braced, Peter gained an added respect because of his posture” (Steinbeck, 77). Seen as a wise, conservative and diligent farmer whose opinions were actively sought prior to the selecting and planting of crops, Peter Randall is initially portrayed as the moral benchmark of the community. With the death of his sickly wife Emma, however, Peter embarks on an unexpected quest for personal freedom that serves only to shatter his illusions of respectability. Casting aside the harness and girdle – tools of his dead wife’s domination and control, vowing never to wear either them again, Peter Randall soon reveals that his respectability within the community is a façade. For no sooner does Peter remove the shoulder harness and stomach belt that he confesses to a lecherous life of visiting the San Francisco brothels for a week every year. What emerges out of this dual confession is the realization that Peter Randall’s superior physical stature and moral virtue are utter fallacies. Learning that Peter Randall, the town’s highly respected civic idol is not what he was led to believe, friend and neighbour Ed Chapell is “scandalized to learn that upstanding Peter Randall is at heart a slouchy,

licentious man who spends annual riotous weekends in San Francisco" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 30). Ironically, it is this quest to be free from the shoulder harness and stomach belt he was forced to wear that ultimately destroys Peter Randall's illusion respectability. In illustrating the complex nature of the narrative, it is further discovered that Peter Randall has also failed to free himself from his wife's control. In what is the first of the "double surprise ending" (Owens, 117), a drunken Peter Randall reveals that his wife's influence continues to haunt him, claiming that "she didn't die dead" and that "she won't let me do things" (Steinbeck, 91). Further confessing that it was the memory of his petulant wife that nearly drove him mad throughout his risky planting and harvesting of sweet peas, Peter Randall's final illusions of respectability are finally brought to light. In admitting that his decision to plant sweet peas, a potentially lucrative but highly risky crop, was made not under a carefully considered plan, but a reckless gamble – owing more to good luck than good management – Peter's image as a judicious farmer is forever shattered. In learning that, "the whole time, all year, [he'd] been worrying it was just like gambling" (Steinbeck, 91), Ed Chapel sees his illusions of Peter as wise and judicious farmer vanish forever. Further highlighting this erosion of respectability is the discovery that Peter's final illusion, his perceived freedom from his wife's domination and control, is equally misplaced. Confessing that he not only continues feel his wife's influence, but that he must atone for the sins committed in her memory,

stating “she still won’t let me do things… that she worried me all year about those peas” (Steinbeck, 91), it becomes clear that Peter Randall is only marginally freer now than when Emma was alive. Furthermore, in feeling increasingly guilty of his lecherous lifestyle, having routinely visited the brothels of San Francisco in drunken fantasies of sexual abandon, Peter feels the need to atone for his sins, and subsequently vows to mend his lecherous ways by honouring his dead wife’s last wish. “When I get back, you know what I’m going to do? I’m going to put in Electric lights. Emma always wanted electric lights” (Steinbeck, 92). Thus, in a stunning turn of events, Peter Randall sees both his illusion of respectability and quest for freedom shattered forever, as he remains enslaved by his dead wife’s memory, deeply haunted by his own feelings of guilt.

What emerges at the end of “The Harness” therefore, is a man’s quintessential fall from grace. First appearing as a larger than life figure, a man of unique physical and moral stature who is respected and admired by all, one soon discovers Peter Randall’s illusion of respectability to be nothing more than smoke and mirrors. Ironically, “The Harness” provides a double tragedy: for while it is Peter Randall’s quest for personal freedom – a freedom from both the harness and his wife’s domination and control that ultimately destroys his illusion of respectability – it is nonetheless a freedom that Peter Randall can never fully achieve. Unable to realize any of the changes he

insisted would follow after Emma's death, "promising to track dirt into the house; hire a fat housekeeper or to never wind the mantle clock" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 31), Peter Randall emerges as a man who is anything but free of the memory of his petulant wife. Wracked with guilt for his annual visits to the fancy-houses of San Francisco and his reckless decision to plant a highly risky crop that his wife would not have approved of, Peter is continually tormented by Emma's haunting voice of temperance, which "has worried him from the first day of planting the sweet peas" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 32). Thus Peter emerges not as a man emancipated from a domineering and petulant wife, but a slave to his own guilt and the overpowering memory of his dead wife. The inevitable consequence of which, sees Peter unable to enjoy the fruits of his labour. In a story replete with unexpected twists and turns, Steinbeck provides one last surprise ending. Given his tragic fall from grace, having his illusions of respectability shattered for all to see, one would expect Peter Randall to go quietly into the night as the vanquished fallen angel. What emerges instead, however, is a new Peter Randall – a man no longer the pillar of the community, but a man determined to atone for his wrongdoings. In much the same way as the legendary Phoenix rose from its ashes, so too does Peter embark on a path of self-improvement. No longer "the good, wise man he once pretended to be" (Owens, 117), understanding that those illusions have been shattered forever; Peter undergoes a fascinating transformation. No longer a drunken and lecherous womanizer, Peter seeks both atonement and

improvement. Promising to become a better man, vowing to resist his natural slouch and appetite for whisky and women, Peter seeks to improve his life in hopes of honouring the memory of his dead wife. What emerges at the end of the story is a new Peter Randall, one who is no longer the moral benchmark of the community, but who is at heart a basically good, though ultimately flawed human being, seeking to one day become a better man.

2. "Johnny Bear"

In further challenging of the illusions of respectability, Steinbeck turns his attention away from the individual, and examines society's role in mankind's fall from grace. Unlike "The Harness", which examined man's fall from respectability at an individual level; affecting only Peter Randall and neighbour Ed Chappel, "Johnny Bear" focuses on the illusion of respect and fall from grace at a much larger societal level by examining "the fall from respectability and its repercussions in the community" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 51). Originally entitled, "The Sisters" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 51), "Johnny Bear" focuses not on the fall of the individual *per se*, but with the role society plays in perpetuating the false illusions of moral supremacy. In shining the light of truth upon society, revealing its faults and failures, "Johnny Bear" seeks to examine the collective illusions of society in a way that "The Harness" and "The Murder" do not. Equally significant is the fact that unlike "The Harness"

and “The Murder”, much of “Johnny Bear” is rooted in real-life events. Just as with “Breakfast”, “The Vigilante”, and “The Raid”, Steinbeck based “Johnny Bear” on real places and real people (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 49). In portraying the costal town of Loma as the fictitious rendition of Castroville, California, an otherwise insignificant town where Steinbeck once worked as a swamp dredger and answered to name of “Johnny Boy” (French, 85), “Johnny Bear” is rooted not only in the creative genius of Steinbeck himself, but with the “illiterate, though colourfully and profanely articulate people he was working with” (French, 85).

Ironically, while the plot centres around the events of a moronic “anthropoid half-wit” (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 80), who begs whisky from the patrons of the local Buffalo Bar and then rewards his newfound benefactors with mimicked voices that he has overheard, the story also conveys a far more serious message. In revealing that Amy and Emalin Hawkins, the town’s resident aristocrats, are not as pristine as the townspeople have been led to believe, “Johnny Bear” examines much more than the mere chronicling of the local village idiot. As the story begins, the narrator, who is himself a stranger to Loma, enters the Buffalo Bar to hear Johnny Bear repeating the events of his date with a young woman named Mae Romero. Embarrassed by the mimicking of Johnny Bear, the patrons of the bar do their best try to forget the shame that has been caused. Thirsty once

more, Johnny utters the voices of Amy and Emalin Hawkins, the two most respected members of the community, individuals who are not only revered and respected, but are believed to be beyond reproach. Rewarded with yet another whisky, Johnny mimics the Hawkins sister's voices with frightening accuracy, revealing that Amy Hawkins has become pregnant with a Chinese labourer's illegitimate child and has attempted suicide. The story subsequently concludes with an unconscious Johnny Bear having been being badly beaten for shattering the town's illusion, and the patrons of the bar left deeply ashamed – discovering that for the first time – "the first ladies of Loma have been disgraced." (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 81)

As with much of Steinbeck's fiction, "Johnny Bear" provides the reader with an overabundance of themes, plots and sub-plots to examine. With similarities to the real life town of Castroville – the town where Steinbeck once worked as a swamp dredger – the Neanderthal-like appearance of Johnny Bear, and Loma's description as a town beset by a multitude of frogs and an "evil smelling fog" (Steinbeck, 108), "Johnny Bear" comprises a rich tapestry of interconnecting themes. Yet, within this complex intermingling of fiction and fact, are two themes of particular importance: the role of Johnny bear as artist and recorder; and society's role in the Hawkins sister's being toppled from their previously unquestioned positions of respectability. As Lisca has correctly asserted,

> [o]n one level, ['Johnny Bear'] is an exploration of the artist's role in society, for like the artist, Johnny Bear holds the mirror up to mankind and reveals through his mimetic talent the hidden festers of society. He is described as a kind of recording and reproducing device, only you use a glass of whiskey instead of a nickel (Lisca, 96).

Notwithstanding the temptation to view Johnny Bear as the villain, often being referred to as "a bizarre creature" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 81) and "a cretin" (Lisca, 96), the unwitting protagonist Johnny Bear emerges instead as the ultimate personification of the artist's mirror. By highlighting its many faults and failures, Johnny Bear forces society to confront the ugly truth of its thoroughly imperfect nature by examining the unwanted intrusions into lives of Loma's citizens. And while Brian Barbour has challenged Lisca's view of Johnny Bear as the artist and recorder, arguing that "no art literally holds up a mirror to nature" (French, 84), such arguments have overwhelmingly been dismissed for failing to address the complexity of "Johnny Bear". Understanding the needs of his audience, Johnny Bear, like any artist, has a clear understanding of what is expected of himself: who in the audience needs to pandered to; and what is needed to satisfy the needs of the audience, are factors clearly understood by Johnny Bear. "He knows if he listens in windows and comes here and repeats what he hears, someone will give him whisky. He tries to palm off Mrs. Ratz' conversation in the store, or Jerry Noland arguing with his mother, but he can't get whisky for such

things" (Steinbeck, 106). Johnny Bear then is the quintessential artist, and although he lacks an awareness of repercussions of his actions; he is nonetheless keenly aware of what his audience needs and wants to hear. Owens further illustrates the importance of Johnny Bear as artist and recorder by comparing Johnny Bear to Steinbeck himself. "Johnny Bear is John Steinbeck, a writer who, while writing his most pessimistic novel, *In Dubious Battle*, thought of himself merely a 'recording consciousness' and who spent a large portion of his career holding up his audience's illusions up to the light to show their falseness and their danger" (Owens, 120). As the artist incarnate, Johnny Bear re-transmits what he hears, by "reflect[ing] the needs and desires of his audience" (Owens, 120). In showing the patrons of the Buffalo bar that the Hawkins sisters are not the untouchable community icons they were originally thought to be, Johnny Bear represents the artist's mirror by challenging society's illusion of respectability. Irrespective of his motivation, finding incentive not in man's pursuit of truth but in the bottom of a whisky bottle, Johnny's role as artist remains intact. For in the end, regardless of his motivation, or perhaps because of it, Johnny Bear succeeds in forcing his audience to examine the false illusions of their society.

Aside from his role as recorder and artist, the second dominant sub plot to be examined in "Johnny Bear" concerns society's role the Hawkins sister's illusion of respectability and fall from grace. Unlike "The Harness",

where Peter Randall's moral decline was dictated by his own actions and reckless decisions, "Johnny Bear" examines society's role in the fall of the Hawkins sisters. Lisca correctly argues that what separates "Johnny Bear" from "The Harness" and "the Murder", is not the actions of the individual *per se*, but how society has perpetuated and facilitated the individual's moral decline. "It is the social group within which these characters exist, and the conflict between its innate curiosity and desire to perpetuate the symbols of decorum despite the revelation by Johnny Bear" (Lisca, 96). Lisca further argues that it is the conflict between the town's desire to protect and perpetuate the Hawkins' illusion of respectability, and the town's desire to know it's much cherished icons, that makes the Hawkins' illusion of respectability and fall from grace, infinitely more complex than that of Peter Randall in "The Harness". As the town's aristocrats, being a family "above reproach" (Owens, 118), the Hawkins emerge as symbols of everything that Loma is not. "They're what we tell our kids when we want to – well, to describe good people" (Steinbeck, 109). Yet as the story progresses, the reader soon discovers that the Hawkins are more than mere symbols, they are, in fact, Loma's sole defence against the vile ugliness that surrounds and permeates the town. "A place like Loma with its frogs, with its great swamp like a hideous sin, needed, really needed the Hawkins women" (Steinbeck, 111-112). The great irony here, is that while it is clear the townspeople

genuinely do cherish the Hawkins sisters, revering them and holding in high regard, there is at the same time a great desire to discover their innermost secrets – secrets which – lay deeply hidden within their lives. After Johnny's mimicking of the Hawkins, a revelation that details the sordid events of Amy Hawkins' inter-racial affair, pregnancy and attempted suicide, an immediate silence fell upon the patrons of the Buffalo Bar. "Now those men [who] really wanted to know, were ashamed for wanting to know, but their whole mental system required the knowledge" (Steinbeck, 118). What emerges, therefore, is a fascinating juxtaposition of Loma's need to simultaneously protect, promote, and ultimately destroy the moral supremacy of Amy and Emalin Hawkins. In what is certainly the most compelling sub-plot within "Johnny Bear", the reader becomes aware of not only the fall of the Hawkins' respectability, but more importantly, the culpability of Loma in sharing the Hawkins' disgrace, a disgrace made possible by the town's need to know the deepest and darkest secrets of the Hawkins' sisters. The significance of society's role in perpetuating and ultimately toppling the Hawkins sisters is perhaps most accurately detailed by R.S. Hughes who states, "Amy Hawkins' affair and Emalin's response to it demonstrate how the fall of a respectable family like the Hawkins can send shock waves through a narrow community like Loma" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 82). Thus what emerges at the end of "Johnny Bear" is a town deeply submerged in a moral quagmire. With their desire to know the truth colliding head on and at breakneck speed, with need to protect

the image of their icons, the patrons of the Buffalo bar, and perhaps all of Loma itself, are forced to share both the guilt and shame of realizing that the Hawkins sisters' illusion of respectability is forever shattered. The consequence of which is a fall from grace not merely limited to the Hawkins sisters, or even to the patrons of the Buffalo Bar, but the entire town of Loma itself.

3. "The Murder"

In the last of *The Long Valley's* three stories that concern the illusion of respectability and fall from grace, Steinbeck examines the collapse of man's moral integrity. Unlike "The Harness" and "Johnny Bear", which examine how their respective communities became deeply affected by the often-reckless actions of community icons Peter Randall, Amy Hawkins, and her sister Emalin, "The Murder" examines the deterioration and eventual collapse of common man and rancher Jim Moore's internal moral values. At its core, "The Murder" tells the story of a common Californian rancher Jim Moore who marries "a Yugoslavian girl whose ways are foreign to his own" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 85). Unhappy with his dutiful albeit sullen and distant wife, a dejected Jim Moore soon begins frequenting the brothels of nearby Monterey. Having one of his trips to Monterey interrupted with the news that one of his cattle has been killed by rustlers, Jim returns home to find his wife

in bed with her male cousin. Initially confused, the protagonist reaches for his rifle and kills his wife's cousin. After the local deputy sheriff quickly dismisses the murder charge, Jim grabs his bullwhip and whips his wife for her indiscretion. The story concludes somewhat surprisingly with his wife Jelka, bloodied and obviously injured, becoming a more personable and loving wife, who cooks her husband breakfast. With its graphic depiction of incest, sexism, racism, murder and spousal abuse, "The Murder" emerges alongside "The Snake" as not only the most disturbing, but quite possibly the most frightening of Steinbeck's *Long Valley* stories. Once beyond this orgy of violence, xenophobia and hypocrisy however, two dominant themes emerge: the dehumanization of Jim Moore's wife, as demonstrated by Steinbeck's use of animal imagery; and Jim Moore's illusion of respectability, as clearly illustrated by the collapse of his moral values and chivalric code.

Within "The Murder", one cannot help but notice Steinbeck's use of animal imagery. Unlike the animal imagery in "Flight", however, which centred on the protagonist, Pepé Lopez, "The Murder's" symbolic imagery focuses on the story's primary supporting character – his foreign wife Jelka Sepic. Being described as having "a doe's eyes" (Steinbeck 122), "whimper[ing] like puppy" (Steinbeck 131), and being patted on the head and neck in the same way one "would stroke a horse" (Steinbeck 134), Jelka's depiction is as much animal as it is human. And while theories differ as to

why Steinbeck chose to include such imagery, the two dominant schools of thought concern the dichotomy between Jelka's need for physical domination and Jim Moore's need for emotional interaction; and the dehumanization of Jelka as a necessary pre-cursor to her physical abuse by her husband. In examining the first of these two views, Owens states that. "[w]hereas Jim misses conversation, Jelka misses the physical contact of her cultural background" (Owens, 125). Even before his marriage, Jim becomes confronted by the cross-cultural barriers of old and new world values, the most obvious of which concerns the foreshadoed abuse of his wife. In stating that Jelka's cultural background requires her to be dominated, "[d]on't be a fool, Jelka is a slave girl. If she's bad beat, her [sic], if she's too long beat her [sic] too, I beat her [sic] mama. Pappy beat my mama" (Steinbeck, 122), Jim is forced to choose which value system he will embrace – Jelka's or his own. This advice concerning Jelka's need for physical domination, which was given to Jim by his father-in-law on the day of his wedding – advice that modern readers have immediately labelled as both racist and sexist – is remarkably different from Jim Moore's need of emotional contact. In describing her as a fine wife, but completely devoid of companionship, "Jim realized before long that he could never get in touch with her in any way" (Steinbeck, 123). What emerges from this imagery, is a collision of two very different worlds: Jelka's need to be physically dominated; and Jim Moore's need for conversation and emotional inclusion. Contrasted against the belief

that Steinbeck's use of animal imagery represents an attempt to portray the cultural divide between Jelka and Jim Moore – a divide that can only be bridged by the end of a bullwhip – is the belief that Steinbeck's excessive animal imagery is needed to justify Jim Moore's physical abuse. Critics contend that Jelka's portrayal as a "domesticated animal" (Benton, 79), being bestial and therefore "less than human" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 55) serves as the necessary justification for Jim Moore to physically abuse his unfaithful wife. With its abundance of "racism (or perhaps xenophobia), sexism and murder" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 55), critics point out that society – even in Steinbeck's era – would have found it repressible to bullwhip an adulterous but otherwise accepted member of its own community. However, by portraying Jelka in such animalistic terms, coupled with her being a foreigner and an incestuous adulterer, Steinbeck provides Jim Moore, and perhaps the rest of society as well, with complete justification to look at Jim Moore's actions "with awe and some admiration" (Steinbeck, 122).

The second critical element of "The Murder", and clearly the most dominant theme concerning mankind's illusion of respectability and fall from grace, is the apparent collapse of Jim Moore's chivalric code and internal value system. At the beginning of the story, Steinbeck depicts Jim Moore as a *gentleman farmer,* a respectable member of the community with deep moral underpinnings. Initially rejecting his father-in-law's advice to beat Jelka when

she is bad, Jim Moore initially finds the prospect of physically abusing his wife to be morally reprehensible. In stating how he "wouldn't beat Jelka" (Steinbeck, 122), Jim Moore, like the stone castle adjacent to the canyon his land sits on, bears remarkable similarities to the chivalric kingdoms of old. Just as the porous sandstone castle is a relic of a by-gone era – unable to offer protection from the elements of nature – so too is Jim Moore's chivalric code unable to address the problems of an unfulfilling cross-cultural marriage. Confronted by the inadequacies of his pre-existing paradigms towards the treatment of his wife and her culture, Jim Moore wants to believe he should not beat his wife, but ultimately knows he must. Owens argues therefore, that this ironic paradox, the belief that a man must not beat his wife, "consists of a kind of chivalry symbolized by the unreal castle – a chivalric code which dictates that it is barbarous and 'foreign' to beat a wife even if the wife's culture has conditioned her to expect or even desire the beating" (Owens, 122). While many critics have correctly seized upon Jim Moore's illusion of respectability and fall from grace – an illusion clearly foreshadowed by the eroding castle of sandstone – they have falsely interpreted "The Murder" as a collapse or failure of Jim Moore's chivalric code and internal value system. In Steinbeck's final twist of irony, Jim Moore's chivalric code does not collapse, but is instead revised so that it can more accurately address the reality of his situation. For in the midst of finding his wife in an incestuous affair with her cousin, Jim Moore does not abandon his chivalric ideals altogether, but

instead adapts them to fit the reality of his situation. Rather than kill both Jelka and her cousin for their indiscretion, an action Jim Moore was not only able to do, but quite possibly justified in doing, given the societal mores of time and place[37], Jim Moore alters his previously entrenched chivalric code and opts for a different solution. One found at the end of a bullwhip.

> In shooting the cousin, Jim acts accordingly to the standards of chivalry in 'Monterey County'… [for]the killing is condoned and even admired by Jim's neighbours and earns him the respect in the nearby town. [But] when Jim deliberately and dispassionately beats Jelka, he is bowing to what he now realizes are her expectations and needs (Owens, 123).

Suddenly finding it acceptable to his whip his wife as "bad as [he] could without killing her" (Steinbeck, 133), a new value system emerges. This new value system, which is based on the fundamental premise that violence against one's wife is justified – or perhaps even welcomed, in such extreme situations, sees Jim Moore adopt a new belief structure, one that embraces both old and new world values. The consequence of which, is that with his chivalric code and moral belief structure altered to address the needs of his foreign-born wife, a new moral code emerges, one that accepts murder, spousal abuse and possibly torture, as long as some restraint is shown. This point is perhaps best illustrated by the deputy Sheriff who states, "where's your wife… you sure

[37] Critics have frequently speculated that the investigating deputy's comments of "Of course there's a technical charge of murder against you, but it'll be dismissed. Always is in this part of the country." (Steinbeck, 132), suggests a tacit approval for the murder of an unfaithful wife.

you didn't kill her too…. Well go kind of light on your wife Mr. Moore" (Steinbeck, 132). Ultimately, Jim Moore's illusion of respectability and fall from grace are all but complete given that the "mores of Monterey County, which not only condone murder but actually encourage it, are more barbarous than those of Jelka's people, which require the beating of a wife" (Owens, 123). Thus at the end of "The Murder", any illusions of Jim Moore as a *gentleman farmer* are forever destroyed, a fact not missed by Owens who states, "its obvious that Jim Moore's mores and illusion of chivalry were as false as the sandstone 'castle' at the canyon's head" (Owens, 123). It is this illusion of chivalry, an illusion irrevocably destroyed through the use of violence and murder that ultimately unites Jim and Jelka and bridges the two cultures by shattering the "illusion that he can treat his Yugoslav wife with the American standards" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 54-55) of chivalry and honour.

IV The Quest for a Unifying Theme

This examination of the specific themes and motifs within the *Long Valley*, leaves one question: is there a single unifying theme that unites this collection, or is it a haphazard collection of unrelated short stories? The answer to this question is unclear. While critics and scholars generally agree that *The Long Valley* represents some of Steinbeck's best fiction, they have

been openly critical of its lack of its lack of cohesion. Unlike *The Pastures of Heaven (1932),* the twelve stories that comprise *The Long Valley* bears no similarity to the geographic and thematically cohesive *Pastures of Heaven*[38]. Considering that *The Long Valley* came to be represented in a single volume at the behest of Steinbeck's publisher Pascal Covici, who was "experiencing financial difficulties and needed another bestseller like *Of Mice and Men* to save the firm" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 20), critics have consistently rejected the idea of *The Long Valley* being a unified or cohesive work. Timmerman echoes this malaise in asserting that Steinbeck's shift from novels to short stories had just as much to do with finances as with the creative process. Arguing further, that like many young authors of his era, Steinbeck turned to the short story because of its ease of publication. Given that "periodicals were plentiful, providing a new market for young talent" (*The Long Valley,* xiii), it is likely that Steinbeck saw the short story medium as the ideal vehicle for a much-needed source of revenue. With *The Pastures of Heaven* earning less than $400, and his second and third novels *A Cup of Gold* and *To a God Unknown* earning less than the $250 advance he received from his publisher, periodicals provided a powerful incentive to a financially struggling John Steinbeck. Not only was this new medium readily available – appearing in weekly or monthly

[38] It should be noted that while it would be incorrect to view *the Pastures of Heaven* as a unified or cohesive work, given its absence of a dominant thematic linkage, critics point out that it nonetheless possessed a geographical and topical unity strangely absent in *The Long Valley.*

newspapers and magazines – they were affordably priced, a key factor during the early years of the depression. These periodicals also enabled an author to produce and distribute his work faster than a traditional novel. Considering that, "[p]eriodicals such as *The North American Review, Saturday Evening Post, The Atlantic Monthly* and *Harpers Magazine*, packed a lot of fictional punch for a dime or quarter" (*The Long Valley*, xii-xiii). It is evident, therefore, that in generating a much-needed source of revenue, coupled with the increased recognition and exposure of his works to thousands of new readers, the appeal of periodicals provided a powerful incentive to a young and struggling John Steinbeck.

Openly stating that it may very well be "a mistake to attempt to harness the entire volume within a single thesis" (Owens, 108), critics and scholars have remained severely critical of The *Long Valley's* lack of cohesion. Yet, amid this onslaught of criticism, some unifying theories have been proposed. With Fontenrose theorizing that the "title indicates a topographical unity" (Fontenrose, 59) , Garcia suggesting that a sense of unity may be found in the presence its garden motif, and French proposing that it is theme of frustration that unites Steinbeck's work, relevant contrasting opinions have been proposed. Unfortunately, while these explanations are not entirely without merit, they have nonetheless been unable to demonstrate a

meaningful and verifiable thematic linkage.[39] Since its garden and topographical motifs are shared equally with mountain, valley and coastal regions, having less than half of *The Long Valley* taking place in the Salinas Valley itself, Fontenrose and Garcia's suggestions geographic unity are at best anaemic and at worst, patently absurd. Likewise, although French's suggestion of frustration appears initially plausible, given the isolation and alienation felt by characters such as Marry Teller, Elisa Allen, Amy Hawkins and Doctor Phillips, it is deficient for two reasons. First, it fails to examine the individual's search for growth, as demonstrated by Jody Tiflin and Pepé Torres' quest for adulthood in *The Red Pony* and "Flight". And secondly, this limited view of mere frustration fails to examine man's need for societal acceptance, as demonstrated by Dick, Root and Mike's quest for inclusion in the Phalanx in "The Raid" and "The Vigilante".

The most plausible of all the themes proposed is Garcia's hypothesis of initiation and growth into adulthood. In suggesting that the sole unifying theme concerns "the brutal initiation into the world of disappointment, loneliness, manhood, knowledge, evil and death" (Owens, 107), Garcia correctly identifies the individual's quest for growth and personal development. Regrettably, aside however, Garcia's dark interpretation of

[39] Since *The Long Valley* is composed of various geographic, chronologic and topical themes, critics have remained unsuccessful in uniting the stories within a singular thematic framework.

humanity, a view inconsistent with Steinbeck's deeply held belief in man's capacity for greatness and self-actualization, there are two glaring problems with Garcia's initiation theory: the failure to address society's role in the disenfranchisement of mankind, and the inability to address society's role in resisting, or in many cases denying the physical, social and emotional needs of the individual. Concerned far more with morality than ideology, Steinbeck saw society's failure to adequately protect and promote the nobility of man at an early age. In stating that his "sympathies did not ally with the ideology but with those who worked in the fields for the cause of humanity" (Timmerman, *Dramatic landscape*, 226), Steinbeck saw a clear link between society's failure to improve the human condition and the individual's need to seek personal fulfillment outside the confines of regular society. And although Steinbeck's belief in mankind's need to look beyond the accepted norms of society to achieve self-actualization became widely known with the publication of *In Dubious Battle* and *Grapes of Wrath*, it was in fact a belief ingrained so deeply in Steinbeck's consciousness that it preceded his days at Stanford. "Having worked in the fields during his Stanford days, and having known migrant labourers all his life, Steinbeck was well aware of the seething unrest" (Timmerman, *Dramatic Landscape*, 225) between man's desire for growth and development, and society's attempts to prevent such growth.

A. The Search for Acceptance Outside the Confines of Society and Culture

What emerges from this conflict between man and society, having "grown up in a fertile agricultural valley about twenty-five miles from the Pacific Coast" ("Introduction to *The Long Valley*" 1), having witnessed society's inequitable treatment of the migrant and labouring class, was the fervent desire to hold society accountable, by "do[ing] something to help knock these [land owning] murderers on the heads" (Steinbeck, *Ledger*, 158). Sensing an obvious social disparity between the haves and have-nots, Steinbeck deeply believed that in order to develop, nurture and promote the needs of the human spirit, man would need to move beyond the normal confines of society. It will be the aim of this chapter to illustrate that it is the individual's struggle to break free of the societal constraints of the day that serve to stifle and diminish the human condition that emerges as the single unifying theme of *The Long Valley*. By examining the individual's search for emancipation from an unfulfilling society; the needs of those trying to find inclusion within a new, more fulfilling social group; the inability of mankind's self-paradigm to provide meaning and fulfillment, and society's inability to promote individual growth and development to its members, it will be shown that it is the individual's need to move beyond ones societal norms

in order to adequately nourish the human spirit that emerges as the sole unifying theme of *The Long Valley*.

B. The Search for Emancipation from an Unfulfilling Society

Exemplifying Steinbeck's belief of man needing to look outside the boundaries of society in order to find personal and emotional fulfillment, is the individual's search for emancipation from an unappreciative society. This needed separation from a society that prevents or otherwise fails to appreciate, nourish, and support the human condition represents a dominant undercurrent, finding itself represented in not only "The Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail", but "Johnny Bear" as well.

In "The Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail", Steinbeck depicts the lives of two strong but disenfranchised women who seek to separate themselves both physically and emotionally from the suffocating worlds in which they live. In portraying two women who have chosen to devote their lives to their gardens rather than the male-dominated worlds of their husbands, Steinbeck examines the uncaring and unfulfilling nature of society and the need of individuals to look beyond the confines of their community to find emotional support and fulfillment. Steinbeck, therefore, uses both "The

Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail" to examine the unfulfilling nature of a sexually stereotyped society and its impact on human isolation.

Emerging as a disenfranchised woman actively engaged in a silent rebellion. Keeping to her garden, finding both her husband and the life of a rancher's wife to be dull and meaningless, "The Chrysanthemums'" Elisa Allen exists as a passionate and sexual woman forced to live in a world empty of human intimacy. Finding the world of her husband to be both emotionally and sexually unfulfilling, Elisa becomes enthralled with the Tinker's nomadic existence, which she finds both emotionally and sexually emancipating. "Although the tinker is ragged and unclean in appearance, he taps Elisa's dormant passion" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 25). With her breasts swelling passionately, her voice growing husky, crouching low like a fawning dog, Elisa takes on a persona that Owens suggests, "is a parody of a bitch in heat" (Owens, 111). This sexual attraction, which clearly reflects her desire for emotional and sexual emancipation from an unfulfilling marriage and an unappreciative society, is so powerful that "Elisa reaches out toward his leg, almost touching it" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 22). In the end however, Elisa's desire for emancipation remains unfulfilled, leaving her with the realisation that she is after all, a rancher's wife in a sexually repressed and conservative environment. As such, she becomes what Brian Barbour calls, "the frustrated and isolated artist"

(Barbour[40], 118). Finding only brief periods of sanctuary in the solace of her garden – surrounded by the chrysanthemums and geraniums that shield herself from the barren emptiness of the world her husband – Elisa languishes in a world that neither nourishes nor supports her adventurous spirit.

Similarly, in "The White Quail", Mary Teller's attempts to keep the outside world, and her husband – both whom she sees as the enemy, from encroaching her immaculate and pristine garden – represents another version of the frustrated and isolated artist. Like Elisa Allen in "The Chrysanthemums", Mary Teller is clearly frustrated with the male-dominated world in which she is forced to live. Barely tolerating both her husband and the world that he represents, finding little use or pleasure in either, she goes to great lengths to separate her life, both physically and emotionally, from the world of men. And while there are numerous similarities between the two stories, the use of sexuality represents a fundamental difference between "The Chrysanthemums". Whereas where Elisa is a passionate, vibrant and sexual woman, Mary Teller's persona is perhaps best described as a prim and proper resistance devoid of sexuality. Finding the world of men an emotional wasteland, Mary separates herself from anything remotely connected to men,

[40] For a greater understanding of Barbour's theory of the frustrated and isolated artist, see "Steinbeck as a Short Story Writer". *A Study guide to Steinbeck's The Long Valley*. Tetsumaro Ed.

erecting as a barrier, a dense fuchsia hedge to guard against the rough and unkempt world that wants to get in.

Seeing the outside world as an unwelcome intrusion, Mary chooses to live in the fantasy realm of her garden. In this feminist utopia, Mary has clearly separated herself both physically and emotionally from the normal confines of society. This separation from the world of men is best explained by her separate bedroom and sitting room, both of which are shielded from her husband and protected by a locked door. “After she was in her own little bedroom she heard a faint click and heard the door knob turn, and then and the turn slowly back. The door was locked… The locked was an answer to a question, a clean quick decisive answer” (Steinbeck, 21). Whereas Elisa Allen was a passionate and sexual woman forced to live in an emotionally and sexually unfulfilling environment, Mary Teller emerges as a pristine and sexless creature bent on severing any and all contact with men. Seeing contact with either her husband or the male-dominated world in which he lives – beyond that which is absolutely necessary – as an invasion of her very soul; Mary emerges as the quintessential feminist heroine, a strong willed but isolated artist more comfortable with the world of floral and fuchsias than men.

Recognising the barren emptiness outside the confines of their gardens, Elisa Allen and Mary Teller take elaborate and sometimes painful steps to limit their contact with the outside world. Finding the male-dominated worlds of their husbands to be inherently unfulfilling, a fact that most critics have attributed to hapless marriages, both Elisa and Mary seek contentment and emotional fulfillment in the one place their husbands dare not enter, their gardens. In what has sometimes been described as "the urge to escape from domestic security" (Fontenrouse, 63), the two heroines seek fulfilment not in the corporeal worlds of their husbands, but in their own botanical creations. This is a juxtaposition of not only the masculine and feminine, but fantasy and reality as well. Thus the heroines in both stories transcend the societal boundaries of their gender-defined existence to find contentment in a world that is neither masculine nor feminine, but a fantastic mix of both. Whether it is Elisa, who is described as wearing "a man's black hat, clodhopper shoes, a figured printed dress completely covered with a big corduroy apron with four big pockets" (Steinbeck, 1-2) for holding her masculine gardening tools, or Mary Teller who possesses a rare ability to perform a man's job, having "achieved the rigid control she desires, with a strength of will usually associated with men" (Hughes, *S.S.F.*, 28), both Elisa and Mary transcend the stereotypical role of women into a world that is a strange mix of both the masculine and feminine. At the same time, however, they also live in a world that is a peculiar mix of fantasy and reality. Described by Fontenrose as a

world where “cosmos and chaos are one” (Fontenrose, 63), both Elisa and Mary see the corporeal worlds of men as being chaotic. This chaotic world, where they can never achieve emotional support or fulfilment, is cast aside for the more appealing garden, or natural cosmos – a world where flowers bloom, birds sing, and stars can shine for evermore. It is in this garden cosmos, a world of beauty and wonder that Elisa describes as being both emotionally and sexually satisfying. In extolling the beauty of nature, Elisa compares her garden to the cosmos, stating that, “[i]ts like when the night is dark – why the stars are sharp pointed, and there’s quiet. Why you rise up and up! Every pointed star gets driven into your body! It’s like that. Hot and sharp and – lovely” (Steinbeck, 8), Steinbeck describes her quest to be emancipated as sexually driven world of fantasy. In describing a world that is far more supportive, comfortable and rewarding than the world inhabited by their husbands, both “The Chrysanthemums” and “The White Quail” represent a clear desire for emancipation, “[y]ou don’t understand! That quail was *me*, the secret me that’s way inside, the one no one can get at” (Steinbeck, 25). With one foot rooted in their garden cosmos, and the other trapped in the male-dominated physical realm of their husbands, Steinbeck examines not only the heroine’s isolation and alienation, but also their genuine desire to move beyond the normal confines of society in order to find emotional fulfillment and support.

Like “The Chrysanthemums” and “The White Quail”, “Johnny Bear” examines the struggle of a woman’s attempt to move outside the boundaries of society in search of emotional support and empowerment. Unlike previous stories, however, “Johnny Bear” ends in an infinitely more tragic manner. In examining the empty and emotionally wanting life of a middle-aged woman’s sexual involvement with a Chinese sharecropper, her unplanned pregnancy and attempted suicide, Steinbeck again examines mankind’s over-powering need to find emotional support outside the confines of regular society.

One of the principle differences that separate “Johnny Bear” from “The Chrysanthemums” and “The White Quail” is that the heroine, Amy Hawkins, is not the main protagonist or even a central character. Being only briefly mentioned at the story’s climax, Amy Hawkins fails to dominate the story like either Johnny Bear or the unnamed narrator. Yet in spite of her limited role, critics have correctly pointed out that “the central focus of the story is the fallen Hawkins sisters” (Lisca, 96) and not Johnny Bear. It is, therefore, her frustration with a life devoid of personal fulfillment, intimacy and human contact, coupled with her alienation from society and attempt to take her own life that emerge as the dominant theme. In recognising that society can neither support or nourish her emotional and physical needs, Amy moves beyond the normal confines of society in search of happiness and peace in two fundamental ways: first she seeks personal intimacy and sexual fulfillment in

the arms of a Chinese labourer – clearly a cultural taboo in the 1930's – and secondly, she seeks to end her own life rather than live in the emotionally unfulfilling environment of Loma. While it has been correctly argued that it is not only Amy's fall from respectability, but her sister Emalin and the entire town that suffers as a result of her fall from grace, it is her frustration with a society that does not nourish and promote her emotional needs that Steinbeck develops through Johnny Bear's unique talent and unexpected revelation. Consequently, it is this need to move beyond the limits of society's accepted norms, norms that are ultimately breached though infidelity, inter-racial romance and attempted suicide that unite "Johnny Bear" with "The Chrysanthemums" and "The White Quail".

C. The Quest to Find a New, More Fulfilling Social Group

In examining the alienation of mankind, a dominant theme in so many of *The Long Valley* stories, Steinbeck makes a clear distinction between the needs of those who merely seek emancipation from an unappreciative society and those who are already disenfranchised and actively seek inclusion within a new social order, one capable of providing a greater level of meaning and support to its membership. It is this distinction on the character and nature of alienation that separates "The Chrysanthemums", "The White Quail" and "Johnny Bear", from "The Raid" and "The Vigilante". Whereas the former

sought freedom from an unfulfilling environment, the latter seeks inclusion in a more inclusive and rewarding social group. Intrigued with his lifelong friend Ed Ricketts' experiments on marine life, Steinbeck became fascinated with the social interactions of biological organisms which he saw as inevitably seeking representation within larger, more fulfilling groups[41]. Describing this phenomena as an individual's return to the Phalanx, a larger social group "with desires, hungers and strivings of its own, [that] actually controls the behaviour of the unit men who comprise it" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 79), Steinbeck examines this individual-collective consciousness to mankind in an effort to explain man's social interaction with one another.

In seeking to further understand mankind's need for inclusion within a larger more rewarding social structure, Steinbeck examines the two separate sides of the Phalanx. In "The Raid", Steinbeck examines two communist party organizers, Dick and Root, who have been disenfranchised from society because of their socialist views. Separated from society, finding it empty and meaningless, the two party organizers seek inclusion within the communist party in hopes of achieving a greater sense of purpose. This is a marked contrast from "The Vigilante", where Steinbeck examines a disenfranchised man who is clearly alienated from both his wife and society, who takes part in

[41] For a greater understanding of Steinbeck's marine research with Ed Ricketts and his interest group behaviour, see *Travels with Ed Ricketts.*

the lynching of a black prisoner and finds a greater sense of purpose in being part of the crowd. Interestingly, while both stories are similar in examining the individual's alienation, their disenfranchisement from society and search for a new, more rewarding societal collective, they use dramatically different points of view. In examining both sides of the Phalanx's ideological spectrum, "The Raid's" portrayal of Dick and Root as victims of a hostile mob, and "The Vigilante's" depiction of Mike as one of the leaders of an equally angry and unruly mob, Steinbeck examines the complex inter-relationship between the individual's desire and the need to be included within a larger social group.

In spite of these obvious differences, the frustration with an unfulfilling life and the need to commit to something larger than oneself remain a constant theme throughout both works. "Thrown out by his father for his radical views, already been severed from his mother" many years before" (Satyanarana, 114), Root is disenfranchised from society long before the story ever begins. Similarly, with Dick being the older of the two, a seasoned veteran of the cause, he too has become separated from society. Frustrated by society's inability to provide meaningful support, "The Raid", much like "The Vigilante, chronicles a transition period from one social collective to another. Divorced from society, having no friends or family outside of the party, both Dick and Root seek to gain a sense of belonging by becoming part of

something larger than themselves, the communist party. This need to belong is graphically illustrated by Root's loyalty to Dick, and Dick's strict adherence to party dogma. Fearful of both the impending raid and the possibility that he won't live up to the expectations of his new adopted family, Root finds comfort in the fact that both Dick and the party will one day accept him. "I'm scared. Maybe I won't be no good at this." (Steinbeck, 72). Dick, meanwhile, who initially hides his fear under a façade of party dogma, being the more seasoned of the two, also finds support in the new collective. Believing that it wasn't the men who were attacking them but the capitalist system (Steinbeck, 76), both Dick and Root emerge as two individuals wrapped tightly in the rhetoric of the Communist Party, individuals who for different reasons, have made a conscious transition from a society devoid of purpose to a new social order. One that although outside the confines of regular society, is nonetheless capable of providing a sense of meaning and fulfillment for its members.

Similar to the "The Raid", "The Vigilante" portrays a man desperately in search of a new, more accommodating social group. Not content with his "thin, petulant wife who is suspicious, complaining and apparently dissatisfied with her husband" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 79), Mike is emotionally disenfranchised from the world in which he lives. Ultimately finding great personal pride and accomplishment with his role in

the lynching, Mike states that the lynching was the right thing to do, claiming that it will "save the county a lot of money and prevent [any] sneaky Lawyers from getting in" (Steinbeck, 94). The lynching, therefore, is Mike's transition from his old unfulfilling life to his new social group, one that provides a greater sense meaning and purpose. Initially feeling "unreal and then ashamed" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 79), he later comes to experience a tremendous sense of pride while being part of the lynching. This sense of self worth, which is derived from his belief in saving the community the cost of a trial and ridding society of a much-despised criminal, represents Mike's transformation from his previously empty society to a new and more rewarding collective consciousness. Unlike "The Raid", however, this feeling of support and inclusion is only temporary. "As soon as he leaves the crowd, Mike becomes desperately lonely" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony* 78), realizing that he has once again been divested from the group. It is, therefore, this transitional phase from their previously unfulfilling life to a new and more rewarding social structure that unites "The Raid" and "The Vigilante" with the rest of *The Long Valley* by examining mankind's need for inclusion and empowerment. One that is capable, if only for a short time, of fulfilling the emotional, spiritual and psychological needs of its members.

D. The Inability of Mankind's Self-Paradigm to Provide Meaning

Being equally concerned just as much with mankind's thoughts as he was with his actions, Steinbeck spent considerable time examining the non-teleological nature of mankind. This preoccupation with non-teleology, or the nature of the unknown, plays a large part in much of Steinbeck's fiction, particularly his short stories. In examining mankind's quest for emotional support, Steinbeck, being the keen observer of human interaction, was particularly fascinated with man's self-imposed paradigm and how the thought process influenced behaviour. In "The Snake", "The Harness" and "The Murder", Steinbeck examines how the inability of the protagonists' self-imposed paradigms facilitated their need to search for emotional support and fulfillment.

Depicting Dr. Phillips as a man distraught and visibly shaken by a strange woman who enters his laboratory to observe a snake kill and eat a rat, only to disappear into the night and never be seen again, "The Snake" examines the collapse of Dr. Phillips' self-imposed paradigm. In examining his own beliefs on the nature of non-teleology, a belief first realized on a biological excursion with lifelong friend and scientist Ed Ricketts in *A Log from the Sea of Cortez*, Steinbeck continued to develop his belief that there was indeed much that neither man nor science could adequately explain. Described as a

quintessential scientist, a man with “the preoccupied eyes of one who looks through a microscope a great deal” (Steinbeck, 49), “The Snake’s” Doctor Phillips is described as a staunch defender of science. This paradigm, however, soon becomes shaken and ultimately breached with the arrival of the mysterious woman. As an enigma to the scientifically-ordered world of Dr. Phillips, the woman remains problematic to the young doctor in that she represents an unscientific nature his tightly ordered scientific dogma can neither define nor accept – a constant reminder that there are some things in life that science alone is wholly and completely unable to explain. This visitor, who many critics have suggested is a product of the sea (May, 328), represents a perplexing mixture of animal and elemental forces. Chief among these elemental forces, are “a reaction of the mythical world against the efforts of science to obliterate it” (May 325). The emergence of a woman who is the embodiment of the unscientific forces of nature serves two distinct purposes. The first and most obvious is to confront the young doctor with the fact there are many things which science alone cannot explain. Perplexed by the woman’s sexually motivated behaviour towards the snake’s swallowing of the rat and his psychological-sexual attraction to her, Dr. Phillips is forced to accept the limitations of his much cherished discipline. Seeing for perhaps the first time the total collapse of his scientific paradigm, Dr. Phillips he becomes deeply confused. In stating, “I’ve read so much about psychological sex symbols, it doesn’t seem to explain” (Steinbeck, 60), the limits of his

scientific knowledge become abundantly clear. The second purpose of this confrontation between science and the unknown, and the one factor most often overlooked by critics and scholars alike, is the realization that Dr. Phillips has allowed himself to live a meaningless life, empty of human interaction. Ultimately accepting the obvious limitations of science, both in practice and in ideology, Dr. Phillips reluctantly looks to other sources for understanding, the most notable of which, is his long since abandoned belief in religion, "If I knew – no I can't pray to anything" (Steinbeck, 60). Suddenly alone, his belief in the supremacy of science shaken forever, the scientist resembles a priest who has lost his faith. With his belief in the supremacy of science in tatters, Dr. Phillips reluctantly concludes that the scientific world he lives in is no longer able to offer the emotional support and comfort he so desperately requires. It is at this point that the story switches from a non-teleological mode to one of loneliness, despair and disenfranchisement. Deeply confused and bewildered, Dr. Phillips represents mankind's need for emotional support. Having his scientific belief structure seriously compromised, the young doctor becomes another example of Brian Barbour's frustrated and isolated artist, a man who is desperately in search of deeper sense of meaning. In searching for the mysterious woman for months – something a seasoned scientist would never do – Dr. Phillips comes to the ultimate realization that he is after all, a very lonely man. Recognizing the limitations of his scientific paradigm, being ultimately made aware of his

empty and unfulfilling life, an emptiness that science alone will never address, the young doctor abandons the safe confines of his empty and meaningless scientific world and begins his search for a renewed sense of emotional fulfillment. In switching paradigms, Dr. Phillips tacitly accepts that he must seek purpose and meaning away from the Bunsen burners and test tubes of his laboratory, and embrace the less certain but more socially rewarding world of Cannery Row. This search which is ultimately concluded in *Sweet Thursday* where Steinbeck reunites a lonely and confused 'Doc' with Suzy, the new girl at the Bear Flag Restaurant" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 69-70).

"The Harness" is the second of Steinbeck's short stories that deals with the collapse or erosion of an individual's belief structure. In what is quite possibly the most complex of *The Long Valley* narratives, Steinbeck examines no less than two separate belief structures of respected farmer and community leader Peter Randall by once again illustrating mankind's search for emotional support and inclusion. In what has often been compared to "the sexually and spiritually frustrated existence of Harry Teller in "The White Quail" (Hughes, S.S.F., 30), Peter Randall is initially portrayed as a hapless but well respected community leader who is completely dominated by his sickly wife Emma. Immediately following her death, a death that sees the grieving widower in a psychotic fit of reckless emotion, Peter Randall embarks upon a false paradigm of freedom. Believing that death has finally freed him of his

domineering wife's control, a control personified by the shoulder harness and stomach belt she forced him to wear, Peter vows to be free of his wife's influence once and for all. As critics have pointed out, there are two versions[42] or paradigms displayed by Peter Randall: the good and wise farmer turned drunken letch; and the reformed Peter turned common man. In the first of these views or paradigms, characterized by his decision to plant a highly risky but potentially lucrative sweet pea crop, to slouch with impunity, and engage in reckless displays of drunken sexual abandon, Peter fails to address his need for emotional and spiritual happiness. "Although Peter consciously advocates libidinous pleasures, the fact that he cannot integrate such pleasures into his everyday life means that he actually rejects them" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 75). This revelation – which is made clear only at the story's climax – sees a drunken Peter Randall confess to his friend and neighbour Ed Chapel, that he has been unable to break free of his wife's influence. In stating that he continues to be haunted by his dead wife, that "she won't let me do things [and] she worried me all year about those peas" (Steinbeck, 91), a decision his wife "would not have approved of" (Hughes, *Beyond the Red Pony*, 75), it becomes painfully clear that Peter's existing paradigm is unable to provide the

[42] Critical opinion on these paradigms, which are often referred to as the versions or visions of Peter Randall, remain, divided. While most see two versions of Peter: the good man turned drunken womanizer; and the drunken womanizer turned into reformed, albeit imperfect citizen, both Owens and Hughes claim that these versions are in fact, the same Peter. Suggesting further that the reformed Peter is none other than "the wise good man he pretended to be" (Owens, 117)

emotional support he requires. In what is clearly a reference to his guilt both past and present in visiting the brothels of San Francisco, Peter Randall confesses that he has been unable to break free of his feelings of guilt in betraying the memory of his puritan wife. In recognising this fallacy of personal freedom, realizing that he will never achieve happiness until he makes peace with his dead wife, Peter adopts a new paradigm of repentance and forgiveness. By recognising and accepting his decadent morality, feeling guilty for his numerous trips to the Fancy-Houses of San Francisco – pledging to honour his dead wife's last dying wish of having electric lights – Peter recognises the unfulfilling nature of his false paradigm. Ultimately accepting that he will never achieve peace as long an he is a drunken letch, Peter moves beyond the confines of one paradigm, finding its drunken and sexual abandon unsatisfying, to embrace a new paradigm of accountability and deep personal and sexual atonement in hopes that he will one day find peace and acceptance.

"The Murder" is the last of Steinbeck's three stories which address mankind's individual belief structure and how man's false paradigm results in feelings of loneliness and illusions of respectability. In stating that "The Murder" clearly belongs with other stories in *The Long Valley* given its incorporation of the themes of isolation and illusion, twin themes that form a continuous thread through "The Chrysanthemums", "The White Quail", "The Harness" and "Johnny Bear" (Owens, 121), Steinbeck demonstrates how the

belief structure of rancher Jim Moore fails to satisfy his most basic emotional needs. “As he does in other stories, in this volume, Steinbeck introduces the theme of illusion in order to suggest man’s failure to grasp a reality that conflicts with what he truly desires to believe” (Owens, 122) The principle fallacy of Jim Moore’s paradigm is of course his misguided belief that he can treat his Yugoslav wife with the same code of ethics as an American woman. This false paradigm of Jim Moore’s presumed chivalric code is correctly compared to the sandstone castle adjacent to the Moore ranch in that it represents an illusion, a false image that serves only to foster misery and loneliness. For just as no one lives in the abandoned castle of collapsed sandstone – being a relic of a bygone era – Jim Moore’s illusions of chivalry, being empty and without foundation, are unable to address the needs of his cross-cultural marriage. In describing his wife as being a good woman devoid of companionship and personal intimacy, it becomes clear that Jim Moore’s concepts of gallantry are wholly and completely ineffective in addressing the problems of his cross-cultural marriage. These notions of gallantry and compassion, notions that would be expected in the treatment of an American woman, are of little use in dealing with Jelka’s old world belief structure. Acknowledging that his pre-existing belief structure is as porous as the sandstone castle on the eastern ridge, Jim Moore comes to the inevitable conclusion that he must find a new way to communicate with his wife. “He realized before long that he could not get in touch with her in any way. If she

had a life apart, it was so remote that it was beyond reach. That the barrier in her eyes was not one that could be removed" (Steinbeck, 123). Unable to have any meaningful contact with his wife whatsoever, openly stating that "if I could find any fault with you I'd call you a damn foreigner" (Steinbeck, 124), Jim Moore becomes yet another isolated and frustrated protagonist. Like so many of Steinbeck's emotionally starved and frustrated male characters, Jim Moore seeks emotional and physical fulfillment not with his wife, but in the bordellos of Monterey. The principle irony here is that although Jim Moore wants to believe that he should be genteel and not treat his wife differently than an American woman, he knows deep down that he must. As a result of this misguided belief – one rooted in American ethno-centric cultural relativism – he is unable to bridge the cultural divide between himself and his foreign wife. Even when advised by his father-in-law to beat his wife when she is bad, Jim desperately clings to his deeply rooted cultural beliefs, refusing to hit his wife.

Like so many of Steinbeck's characters, Jim Moore realizes the futility of his actions and embraces a new belief structure. This realization, which is violently brought forth by finding his wife in bed with her cousin, forces Jim Moore to find a new, less enlightened way of communicating with his wife. In assaulting his wife with a bullwhip, Jim embraces a new paradigm, one built not on the cultural relativism of America, but one that simultaneously

recognizes what his wife's old-world cultural expectations are, and subsequently enables him to act upon them. Owens addresses this by stating that Jim Moore's illusions and chivalry were obviously false, "once he can approach Jelka on her an own term, the barrier between them is dissolved" (Owens, 123). In recognising that his American code of honour is unable to satisfy his emotional needs, mindful of his earlier failed attempts at communication and emotional interaction, Jim Moore adopts a new paradigm that is a strange mix of old and new world values. In beating his wife – something he openly professed he wouldn't do – Jim hopes to foster a new emotional attachment with his culturally estranged wife. Realizing the falsity of his non-violent paradigm, Jim accepts that it is only through the use of physical violence – a disagreeable but necessary measure – that he can achieve a new interpersonal relationship with Jelka. And although Jim's new paradigm is deeply offensive to the modern reader, most of whom, would find the use of violence on ones spouse to be unacceptable, it nonetheless re-enforces Steinbeck's deeply held belief that the disenfranchised must move outside the confines of society if one is to have any chance of achieving personal, emotional or spiritual fulfillment. Recognising that his earlier attempts at non-physical communication have been unsuccessful at bridging the cultural divide with his wife, Jim blends his pre-existing paradigm of new world values for a new paradigm of old-world physical contact. With words alone being incapable of providing Jim the interaction he requires, Jim moves

outside accepted society to embrace a new paradigm of direct physical interaction.

E. Society's Inability to Promote Individual Growth and Development

The final method in which Steinbeck examines the search for identity and meaning concerns the inability of society to adequately promote the individual's growth and development. In *The Red Pony* and "Flight", Steinbeck examines the individual's quest to find comfort and support outside the confines of society, by examining how an unappreciative society attempts to restrict and at times even prevent its members from completing their quest towards maturity.

In *The Red Pony*, Steinbeck brings to life some his most powerful and enduring themes of childhood: life, death and a young boy's quest towards maturity. Amid this theme of growth and development, however, is the often-overlooked attempt of society to restrict, and in some cases prevent, the individual's search for support and personal development. The principle resistance to Jody's development is of course, his father Carl. Portrayed as a staunch disciplinarian who despised weakness in all its forms, Carl Tiflin emerges as the foil to Jody's emotional and spiritual development. "A stern, unbending man possessed of a ridged sense of discipline" (Timmerman,

"Structural Patterns Unite the Red Pony[43]", 92), Carl Tiflin establishes a strict code of conduct designed to mould Jody into his own sense of high moral conduct, hopping that one day his son will follow in his footsteps. As an overtly stern and serious man, seeing no value in entertainment or entertainers, he repeatedly lectures Jody on the value of dignity. In reflecting on the training of Jody's pony, Carl comments disapprovingly that "he's getting almost to be trick pony, I don't like trick horses, it takes all the dignity out of a horse to make him do tricks" (Steinbeck, 158). According to Timmerman, this unyielding discipline is the chief obstacle to Jody's emotional and spiritual development. "It has never occurred to Carl that his own rigid discipline threatens Jody's independence, almost transforming him into a trick boy" (Timmerman, "Structural Patterns", 92). It is, therefore, Carl's presence as the unyielding disciplinarian that is seriously undermining his son's development. Seeing his father as having little or no imagination or vision, given his repeated unwillingness to speculate as to what may exist within or beyond the foreboding mountains, Jody becomes progressively alienated and isolated from his father by the relentless pragmatism of the elder Tiflin. Unable to understand his son's interest in exploring the desolate mountains, viewing them instead, as a danger to be avoided, Carl is both unable and unwilling to share in his son's sense of wonder and amazement with the

[43] For simplicity, all further Citations from this text, "Structural Patterns Unite the Red Pony", and will be cited as "Structural Patterns."

unknown. The inevitable consequence of which is Jody becoming closer to the mysterious Gitano and his grandfather, than to his own father.

The second way in which Carl restricts his son's growth and development is though his cruelty and lack of compassion. This insensitive nature, first reflected in his hostility towards letting the aged Indian Gitano stay on at the ranch, and later by his cruelty to his nostalgic father in-law, and his 30 year-old horse Easter, Carl shows himself to be a man of little compassion towards the old and infirm. Angry with Gitano for imposing himself upon his hospitality, Carl openly states that "old things should be put out of their misery" (Steinbeck, 183), an obvious reference to his 30-year old horse Easter, and the unwelcome Gitano. Contrasted against this belief that Easter, like all old and useless things should be shot, are the soothing words of Billy Buck who states, "They got a right to rest after they worked all their life." (Steinbeck, 183) Soothed by the compassionate words of Billy, Jody begins his silent rebellion against his father. This reluctance to adopt his father's cruel ways becomes even more pronounced with the arrival of his grandfather and his unwelcome nostalgia. Frustrated with his father-in-law's repeated stories of crossing the plains and fighting the Indians, stories that Carl has heard many times before, Jody witnesses the height of his father's cruelty towards his grandfather. In berating the old man when he is believed to be out of earshot, Carl senselessly insults Jody's grandfather only to be confronted

by the shame of realizing that his father-in-law has heard every word. Seeing both the cruelty and shame of his father as yet another example of the fallibility of mankind, Jody becomes even further isolated from his father.

> With his father's harshness shattered by shame, bearing in mind his attitude toward 'old things' as useless clutter, Jody steps into the role that rightfully should be Carl's. Having lost the heart for the gratuitous violence of killing mice in a haystack, Jody ushers Grandfather into the house and makes him a glass of lemonade, the right action toward an old thing [sic] whose only sin has been run out of the room for his great dream of westering. (Timmerman, "Structural Patterns", 93)

The consequence of this display is, of course, that Jody now seeks to distance himself from the ways of his father. Claiming that it is his cruelty to Grandfather, Gitano and even old Easter, that ultimately alienates Jody from his father, Timmerman suggests that Carl's cruel nature is ultimately self-destructive, serving only to foster and perpetuate Jody's silent rebellion. After hearing his father attack his grandfather in such an insensitive manner, realizing that the old man's westering dreams have been largely unfulfilled, Jody seeks to pick up where his grandfather left off. In stating "maybe I could lead the people some day" (Steinbeck, 225), Jody turns away from the pragmatism and discipline of his father and chooses instead to embrace the adventurous spirit of both his grandfather and Gitano.

It is the relentless discipline, pragmatism and cruelty of Carl Tiflin, therefore, that emerge as the primary obstacle to Jody's continued quest for development and maturation. In seeing the world of his father as being unrewarding, offering no vision to satisfy his quest for adventure, Jody seeks a new path. "The fact that Jody is ready to enter into a new unknown region, whether it be the mountains or the sea, suggests that he may become a greater Quester [sic] than Grandfather" (Owens, 57). Given that his father's worlds of cold rational and pragmatic reason – well intended though they may be – are wholly and completely incapable of promoting his development and growth as a person, Jody turns away from the ways of both his family and own sub-culture. Turning away from both his upbringing and his father's pragmatism, Jody seeks a new path far removed from what is deemed socially acceptable to his Father, in the hopes that it will one day provide the necessary support and fulfillment he so richly deserves.

Unlike *The Red Pony*, "Flight" has an infinitely more complex inter-relationship between the individual's quest towards adulthood and society's role in resisting that development. Whereas Jody's quest toward adulthood was principally resisted and obstructed by his father's relentless discipline and abusive intolerance for others, Pepé's quest to become a man is resisted at several different levels. The most obvious obstruction to Pepé's development is of course the posse that pursues him deep into the Santa Lucia Mountains

where he is dehumanized and ultimately killed. And notwithstanding Peter Lisca's suggestion that it is Pepé's hastened death at the hands of his pursuers that has made possible his entrance into manhood, Walter K. Gordon makes an equally persuasive argument that Pepé's search for manhood remains unfulfilled due to his systematic dehumanization into a "near animal state" (Lisca, 99-100) and ultimate death at the hands of his trackers. Gordon further states that it is Pepé's progressive "moral deterioration and regression that inevitably results when he abandons responsibility for his actions, and becomes, by running away, less than an animal rather than a man" (Gordon, 453). It is this progressive cascade into the primordial world of nature; when Pepé' becomes barely distinguishable from the animals he seeks shelter with, which represents a fundamental physical obstacle to Pepé Torres' quest for development and growth.

The final physical interruption of Pepé's tortured journey into both the mountains and adulthood is death. Cloaked in the death shroud of his dead father's black coat and hat, all the while accompanied by the foreboding mountain's dark watchers and his mother's belated death wail, "Pepé is as good as dead once he enters the mountains" (Owens, 30). This journey towards death, a death that was clearly pre-ordained by the hands of fate, represents an obvious physical obstruction to his ill-fated quest for maturity. Considering that his mother has given him up for dead, no longer concerned

that he will succeed in his escape, but that he may "die like a man and not be caught like a chicken" (Steinbeck, 35), Pepé's death marks the final tortured episode of an unrealized quest towards maturity. This failure to become a man is further illustrated by Gordon who states, "at no time does Steinbeck "portray Pepé with any of the duties, obligations or responsibilities" (Gordon, 453) that a quest toward adulthood would regularly imply.

Beyond this physical interruption of Pepé's journey towards adulthood lie the more subtle restrictions of family and culture. The first of these restrictions concerns the role Pepé's mother plays in resisting her son's quest for development and growth. Routinely taunting him for his laziness, suggesting, "[s]ome lazy cow must have gotten into thy father's family" (Steinbeck, 29), or that a lazy coyote must have looked at her when she was carrying Pepé. Mama Torres consistently reminded that he is not a man but a "big sheep", "a foolish chicken" and "a peanut" (Steinbeck, 30**),** Pepé's mother refuses to accept him as a man. Defiantly stating that "a boy gets to be man when a man is needed" (Steinbeck, 32), it is clear that Pepé's ascension into manhood will come only with his mother's approval. Understanding all too well the dominant role of a widowed mother in Spanish culture, having lived much of his life amid California's Spanish-Americans, Steinbeck endows Mama Torres with a dominant presence rarely seen in his works. With no coronation ceremony for a young man's entry into adulthood,

believing that only when a young man does something daring or brave will he be called a man, Mama Torres acts as a recurring foil to Pepé's development by consistently resisting her son's quest for manhood. As a result of this maternal interference, Pepé's only chance to do something brave and manly is to leave the Torres ranch. Yet even in leaving the family ranch and heading into the dangerous mountain ranges, it is Mama Torres and not Pepé who will decide when he is a man. In stating that "he is nearly [but not yet] a man" (Steinbeck, 31), it becomes clear that the young Torres' only chance to become a man is through the "escape of his mother, the divestiture of his father" (Vogel, 87), and reluctant embrace of the icy, lonesome grip of death.

The second non-physical obstruction to Pepé's growth, concerns the role society plays in opposing his entry into manhood. While not directly mentioned, Steinbeck leaves little doubt that the forces racism and cultural insensitivity play a powerful in Pepé's painful search for manhood. Confessing to his mother that he killed a man in town for saying names he could not allow (Steinbeck, 32), Steinbeck leaves little doubt that it was a racially motivated display of hostility that precipitated Pepé's act of aggression. Considered to be little more than yet another poor Mexican kid whose life or death is of little consequence, Pepé openly defies the presumed racial superiority of Anglo community by wilfully plunging his father's knife into the abusive townsperson. In what is both a tragic and ironic twist of fate,

had the Anglo community simply accepted Pepé as an equal, Pepé Torres could have returned home a conquering hero – the man his mother wanted him to be – having successfully completed the task she placed before him. Such, however, does not come to pass. Instead, it is the racism and cultural intolerance of the Anglo community, coupled with his mother's inability to accept him as a man, which obstructs Pepé's agonizingly futile and ultimately fatal path of self-discovery. "Flight", then, emerges as a macabre reflection of other *Long Valley* stories. In depicting a protagonist who is forced to look outside the confines of regular society, realizing that he will never be accepted as a man in either his family's home or the nearby town, Pepé sign's his own death warrant by risking his life within the treacherous slopes of the Santa Lucia Mountains in hopes of becoming a man and finding a sense of meaning and purpose he was unable to achieve with either his own family or the local townspeople.

V Conclusion

In seeking a greater understanding of John Steinbeck's short fiction, this thesis has addressed three separate issues: Steinbeck's motivation in utilizing the short story medium; the importance of *The Long Valley* stories to Steinbeck at the time of their writing, and the controversial task of connecting these abovementioned stories within a singular cohesive

framework. In examining the first two issues, it is important to bear in mind that Steinbeck seized upon the short story medium as a cost-effective means to develop a variety of concepts and impressions that might not otherwise have had the opportunity to be told. Considering Steinbeck's well-documented personal and financial difficulties during the early 1930s, being the primary caretaker of his infirm mother – having little financial recourse to speak of – Timmerman correctly points out that, "Steinbeck felt compelled to tell those stories that grew out of his own experience rather than tackle another novel in a fickle market, the surer course for his artistic searching lay in short stories" (*The Long Valley*, xii). Using the short story as the ideal means to convey a host of "concepts, ideas and impressions, Steinbeck sought to develop his belief in "man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit, [and] in the endless war against weakness and despair" (Nobel Acceptance Speech, 1962). Having a clear idea of what he wanted to convey, Steinbeck saw mankind's faults and failings – the inequitable treatment of women, the inability of science to explain the unknown, the illusion of respect, the need for societal inclusion, and the quest for growth – not as a negativism, but as a genuine opportunity for advancing the human condition.

Finally, in seeing Steinbeck's short stories as much more than a haphazard collection of unrelated short fiction, this thesis has challenged the prevailing critical opinion that *The Long Valley* is devoid of a unifying theory.

Unlike previous theories, which focused on a topographical or geographic unity, this thesis has shown that it is not the issues of time or space that unite *The Long Valley*, but mankind's search for meaning and fulfillment outside the confines of regular society. Given Steinbeck's ardent belief that mankind's search for identity and meaning must ultimately be satisfied, be it in his native environment or elsewhere, this thesis has demonstrated that it is mankind's pursuit of fulfillment outside the socio-cultural limits of time and place that unite the *Long Valley* stories. Beginning with the disenfranchisement of women, as demonstrated in "The Chrysanthemums", "The White Quail" and "Johnny Bear", Steinbeck shows how women trapped by the sex-stereotyped roles of society, will inevitably seek emancipation outside their male-dominated environments. This frustration with an unappreciative society is further evident in "The Raid", "The Vigilante" and "the Leader of the People", where Steinbeck investigates the struggles of marginalized unit men to find purpose and meaning within a new and more supportive social order. Being openly critical of society's inability to adequately protect and promote the needs of the individual – a criticism he would sharpen in much greater detail in his larger works of *In Dubious Battle* and *Grapes of Wrath* – Steinbeck also became intrigued with the failings of society at both the individual and collective level. Fascinated with man's misplaced belief in scientific knowledge and illusion of respect, Steinbeck uses "The Snake", "The Harness" and "The Murder" to expose the inability of

mankind's belief structure to provide meaning and purpose. Finally, in *The Red Pony* and "Flight", Steinbeck focuses on society's role in resisting – and in many cases obstructing – the individual's quest for growth and development. What emerges at the end of *The Long Valley* then, is a complex investigation of humanity. In developing an assortment of deeply personal ideas and concepts, *The Long Valley* conveys a belief first realized on a biological excursion with scientist and friend Ed Ricketts many years before – that man, like all social creatures – will inevitably seek meaning and support outside society if his emotional, psychological and personal needs are not met.

VI APPENDIX:

Table 1: *The Long Valley* Dates of Composition and Publication[44]

Story	Composed	First Published
"Saint Katy the Virgin"	Before May, 1932	Dec. 1936
"The Gift"	June 1933	Nov. 1933
"The Great Mountains"	Summer 1933	Dec. 1933
"The Murder"	Fall 1933	April 1934
"The Chrysanthemums"	February 1934	Oct. 1937
"The Promise"	Summer 1934	Aug. 1937
"The Leader of the People"	Summer 1934	Aug. 1936
"The Raid"	Summer 1934	Oct. 1934
"The Harness	Summer 1934	June 1938
"The White Quail"	Summer 1934	March 1935
"Flight"	Summer 1934	1938[45]
"Johnny Bear"	Summer 1934	Sept. 1937
"The Vigilante"	Summer 1934	Oct. 1936
"The Snake"	1935	June 1935
"Breakfast"	1936	Nov. 1936

[44] Dates of composition and publication are taken from R.S. Hughes', *Beyond the Red Pony*, p. 53.
[45] "Flight", being originally published in The Long Valley, was the only to story not previously published.

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