SELF-ALIENATING CHARACTERS IN THE FICTION OF JOHN STEINBECK

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The primary purpose of this study is to show that John Steinbeck's concern with alienation is pervasive and consistent from the beginning of his career as a writer until the end. The pervasiveness of his concern with alienation is demonstrated by examining his two early collections of short stories and by showing how alienated characters in these stories resemble alienated characters in all the author's major works of fiction.

Since much confusion surrounds the meaning of the word "alienation," it is necessary to begin with a definition of "alienation" as it is used to discuss Steinbeck. An alienated character in Steinbeck's fiction is a person who is separated from another person, group of persons, society, or the person's ideal self. This study is concerned with characters who create their own alienation rather than with those who are merely helpless victims.

Steinbeck was interested in alienation as a human experience and not as a philosophic concept. He therefore offers more insight into patterns of alienation as it is experienced than into its ultimate causes. The patterns of
alienation he establishes in the stories in *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932) derive from conflicts which keep characters estranged from themselves and from others. These individuals are turned inward, yet controlled by external forces. To maintain confidence in their importance as human beings, they either escape frightening responsibility by letting other persons dominate them, or they try to prove that they are unique. Whether they bolster their self-esteem through role-playing, controlling people or things, following rituals, or creating myths, these alienated characters create fantasies to satisfy their egos.

In *The Long Valley* (1938) these patterns are repeated and a pattern based upon substituting violence for intimacy emerges as a major one. Steinbeck seems to see violence as a point on a vicious circle that goes from alienation to pain to aggression and violence and back to alienation. In *East of Eden* and the journal he kept while writing this novel, Steinbeck pointedly states his belief that rejection (which causes alienation) is the great motivating force in the history of mankind and the great theme of all literature.

A comparison of Steinbeck's first hero in *Cup of Gold* (1929) with his last in *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961) shows the continuity of alienation as Steinbeck's major theme. Other novels are not discussed in detail in this
study if they emphasize social rather than personal alienation, for their characters are too flat to be called self-alienating. Those novels which most clearly iterate the patterns of alienation discernible in the early short story collections are discussed at length.

Steinbeck's literary reputation in the United States has largely grown out of the immense popularity of *The Grapes of Wrath*, which is widely believed to express the core of Steinbeck's moral vision. This study implies that *The Grapes of Wrath* is atypical, that Steinbeck's overriding preoccupation is with personal and private forms of alienation, rather than with the external, social forms intrinsic to his most famous work. Steinbeck does not cry for brotherhood; he cries in pain.
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CHAPTER I

A DEFINITION OF "ALIENATION" AS IT APPLIES TO THE FICTION OF JOHN STEINBECK

Many critics believe that the novel The Grapes of Wrath embodies John Steinbeck's characteristic vision of the human condition. However, in depicting a specific social problem and in unambiguously celebrating the brotherhood of man, The Grapes of Wrath is almost unique in Steinbeck's fiction. Steinbeck himself felt that East of Eden was his most important novel and that its theme of rejection and consequent alienation was the theme most important to mankind. The primary purpose of this study is to show that Steinbeck's concern with alienation is pervasive and consistent from the beginning of his career as a writer until the end. The pervasiveness of this concern will be demonstrated by examining the extraordinary short stories which mark the beginning of Steinbeck's career and by showing how these stories anticipate all his major works of fiction. If this study helps to overcome some critical clichés about Steinbeck as simply a regional or social novelist, it will have achieved another goal.
Besides the critics who overemphasize the regional aspects of Steinbeck's fiction, there are those whose attention to Steinbeck's biological view of man has led them away from his humanistic concerns. Steinbeck's study of biology at Stanford University, his participation in a research expedition, and his friendship with the marine biologist Edward F. Ricketts correlate with his interest in the human race. Like Norris, Dreiser, and Jack London, Steinbeck uses analogues between animals and human beings to enhance observations that are more social and psychological than biological. He can describe the struggle for survival in a tide pool with scientific detachment, but human struggles evoke his compassion. Steinbeck's continual concern with man's adaptation to existence finds its strongest expression in his final novel, The Winter of Our Discontent, a novel not about brotherhood or the function of the human species, but about how an individual, Ethan Hawley, confronts overwhelming alienation.

But before Hawley's condition, or any other, can be described as "alienation," the term must be defined. In Alienation (1971) Richard Schacht tries to sort out the confusion surrounding the word. After determining that there is neither a universal meaning for this word, nor a general meaning with different aspects, Schacht examines the differences in its applications by influential philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists. All that
Schacht can find in common among the various uses is that the term implies some sort of separation. He maintains that one should not use it today at all without explaining one's meaning.

Schacht finds important differences of opinion over whether "alienation" implies discontent and awareness in those alienated, whether a loss has to occur, and whether the term has to be evaluative or polemic. He finds that the phenomena with which "alienation" is associated may be viewed favorably, unfavorably, or neutrally. It may or may not be that an individual is responsible for self-alienation; that people can escape alienation; or that an opposite condition is an improvement. Schacht also discovers departures from the popular view that "alienation" means "loss," that it signifies a change from a previous condition. In fact, alienation may consist entirely of a feeling that something is alien or that someone is separated; that is, "alienation" might reflect a subjective state of mind relating to a condition which may or may not actually exist. Schacht does not say, as Walter Kaufmann does (in the introductory essay to Schacht's book), that men are not alienated unless they perceive their alienation, for there are instances of both uses of the term.

Unlike Schacht, Kaufmann concerns himself with more than the applications of the word "alienation": Kaufmann is interested in the concepts it represents, the phenomena
which sometimes have been called "alienations" since the
nineteenth century, but which have existed whether this word
or any other word has been applied to them. He differs,
therefore, from writers who believe that alienation is a
uniquely modern condition: he believes that their view is
historically blind. Kaufmann acknowledges a further dif-
ference from some other writers when he asserts that "al-
ienation" implies interaction between two agents, one agent
who is alienated, and another from whom the former is al-
ienated. Kaufmann says that the second aspect cannot be
missing because "'Alienation' is an elliptical term that
requires completion in two directions."4

In Kaufmann's terminology an alienated agent in Stein-
beck's fiction is a character who is separated from another
person, a group of persons, society, or the person's ideal
self. The meaning of "alienation" in this study derives
from Steinbeck's emphasis upon the importance of human love.
He thinks that a natural impulse to love is often blocked by
such obstacles as selfishness, pride, fear, or lust for
property. Steinbeck's happiest characters are those he sees
as the most natural; they are skillful and flexible. In
their relations with others, they are spontaneous, open, and
unrestrained. Least affected by alienation because they
know themselves best, they accept their limitations and they
accept alienation as a condition of life. Therefore they do
not need the kinds of defenses which prevent communion with others.

Steinbeck's characters may not perceive their alienation, nor does their alienation necessarily reflect a change from another condition. This study will emphasize situations in which Steinbeck's characters create their own alienation rather than situations in which alienation benefits them or in which they are merely helpless victims.

In Steinbeck's world alienation is frequently caused by fragmentation of the individual, a separation between what Steinbeck sees as the characters' real and ideal selves. Schacht attributes this meaning of "alienation" to Friedrich Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795). Schiller explains that there is a separation between man's inner nature and his external condition which he thinks man should strive to reconcile; he blames culture for the division, but he thinks that fragmentation can stimulate one to produce a new, improved unity. This view strongly resembles later concepts of Hegel and Marx. Hegel uses "alienation" to refer to conflicts between an individual and his society or between a person's actual condition and his essential nature. Steinbeck's patterns of alienation can sometimes be explained by comparing them to Marx's views. Occasionally, and in a broad sense, Steinbeck's fiction illustrates Marx's idea that activities which interfere with basic human needs alienate man. Since
this study emphasizes Steinbeck's individuals rather than his social groups, Erich Fromm's psychological extension of Marxian alienation will be discussed later in conjunction with patterns of alienation in Steinbeck's fiction.

Although Martin Heidegger rejects the notion of an "ideal" for man, Steinbeck's sense of man's fragmentation may be understood by reference to Heidegger's theory of "authentic" existence propounded in Sein und Zeit (1927). Alienation is part of the "inauthentic" mode of existence. Authentic existence is self-determined; an authentic person can fulfill his "Ownmost potentiality-for-being." Inauthentic existence, a different potentiality-for-being, permits a person's life to be determined by others. An inauthentic person does not face the fundamental facts of his existence, nor make his own decisions. Heidegger uses "alienation" to indicate the separation from authentic existence. By Heidegger's standards the strongest characters in Steinbeck are "authentic." Weak ones do not control their own lives: often they are submissive or they are controlled by obsessions which obstruct conscious choice. Psychoanalysis offers a validation of Steinbeck's characterizations, particularly in its description of the compulsions and obsessions which control many of Steinbeck's characters. Compulsive phenomena are indications "of alienation, since the element of drive in them betokens some force seeking expression while the element of
involuntariness indicates that the subject fails to recognize them as parts of himself. The opposites of 'compulsive' are 'free,' voluntary,' 'spontaneous,' and 'ego-syntonic.' 9 This view of compulsiveness is consonant with Heidegger's description of inauthenticity.

In his belief that men can escape the effects of alienation through satisfying human relationships, Steinbeck resembles Martin Buber in Ich und Du (1923). The core of Buber's thinking is the idea that the great meaning of life is found in experiences between human beings who confront each other as whole individuals and accept each other as such, each saying "I" to the other's "Thou." In a later essay ("What Is Man?") Buber says that it is important for man to realize with his whole life and being what relations are possible to him. He can learn this only through experiencing solitude. When a man can come out of solitude but retain the ability to ask questions, he can be a genuine person and be free to break through to another such person.

The fundamental fact of human existence is neither the individual as such nor the aggregate as such. . . . The fundamental fact of human existence is man with man. What is peculiarly characteristic of the human world is above all that something takes place between one being and another the like of which can be found nowhere in nature. . . . Man is made man by it. . . . It is rooted in one being turning to another as another . . . in order to communicate with it in a sphere which is common to them but which reaches out beyond the special sphere of each. I call this sphere . . . the sphere of "between." 10
The only way man can find the "sphere of 'between'" is to overcome the state in which he exists as an isolated, separated soul or as part of an abstract, collective mass of men. If man tries to escape alienation in the security of a group which assumes responsibility for his existence, he merely exchanges his cosmic and social solitude for a de-personalized life. Instead of escaping solitude, men en masse may at best deaden their feelings, for collectives desecrate the spirit of the individual and prevent him from forming the bonds of true community possible between human beings. Except in The Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck suspects, as Buber does, that submerging one's self in a group harms one's sense of identity. Some of Steinbeck's most estranged characters are those who are part of various large social groups or organizations.

If Steinbeck was interested in alienation not only as a human experience but also as a philosophic concept, such interest is not recorded. However, under the influence of Ricketts Steinbeck wrote an essay about something he called "non-teleological thinking," a mode of thought in which seeking chains of cause and effect is abandoned in favor of observing what is. Steinbeck apparently came to believe that if a person can understand and accept what is, he will neither feel isolated from his community when he acts independently, nor lose his identity if he merges with a group. "Good" for Steinbeck is acceptance and understanding
of what is; "evil" is marked by obsessive behavior that comes from a refusal or inability to understand and accept what is. But Steinbeck also believed in the perfectability of man, and this belief was sometimes at odds with his non-teleological thinking. When Steinbeck shows that the pain of alienation can be avoided or alleviated if certain conditions in society are changed or if men will make the changes in themselves he thinks they can make, he is as guilty of cause-and-effect reasoning as any other Western man.

It is possible that Steinbeck was attracted to non-teleological thinking because he suspected that he did not always understand his own "moods and impulses." The result of his preferring not to examine causes is that he often fails to develop the potential psychological meanings of important scenes in his fiction. Psychological examination of Steinbeck's characters may never get very far: often the author hints at reasons behind the loneliness of characters or he seems to ask why alienation exists, but he rarely gives the reader enough information to reach satisfactory answers. Steinbeck goes beyond the point where the reader can accept what the characters do as inevitable according to their natures, yet he usually stops short of developing an answer, that is, his answer as to causes. This tendency is less apparent in novels like Cup of Gold (1929), East of Eden (1952), and The Winter of Our
Discontent (1961), written before and after Steinbeck's interest in non-teleological thinking was being strongly influenced by Ed Ricketts. Since Steinbeck offers more insight into patterns of alienation as it is experienced than into its ultimate causes, it seems appropriate to examine alienation in his work by describing its patterns. When Steinbeck's letters and a good biography are available, deeper psychological investigations may make it possible to tie Steinbeck's personal attitudes to the patterns in his fiction.

Steinbeck's reluctance to account for characters' motives may be the reason that, on the whole, his short stories are superior to his novels. The short story form does not require that scenes, episodes, characters, and motives always be fully developed. Steinbeck wrote most of his short stories early in his career. The reader of these stories can usually suspend disbelief and accept for a time Steinbeck's insistence that it is enough to ask how things happen without asking why. If one understands the patterns of alienation established in the short stories, he may be better prepared to approach the novels.
Notes to Chapter I


5 Schacht, pp. 23-25.

6 Hegel, Phanomenologie des Geistes, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), passim. Hegel's word is Entfremdung, which is translated variously as "alienation" or "estrangement"; see Schacht, p. 205. "Alienation" and "estrangement" are now used interchangeably.


13 Sea of Cortez, p. 135. Wherever possible throughout the remainder of this study, page references for Steinbeck's work will be given in parentheses in the text after the edition has been cited in a note.
CHAPTER II

PATTERNS OF ALIENATION IN
THE PASTURES OF HEAVEN

All but one of the stories of The Pastures of Heaven (1932) and The Long Valley (1938) are set in Steinbeck's native California. The pleasant places named in the titles of these collections provide ironic backgrounds for various unhappy people. These characters seem to follow similar self-defeating modes of thought and behavior, creating patterns called here "patterns of alienation." Alienated characters tend to isolate themselves; they deliberately, if sometimes unconsciously, avoid intimacy through various means. The most seriously alienated characters, whose egos depend on a sense of their special destiny or uniqueness, separate themselves to protect their crucial fantasies. Seeing themselves as ordinary human beings will not satisfy these men and women. The pleasure of intimacy either repels them or threatens them; obsessed with their own feelings, they cannot respond warmly to others. If they experience love at all, their love is possessive, merely gratifying private needs without sharing the exchange of sympathy associated with healthy relationships.
The Pastures of Heaven consists of twelve parts: nine fully developed narratives and three sketches which introduce and conclude the group. In form this book resembles such earlier collections of related short stories as Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio and Hemingway's In Our Time. Although Steinbeck made visible efforts to unify The Pastures of Heaven, the episodes will be examined here more or less separately in the interest of determining Steinbeck's patterns of alienation.

While he was writing The Pastures of Heaven, Steinbeck wrote his publisher that the title referred to a valley called Las Pasturas del Cielo, which corresponds with Corral de Tierra near Monterey, California. The author explained his plan to borrow from real life a situation in which the members of a family new to the region quite unintentionally brought harm to everyone with whom they came into contact. Steinbeck said,

They were ordinary people, ill educated but honest and as kindly as any. In fact, in their whole history I cannot find that they have committed a really malicious act nor an act which was not dictated by honorable expediency or out and out altruism. But about the M----s there was a flavor of evil. Everyone they came in contact with was injured. . . . I am trying to show this peculiar evil cloud which follows the M----s.

Steinbeck calls his fictional family the Munroes. Bert, the head of the family, believes himself cursed before he buys a farm which is also said to have a curse. The storekeeper
of the Pastures jokes that the curses may unite and reproduce, and, superficially, this is what seems to happen. The Munroes spread their "evil cloud" throughout the valley.

Critics differ regarding how closely the Munroes follow their historical prototypes. Peter Lisca regards the description in the letter as consonant with the attitude Steinbeck shows in the stories toward the Munroes. According to Lisca, unity in The Pastures of Heaven derives in part from "preoccupation with irony--the evil results of the Munroes' innocent actions." Joseph Fontenrose says, however, "Steinbeck's own attitude to the curse, i.e., the Munroe acts, remains unclear in the finished book." And Warren French insists that Steinbeck meant his fictional family to be less "innocent" than the original family: "the novel excoriates their complacency."

In each episode a Munroe wreaks havoc by misjudging some aspect of a situation or by thoughtlessly saying or doing the wrong thing--the thing that will destroy the world another person has either carefully constructed for himself or come painfully to accept.

Fontenrose believes that the curse upon Bert Munroe "is the unifying theme" of the book; French is sure that not "an unexplained 'curse,'" but the callousness of the Munroes precipitates the harm they do:

It never occurs to them that other people could feel differently from them--that they could be wrong about something. . . . Because they are self-righteous in their wrongness, they are culpable of destroying the happiness of those they come in contact with--culpable
not in the insensitive eyes of the law, but in the sensitive eyes of the compassionate artist. The novel is thus more specifically and bitterly satirical than it is usually credited with being.\(^9\)

French's argument raises a problem which his discussion does not resolve: if Steinbeck intended to censure the Munroes for upsetting the "carefully constructed" worlds of others, he would have had to believe that it is better for some people to live in illusion than to face truth; to live inauthentic rather than authentic lives. This belief would have been atypical of Steinbeck. Fontenrose's position appears a more likely explanation: he considers the Munroes to be no more than "agents of the curse" on Bert Munroe, which is "the principal unifying device . . . the central mythical construct of The Pastures."\(^10\) Fontenrose correctly notes that each "principal character had founded his tranquil life in the valley upon an unhealthy adjustment, an evasion of reality, an illusion, or an unrealizable dream; and a deed of a Munroe forced him to face the truth. . . ."\(^11\)

Steinbeck doubtlessly sympathizes with the characters who must insulate themselves by means of fantasies, but he surely believes people are better off if they can be honest with themselves. To him the problem of living in illusion is that it makes people vulnerable to the very hurts that the Munroes or others may unintentionally impart. Furthermore, if a casual word or deed of a Munroe can shatter the
lives of characters who have "come painfully to accept" certain circumstances, the adjustments made by the characters must have been precarious. If one believes Steinbeck to be more a realist than a romantic escapist, one must take a more objective view of these characters hurt by the Munroes. One may see, then, that the victims all try to prove themselves exceptional in some way; they seem to compensate for feeling inadequate by clinging to something that makes them feel special. Whatever its origin, the importance of being unique interferes with their adjustments to the actual circumstances of their lives. These characters would be alienated without a Munroe or any other catalyst to affect them.

However monstrous the voice of reality may be, not the Munroes but the world itself makes it monstrous; the harsh world can drive its inhabitants to escape into fantasy and then seek them out in their hiding places. Instead of being harbingers of evil, the Munroes are ordinary citizens like the chorus in a Greek drama. They are no more guilty than anyone else for the effects of their words and deeds. The worst thing the Munroes do is to bring the conditions of the outside world into the Pastures of Heaven. The residents of this beautiful valley are insulated in their heaven on earth. But precarious defenses built of fantasies are too easily toppled by hard facts. When the Munroes cause pain
by revealing either unpleasant truths or typical social attitudes, they prove that people who have not learned to accept themselves and life cannot be secure. Only the authentic person who can face fundamental facts of existence is going to be able to cope with the unpredictable. The inauthentic one is wrongfully obsessed with the present: he who devotes his energy to protecting himself from day-to-day reality is liable to find that he cannot control the whole world; inevitably the outside world will catch up with him. To see the Munroes as baleful is to misinterpret Steinbeck's sense of the human condition.

Bert Munroe

Before introducing the Munroes, Steinbeck sketches the discovery of the Pastures of Heaven by an eighteenth century Spanish soldier. This two-page opening does not develop the corporal in very much detail, but the man's delusions of superiority and his arrogance mark him as the forerunner of future residents of the valley, who, in less savage ways, alienate themselves and others in the names of their obsessions. Here Steinbeck also sets the detached tone he will use throughout The Pastures of Heaven. Steinbeck strongly and consistently criticizes many aspects of human conduct, but he does so indirectly, through irony. This initial episode attacks people who believe their injurious actions derive from unselfish motives: in this case from
loyalty to the missionary crusade of the Roman Catholic Church. Steinbeck begins:

When the Carmelo Mission of Alta California was being built, some time around 1776, a group of twenty converted Indians abandoned religion during a night, and in the morning they were gone from their huts. Besides being a bad precedent, this minor schism crippled the work in the clay pits where adobe bricks were being moulded.

After a short council of the religious and civil authorities a Spanish corporal with a squad of horsemen set out to restore these erring children to the bosom of Mother Church. The corporal found "the twenty heretics" and "in spite of their howlings attached them to a long slender chain." He then "headed for Carmel again to give the poor neophytes a chance at repentance in the clay pits" (p. 1). The next day, chasing a deer for his dinner, the corporal stopped at the ridge of a hill,

stricken with wonder at what he saw--a long valley floored with green pasturage on which a herd of deer browsed. Perfect live oaks grew in the meadow of the lovely place, and the hills hugged it jealously against the fog and the wind.

The disciplinarian corporal felt weak in the face of so serene a beauty. He who had whipped brown backs to tatters, he whose rapacious manhood was building a new race for California, this bearded, savage bearer of civilization slipped from his saddle and took off his steel hat.

"Holy Mother!" he whispered. "Here are the green pastures of Heaven to which our Lord leadeth us." (pp. 1-2)

The allusion to the twenty-third Psalm contrasts sharply with the "savage" way the Spaniards treat the Indians. The Spaniards deprive the Indians of a life that is comfortable to them in order to satisfy their ambitions and appetites.
Ironically, the white conquerors immortalize themselves in the mixed race they create as the result of their "rapacious manhood": their innocent descendents will suffer alienation long after the Spaniards are gone, when other white men arrive needing someone to exploit.

It was the fond wish of the Spanish corporal to return to the Pastures of Heaven:

Like most violent men he looked forward with sentimental wistfulness to a little time of peace before he died, to an adobe house beside a stream, and cattle nuzzling the walls at night. (p. 2)

Death from syphilis prevented his return, but his descendents lived in the valley a century later when other white men came to settle.

Among the first settlers was George Battle. Steinbeck's second episode reviews the history of the Battle farm from 1853 to the late nineteen-twenties, when Bert Munroe buys the property. Young George Battle came from upper New York State to invest his mother's money in land and to build a house for them to live in. But when the house was ready, his mother died en route to join him. George married a wealthy spinster as "a good investment" to take his mother's place. Myrtle "bore him a son, and, after twice trying to burn the house, was confined in a little private prison called the Lippman Sanitarium, in San Jose" (p. 4). While he worked his land obsessively and ignored his neighbors and his son, George yearned in vain for another woman to
share his magnificent farm. When George died at sixty-five, his son, John, who "had inherited both the epilepsy and the mad knowledge of God" (p. 5) of his mother, gave his attention to devils rather than to crops. Weeds had over-taken the land before John died of snakebite.

Then a foreign family, the Mustrovics, moved in. The youngest Mustrovic worked prodigiously to make the land beautiful again, but after two years the family mysteriously disappeared as suddenly as they had come. The wilderness had repossessed the farm by the time Bert Munroe bought it.

Before he moved to the valley Bert felt cursed because he had suffered a series of business failures.

His spirit was so badly broken that he didn't leave his house very often. He worked in the garden, planted a few vegetables and brooded over the enmity of his fate. Slowly, over a period of stagnant years, a nostalgia for the soil grew in him. In farming, he thought, lay the only line of endeavor that did not cross with his fate. He thought perhaps he could find rest and security on a little farm. (p. 13)

The potentialities of the Battle property in the Pastures of Heaven inspire Bert with enthusiasm. "The moment he had bought the farm, Bert felt free. The doom was gone. He knew he was safe from his curse" (p. 14). Bert counters the legend of a curse on his farm with conviction: "Maybe my curse and the farm's curse got to fighting and killed each other off. I'm dead certain they've gone, anyway" (p. 15). The storekeeper's response to this declaration
has been mentioned earlier: he considers the possibility of the mating of the curses and a proliferation of little ones.

Steinbeck's attention to curses here forces one to consider what the curses meant to the author and what they have to do with the meaning of his work. Obvious questions arise: Does Steinbeck believe in curses? Does he expect his reader to? Do his characters seriously believe in them? Are curses actually to blame for events in the narratives? Are the various curses (there is another in the last story) related? Is their nature important? That is, are there reasons for them inherent in the plots? Does Steinbeck intend his characters to discover some way to remove them? Steinbeck seems to believe that curses control people only through the power of suggestion (if people believe in them); people retain freedom of choice in whether they feel defeated by fate. When Bert Munroe ceased to see himself as cursed, his curse ended. In the final tale, the Whiteside curse is important because its victims adapt to it. The curse is Steinbeck's metaphor for any series of analogous misfortunes which appears to be beyond the control of human will or action. Perhaps the curse is equivalent to malignant fate. But the curse is not Steinbeck's central concern; what interests him are those aspects of life which remain within man's power to control.
Shark Wicks

Edward Wicks is the protagonist of the first complete tale in *The Pastures of Heaven*. Wicks's neighbors signify their respect for his economic acumen by calling him "Shark." Shark depends upon their respect, which, unfortunately, he has gained by spurious means. Almost daily he contrives petty lies to feed the opinion of the community that he is a financial wizard. He keeps books on his imaginary accounts, conveniently back-dating entries to make himself appear shrewd, then dropping public hints about his financial killings. In turn, the community's admiration feeds Shark's sensation of being as rich as he pretends to be. But since Shark has to depend upon things outside himself to feel important, his comfort is delicately balanced.

Almost as necessary to Shark as his nonexistent fortune is his daughter, Alice. When she is born, Shark thinks "a very precious thing had been given to him, and, since precious things were universally coveted, Alice must be protected" (p. 20). In time, he learns that his "lovely daughter was an incredibly stupid, dull and backward little girl" (p. 21). When Alice reaches puberty, her stupidity becomes a major problem to Shark because he imagines that she may be easy sexual prey. Alice's remarkable beauty makes Shark feel exceptional as her father; but in his mind
she will lose her value if she loses her virginity. Depending upon Alice as another source of self-esteem, Shark becomes obsessed with Alice's chastity.

Maintaining and protecting his fantasies so absorb Shark that he ignores the realities and potentialities of his actual life. He disregards his wife, who, when he married her,

had the firm freshness of a new weed, and the bridling vigour of a young mare. After her marriage she lost her vigour and her freshness as a flower does once it has received pollen. Her face sagged, her hips broadened, and she entered into her second destiny, that of work. (pp. 18-19)

Katherine Wicks realizes that she will always be estranged from her husband. He has never loved her: "He married her because her family and all of the neighbors expected it. . . . He never talked to her as to [a] human, never spoke of his hopes or thoughts or failures, of his paper wealth nor of the peach crop" (p. 19). Shark has also foregone normal paternal love for his daughter. "Rather he hoarded her, and gloated over the possession of a fine, unique thing" (p. 22).

Because the need to protect his fantasies has obscured "what is" in Shark's life, the adolescent kiss Jimmy Munroe bestows on Alice at a school dance sets off a chain of absurd events. The results are serious to Shark: they destroy his dream world and expose him as a fool and a fraud. Shark is actually incapable of real malice, but he
goes after Jimmy with a gun. Bert Munroe, the boy's father, has Shark seized. When the town learns that Shark cannot pay his bond, everyone knows that he has never had any money. Ironically, Shark loses his two precious fantasies in the same act: he loses the value he has placed on Alice, for he sees how foolish he has been about her; and he loses his prestige in the community because his real financial situation is exposed. Inasmuch as his self-esteem is entirely dependent upon his fantasies, he does not even consider whether the town may still value him; nor does he wonder how he is valued by the two people closest to him.

Right at a point where he could overcome the alienation of his inauthentic existence, Shark chooses to run away so that he can reconstruct his image as he must have it. He overtly bypasses the promise of an improved relationship with Katherine. Steinbeck suggested earlier that Katherine did not want to share Shark's worries: "Her life was sufficiently complicated without the added burden of another's thoughts and problems" (p. 19). Yet this auctorial judgment seems to be disproved when Shark confesses his shame to her:

A warm genius moved in her. Katherine sat down on the edge of the bed and with a sure hand, took Shark's head on her lap. . . . Her soothing breasts yearned toward the woe of the world. . . . In a moment she knew what she was and what she could do. (pp. 33-34)

Shark "saw how beautiful she was in this moment, and, as he looked, her genius passed into him" (p. 34). Katherine
restores his confidence by chanting, "We'll go out of here. ... We'll sell this ranch and go away from here. Then you'll get the chance you never had. ... I believe in you" (p. 35). Shark takes new energy from Katherine's comforting, but Steinbeck says Shark "had forgotten Katherine. ... 'I'll go soon,' he cried. 'I'll go just as soon as I can sell the ranch. Then I'll get in a few licks. I'll get my chance then. I'll show people what I am'" (p. 35). Katherine said "we"; Shark says "I": Shark's final, determined cry proves that he remains as obsessively self-centered as he has always been.

Gabriel Marcel illuminates Shark Wicks's alienation in "Sketch of a Phenomenology and a Metaphysic of Hope," a lecture prepared for the Scolasticat de Fourvière in February, 1942. Marcel's subjects are conditions he calls "captivity" and "hope." In "captivity," which is "of the nature of alienation," man is "pledged by external constraint to a compulsory mode of existence involving restrictions of every kind touching ... personal actions." Existence in general is "captivity," yet man can escape through "hope." "Hope," which depends upon communion, is intrinsic to love; love must involve another person, and the reciprocation of love is crucial to a man's feeling about himself. Remembering Hegel, Marcel says: "My relationship to myself is mediated by the other person, by what he is for me and what
I am for him."\textsuperscript{16} Marcel disparages what he calls a "perverted" kind of love for being an enemy of hope; this is a subjective love that "consummates its own loss"\textsuperscript{17} by trying to monopolize its object. Dominating another being, a person becomes estranged from himself because he treats reality as an object he can manipulate; reality therefore loses for him "its true nature . . . and becomes a sham and an idol."\textsuperscript{18}

To Marcel, a second enemy of hope is the desire for having things, because anxiety about ownership interferes with the aptitude for "divine light-heartedness of life in hope."\textsuperscript{19} The soul can maintain its breathing only "through the cracks and openings which are to be found in the armour of Having which covers us: the armour of our possessions, our attainments, our experience and our virtues, perhaps even more than our vices."\textsuperscript{20} Shark Wicks exists in captivity without hope, because his compulsive need for Having constrains his personal actions. The things he needs to have may be intangible but they enslave him nonetheless. Other people mean nothing to him: his possessiveness subverts his relationship with his daughter and makes him oblivious to communion with his wife.\textsuperscript{21}

Tularecito

The principal character in the next story cannot be examined here like most of the other alienated characters
in *The Pastures of Heaven* because he is abnormal; he is the first of many freaks created by Steinbeck. The mind of this eleven-year-old stopped developing when he was six. A foundling, he is called "Tularecito" ("Little Frog") because of his peculiar flat face and deformed body. In general, the author treats his freaks compassionately because these hopeless and misunderstood misfits are alienated from others through natural causes. They are not discussed in this study if their abnormality deprives them of a normal person's freedom to choose his course of action or mode of living. Yet Tularecito's story is of interest here because of the ways two intelligent but compulsive characters, his teachers, affect him.

The first, Miss Martin, is a stereotyped schoolmistress whose rigid notions of the ideal teacher and her sense that she is destined to fulfill that role through Tularecito eventually cause her to resign. At the beginning of the term she entertains thoughts of "the glory that would come to her for discovering and fostering this genius" (p. 39), for the boy is gifted in drawing and carving. But one day she allows the class to erase pictures Tularecito has drawn on the blackboard. Enraged, this boy with the strength of a man tears up the school and sends everyone fleeing for safety. By making Miss Martin appear to be a failure, Tularecito crushes her fantasies about her future glory.
To compensate for her loss she insists that Tularecito's guardian whip him and sadistically enjoys the punishment: her "hand made involuntary motions of beating" (p. 40). But she is horrified when Tularecito continues to smile at her after the stern strokes. Her bewilderment prompts her to argue that he should be locked up.

Miss Martin's demand for punishment could be expected from someone who must always be in control and whose self-image is all-important. She turns to violence when other things fail to satisfy her. She hates Tularecito's guardian, Franklin Gomez, because she knows that while she is mean, he is generous. Gomez tries to tell her that his ward should not be locked up but be allowed to run free—and be free of school. Too involved with the role she is playing as teacher, she cannot respond with sympathy toward her student. Miss Martin is replaced by a truly sympathetic teacher, Molly Morgan. But Molly makes mistakes out of the same kind of messianic urge that impels her predecessor. She, too, is excited by the challenge offered by Tularecito: "She knew all about him, had read books and taken courses about him" (p. 41). Analyzing Molly's actions here will aid the reader in understanding Molly in her own story later.

Molly amazes everyone with an enthusiasm for teaching which makes the school a pleasant and exciting place. The
students' favorite moments are spent listening to her read daily installments of thrilling stories by authors like Jack London or Sir Walter Scott or Zane Grey. After awhile she decides that instead of humoring the older children any longer, she will read the class what most pleases her--fairy stories. Not only does Molly like fairy stories; she also likes the idea that there are "whole populations who believed in fairies and consequently saw them," and she believes that "part of America's cultural starvation was due to its boorish and superstitious denial of the existence of fairies" (p. 42). The fantastic figures, especially the gnomes, get Tularecito interested in reading for the first time.

Molly's preference for fantasy, together with her consequent decision decision to please the younger children (and herself) by reading fairy tales, indicates a certain childlike quality residual in Molly. The weak-minded Tularecito enables her to indulge herself in a childish interest and in another significant way: to feel that she is leaving her mark in the world. Other signs point to Molly's obsession with this kind of immortality. Once she is inspired to climb up a chalk cliff to carve her initials on a plane. "On the way up she tore her finger on a thorn, and, instead of initials, she scratched: 'Here I have been and left this part of me,' and pressed her bloody finger against
the absorbent chalk rock" (p. 43). That night she writes a letter that eloquently expresses her awareness of man's drive to leave proof of his existence on earth. Keeping a copy of the letter, she seems to show pride in her thought and her expression of it.

Molly may sympathize with Tularecito more because he meets her needs than from compassion; certainly her sympathy does not encompass full understanding. When she encounters him one afternoon she is frightened: "The road was deserted--she had read stories of half-wits" (p. 43). Two things indicate that Steinbeck is censuring her here: he has already established through Franklin Gomez that the boy is not crazy and is harmless if he is not provoked; and this is the second time Steinbeck hints that Molly's knowledge of Tularecito comes from books rather than from her natural instincts to love and accept him as a fellow human being. Like most other people, Molly is too concerned about herself and too obsessed with her own notions to see the whole of the boy. She is relieved to learn that all he wants is to talk to her about gnomes. He not only accepts their existence, but also believes that they are his people, and he wants to find them. Unable to imagine how it could do any harm, Molly decides to encourage him, thinking that this is a way to gladden and enrich his life--and anticipating her own rewards:
Miss Morgan found herself charmed with the situation. Here was paper on which to write, here was a cliff on which to carve. She could carve a lovely story that would be far more real than a book story ever could. (p. 44)

She tells Tularecito that if he wants to find gnomes he will have to look for them when they are out at night.

She left him staring after her. All the way home she pictured him searching in the night. The picture pleased her. He might even find the gnomes, might live with them and talk to them. With a few suggestive words she had been able to make his life unreal and very wonderful, and separated from the stupid lives about him. (p. 45)

Molly's thoughts here imply her own emptiness and dissatisfaction with life. She projects her problems onto the boy in whom there is a chance to solve them vicariously.

That evening, against the superstitious warnings of his old friend Pancho, Tularecito sets out to dig for his people, whom he believes live in the ground. Steinbeck evokes special sympathy for the terrible alienation of this abnormal creature by describing how hopefully he embarks upon his impossible mission: "All his life he had been an alien, a lonely outcast, and now he was going home" (p. 46). Tularecito haplessly chooses to dig in Bert Munroe's orchard. When Bert finds the holes and tries to fill them up, the boy nearly kills him. A band of neighbors captures Tularecito; a judge commits him to an asylum for the criminally insane.

Franklin Gomez remains the only one genuinely sensitive to the boy. Miss Martin, Molly Morgan, and Bert Munroe lack
Gomez's understanding; they are typical of people who are frightened by the abnormal and who tend to avoid freaks to protect themselves. Bert might be forgiven for being more fearful than others since Tularecito actually attacks him, but Bert did not condemn Tularecito by himself: this story indicts society at large for being unable to tolerate and provide adequately for its monsters. Molly Morgan might be expected to be less fearful of Tularecito than the others because of her training, but she is as guilty or as innocent as the rest of the community for what happens. Her obsessions make her an agent in the boy's fate, but that fate was inevitable in their society. The analysis of the story which focuses upon Molly will show how her fantasies cause her to be alienated and how they eventually disrupt her life in the Pastures of Heaven.

Helen Van Deventer

Helen Van Deventer pretends that her great concern in life is her abnormal daughter; but her story suggests that she is motivated by the wish to maintain her sense of uniqueness and to project a certain image of herself at any cost. She finds her destiny in her notion that she is supremely suited to endure tragedy. From childhood she has had a penchant for mourning, and fate has provided her ample reasons to suffer, beginning with the death of a kitten--and the death of her father--when she was fifteen.
Only three months after Helen marries, her husband, Hubert, kills himself in a hunting accident and she inherits their fashionable home in San Francisco and a sizable fortune.

Helen Van Deventer closed off the drawing room with its trophies. Thereafter the room was holy to the spirit of Hubert. The curtains remained drawn. Anyone who felt it necessary to speak in the drawing room spoke softly. Helen did not weep, for it was not in her nature to weep, but her eyes grew larger, and she stared a great deal, with the vacant staring of one who travels over other times. (p. 49)

Mourning is a thing in itself to Helen, something to wear outside herself. She doesn't weep because she doesn't experience normal grief. Her husband's death and the money he leaves her provide Helen the means to effect the life she finds most satisfying, that is, to live in conspicuous, affluent gloom. After Hubert has been dead six months Helen delivers a pretty daughter, Hilda. When Hilda is six years old Helen's doctor, Dr. Phillips, says that Hilda needs a psychiatrist, but that there is a good chance that Hilda can be cured. (As is usual in Steinbeck, the doctor here is a sympathetic character.) Helen refuses to let a psychiatrist treat Hilda, giving mystical rather than logical reasons: Hilda "was born at the wrong time. Her father's death--it was too much for me. I didn't have the strength to bear a perfect child, you see. . . . I'll just watch her and care for her. That seems to be my life" (p. 50). Thus Helen welcomes the unnecessary hardship of caring for her child, and she annoys her doctor with her declarations of strength:
"No amount of tragedy can break down my endurance" (p. 51). Dr. Phillips is disgusted. "'If I were fate,' he mused, 'I'd be tempted to smash her placid resistance too'" (p. 51).

His words foreshadow future events. Horrible visions begin to plague Hilda. Helen "accepted the visions as new personalities come to test her" (p. 51). Another new problem bothers Helen worse: Hilda's lying. One day Hilda shows her mother a diamond-encrusted gold watch, telling a fantastic tale about how an old man gave it to her. Helen's strength weakens: "Helen's hands shook with terror as she took the watch. For a second her face lost its look of resistance, and anger took its place" (p. 51). That night Helen buries the watch in the garden. From then on she confines Hilda to their grounds, which she secures with a tall fence.

It is not clear what Helen thinks about the watch, but when Hilda is thirteen, the girl's four-day escape raises the issue of her developing sexuality. (Hilda says that she has married a gypsy.) After examining her physically, Dr. Phillips warns that the changes of adolescence will exacerbate Hilda's insanity and Helen definitely will not be able to handle her any longer. Still refusing to have Hilda committed to a mental hospital, Helen provokes Dr. Phillips into admitting that he hates her for what she is doing. But his protest merely increases the pleasure Helen takes from the painful situation: he testifies to her endurance.
Instead of committing Hilda Helen buys land at the Pastures of Heaven, builds a sturdy, isolated cabin there, and hires a houseboy to help her with the girl. Helen likes her new place. In a moment when "Her face had lost some of its resistance" (p. 55), she tries to share her joy in the beauty of her garden with Hilda. Hilda rejects her mother's attempt and without warning hits her with a stick. Returned to the house, Hilda wrecks her room. Again, for just a moment, Helen nearly loses her control, but soon she is able to ignore Hilda's shrieks.

Bert Munroe stops by that afternoon out of ordinary neighborly curiosity. From a brief conversation with Hilda at her barred window Bert suspects her mental condition; but when he tries to see Helen he is rebuffed by the houseboy at the front door. What Bert would have said to Helen is never known: to his request to see "the lady of the house . . . about the little girl that's locked up" (p. 57), the houseboy responds that his mistress is ill. Bert's simple intrusion upon Helen's domain infuriates her. She vents her anger on her servant, then abruptly tells him he did the right thing. Meanwhile Hilda is building fantasies that Bert will return and elope with her.

Helen follows her outburst with a quiet time in the living room. Here "she had created a kind of memorial to her husband. She had made it look as much as possible like
a hunting lodge" filled with reminders of him. "Helen felt that she would not completely lose her husband as long as she had a room like this to sit in" (p. 58). In this room she wants to continue the ritual of evoking Hubert's memory which she had practiced in her drawing room at Russian Hill. The vision begins with his image, which she recalls in careful detail; it ends with the appearance of Hubert's friends bearing his body. Her fantasies show that Helen even attempts to control death:

By this means she kept her husband alive, tenaciously refusing to let his image grow dim in her memory. She had only been married for three months, she told herself. Only three months! She resigned herself to a feeling of hopeless gloom. She knew that she encouraged this feeling, but she felt that it was Hubert's right, a kind of memorial that must be paid to him. She must resist sadness, but not by trying to escape from it. (p. 59)

Helen not only avoids trying to escape from sadness, she invites it and wallows in it. But this night, although "she intended to welcome her dream into its new home" (p. 59), she begins to give in to a "new sense of peace; she felt protected and clothed against the tragedies which had beset her for so long" (p. 60).

Her good feeling continues as she strolls in her garden. She seems to forget the accumulation of difficulties that have begun to break her down, and she notices with pleasure the animal life stirring around her. "Suddenly Helen felt foolishly happy. Something delicious and
exciting was going to happen, something very delightful" (p. 60). For awhile she remembers her husband; then "All of a sudden Helen realized that she didn't want to think of Hubert any more. The retrospection had almost killed her sense of peace" (p. 61).

Before this moment, life has gradually been slipping from Helen's control, and she is a person to whom control is vital. As Dr. Phillips had said, Fate has indeed been tempting "her placid resistance." Now that her anguish is genuine, her tolerance for pain proves to be rather normal. In this suspenseful moment of the story it seems possible that the change "stealing over Helen" (p. 60) could result in a more authentic mode of living: she might accept for once the realities of her own being, of her husband's death, and of her daughter's unmanageability.

That evening Hilda reveals her fantasies about Bert. In her old, enduring manner, "Helen sighed. It was just another of the stories, the little dramas Hilda thought out and told. And they were so real to her, poor child" (p. 62). Later, as Helen begins her ritual of evoking her husband, she is startled to discover that she can no longer do it: "He was gone, completely gone. For the first time in years, Helen put her hands to her face and cried, for the peace had come back, and the bursting expectancy" (pp. 62-63). Here is a hint that there is another Helen somewhere under the
masks of Hubert's wife and Hilda's keeper, a woman who does
know how to cry. Helen's excitement prompts her to lean
out the window, feel the "cool peace," and listen to the
night noises in the garden. "It's just infested with life," she thought. "It's just bursting with life!" (p. 63). Shortly, however, she hears strange sounds which take her
to Hilda's room and the discovery that her daughter has
hacked her way out of her prison. "For a moment Helen stood
rigidly at the open window looking into the grey night.
Then her face paled and her lips set in the old line of en-
durance" (p. 63). Helen resolutely goes after Hilda with
a shotgun and makes her daughter's death look like suicide.

Right on the verge of releasing her obsessions, Helen
has given in, instead, to her chronic need for control. Most
of all now she needs peace, but she cannot have it and keep
Hilda. She commits murder rather than give up Hilda and
her hair shirt. At the conclusion, "her severe, her almost
savage mourning" makes her look "as enduring as a sea-
 washed stone" (p. 63). She tells Dr. Phillips that she
knows what life expects of her: "I have the strength to
endure, Doctor. Don't you worry about me" (p. 63). She has
won herself yet another tragedy to mourn, as well as a chance
to mourn in peace.

It is not love that makes Helen endure suffering, but
love of suffering that makes her endure. No reason is given
regarding why she treats her daughter not as a person but as an object to manipulate for the defense of her ego, although a psychological reason may be inferred from the evidence: Helen's ego has certain neurotic needs, and Hilda is convenient to satisfy them. Having Hilda close also gives Helen an excuse to keep other people away. Finally, Hilda's death gives Helen a new excuse to isolate herself in perpetual grief. Helen has fought various temptations to overcome her perverted needs: indeed, she has to struggle to maintain the frame of mind which suits her self-image. The garden, a peaceful Paradise, almost draws Helen out of the neurotic sadness she has nurtured. The garden even makes her want to abandon her ritual of worshipping her husband's memory. Feeling benevolent there and honoring her husband's teachings, she tells a rabbit that she will not shoot him because it would not be sportsmanlike. But her geniality expires and her principles evaporate when her daughter antagonizes her. Through Hilda's death Helen satisfies her craving for peaceful mourning and restores her old, comfortable role of enduring.

Steinbeck implies that Helen is a person who disguises her true nature beneath an appearance that is more acceptable to her. She lives in the characteristically split condition of people who are alienated from themselves. When the exciting sights and sounds and smells of her new
environment stimulate the latent life in her and she cries for the first time in years, Helen exposes, by her moment of weakness, the force of the control she has exercised over herself since childhood. The reason behind her need for control seems to go back to very early days, for by the age of fifteen she has taken up her obsession with mourning. Even then her affectations indicate a pathological ego defense in operation. Certainly it seems that whatever personality maladjustment she has must have existed before her marriage, although the marriage provided a new way to express her problems.

Generally the very persons to whom control is the most important are the ones who actually fear their lack of control. Whenever Helen senses she is losing her grip on things, she is frightened; but one can hardly guess what impulses, other than murder, she fears in herself. If looked at as a defense mechanism, Helen's control appears to be a reaction formation (a process "by which an unacceptable impulse is mastered by exaggeration ... of the opposing tendency"\textsuperscript{22}). By the same line of reasoning, her excessive mourning implies actual pleasure in the deaths of the people she mourns. There is no doubt that Helen wanted Hilda dead, and there is much to indicate that she also wanted her husband dead.

Mourning can become very "complicated or even pathological"\textsuperscript{23} in a survivor who has extremely ambivalent
feelings about the deceased person. Helen goes through a normal first step of mourning when she "introjects" her husband, that is, forms a mental representation of him to replace his actual being. In an ambivalent mourner, "introjection acquires a sadistic significance" by representing not only "an attempt to preserve the loved object but also an attempt to destroy the hated object. If a hostile significance of this kind is in the foreground, the introjection will create new guilt feelings." Helen's habits of surrounding herself with Hubert's hunting souvenirs and regularly evoking a mental image of him suggest strong guilt feelings: she does not do these things out of love but because "she felt that it was Hubert's right, a kind of memorial that must be paid to him" (p. 59).

Another indication that Helen is pathological is that in the normal person the state of sadness is "characterized by a decrease in self-esteem." Helen likes to affect sadness to maintain self-esteem. Depression, in general, "is a loss of self-esteem." But again there are no signs of genuine depression in Helen. This is not to say that her self-esteem is secure; it is illusory, but the illusion works better for her than anything else she has let herself try.

Helen's constant mourning, her husband-worship, and her delusions of superiority all manifest neurosis, "a breakdown of adjustments" of the ego. It is Helen's secondary
attempts at adjustment, those which "involve a curtailment of the freedom and flexibility of the ego,"\(^{28}\) that make Helen's character interesting. Helen's actions demonstrate how in the "reaction formations of compulsion neurotics ... the attempt is made to suppress the original instinctual attitudes. Patterns of this kind are rigid, definitive, once-and-for-all formations."\(^{29}\) Such patterns may also be called "patterns of alienation" because they alienate the individual from his instinctual self.

Junius Maltby

Junius Maltby is an appealing character; critics like him, and Steinbeck himself seems to be fond of him. When Junius's story was published separately, Steinbeck added a postscript saying that he liked to believe Junius and Robbie had returned to the Pastures of Heaven to resume their old easy life.\(^{30}\) Yet in spite of its serenity, Maltby's life in the Pastures was alienated in some respects: he was isolated from most of society; he was separated from reality; and he was not even intimate with the two other people who shared his alternative society. Pressures from the outside eventually penetrated his haven, making Junius and his son suffer from having to face some ordinary problems of existence.

Junius went to the warm valley of the Pastures at thirty-five when he learned that his lungs could no longer
tolerate the San Francisco climate. He rented a shed on the ranch of a widow who had two sons. When the woman began to worry about appearances, he gladly married her to share in her property. But he did not count on having to work when she dismissed the hired man. During his convalescence, Junius had grown so lazy that he was not willing to work on the farm at all. All he wanted to do was read. He ignored his wife's nagging, and she "took to sniveling and neglecting her hair" (p. 67) as they grew poor and hungry.

Then tragedy struck: influenza killed Mrs. Maltby's undernourished sons, and she died soon after following childbirth. It was something of a miracle that the infant lived, for Junius knew nothing about caring for it. He hired Jakob Stutz to help him on the farm, but the old German turned out to be just like his employer. They had endless, fascinating discussions about all manner of things while the weeds took over their land.

Junius's son, Robbie (apparently named for Robert Louis Stevenson), was treated like a small adult. He struggled to make his mind reach out as far as the men's, and to make his feet reach down as far as theirs from the sycamore limb they sat on. These shoeless three were very happy. But their neighbors, who could not accept the Maltby alternative, were annoyed at the signs of poverty at the Maltby place in the midst of their own prosperity. They pitied Robbie,
thinking he was being neglected. They tried to change Junius by visiting him, then to shame him by ignoring him. But Junius was immune to the deliberate attempt to make him feel alienated. He remained "gloriously happy. His life was as unreal, as romantic and as unimportant as his thinking" (p. 72).

When Robbie is forced to go to school, he becomes a hero; he is a natural leader. Some of the boys even sneak over to the Maltbys' to share the fellowship of the sycamore limb. Before long the visiting boys acquire better vocabularies as well as a hatred for shoes and good clothing.

The curiosity of the schoolteacher, Molly Morgan, inspires her to call on the Maltbys to judge the quality of Robbie's life for herself. After spending one of the most pleasant afternoons of her life with the men and boys, she comes away knowing that the tacit approval she has always given Junius was justified. For this reason she is appalled when she hears that Mrs. Munroe, wife of the newest member of the school board, has bought Robbie some clothes. Molly is sure the gesture will embarrass the boy. Yet the rest of the school board supports the move and Molly is helpless to prevent it. Immediately after the clothes are presented to Robbie, the board knows that Molly was right, for Robbie bolts through the door. John Whiteside, the clerk of the school board, is regretful while Mrs. Munroe
is adamant that Robbie have the clothes because "little boys shouldn't walk around in bare feet in the frost" (p. 85). She insists, "I think his health is more important than his feelings" (p. 86).

This affair leads to the departure of the Maltbys from the valley. Junius admits to Molly, "I didn't know I was doing an injury to the boy, here. I hadn't thought about it. I suppose I should have thought about it. You can see that he shouldn't be brought up in poverty. You can see that, can't you? I didn't know what people were saying about us" (p. 86). Molly tries to persuade Junius to remain, but he explains that he must find a job in San Francisco to provide for Robbie. Surprised at Molly, Junius continues: "You can see for yourself that a growing boy shouldn't be brought up like a little animal, can't you?"

Junius's world was as unreal as the world of Shark Wicks, although Junius did not so much create his world as permit it to develop around him by taking easy alternatives. From giving up a loathsome city job, to marrying the widow, to inheriting the farm, Junius found his life flowing in agreeable channels. Once his little coterie had formed, he found himself amidst carefree, congenial males, free of the kind of society he found oppressive. Every day the three followed the ritual of lining themselves up on the sycamore limb and letting their minds drift from one entertaining
thought to another. The most work they did was reading and
checking facts. The ground even afforded them some food in
spite of their carelessness about planting and cultivating.
In effect, Junius had his own alternative society: it was
separate, unique. And he was the head of it. It was as
though he had been destined for this. No wonder that he
wanted to perpetuate this existence.

Yet alienation is inherent in the way Maltby always
keeps himself separated from others. He seems alone in
spite of his relationships with Jakob and Robbie because he
has encouraged them to be duplicates of himself. Moreover,
the close association of the three depends on their being
isolated and different from the rest of the world. In their
escape they forgo other human relationships, which usually
require adjustment to things like a nagging wife or a tire-
some job. Finally, the private society they enjoy is sur-
prisingly impersonal:

The discussions were erudite. Robbie couldn't
use childish talk, for he had never heard any. They
didn't make conversation; rather they let a seedling
of thought sprout by itself, and then watched with
wonder while it sent out branching limbs. They were
surprised at the strange fruit their conversation
bore, for they didn't direct their thinking, nor
trellis nor trim it the way so many people do. (p. 71)

While games of make-believe and endless factual and philo-
sophical discussions entertain this society, these diver-
sions also preclude moments of intimacy among its members.
And in this Eden, the Carthaginians, the Incas, and the
Aleutian Indians all mean more to Junius than his neighbors in the Pastures of Heaven. As for the traditional relationship between parent and child, Junius loves Robbie but has never been able to let Robbie be a child to him:

Robbie grew up gravely. He followed the men about, listening to their discussions. Junius never treated him like a little boy, because he didn't know how little boys should be treated. If Robbie made an observation the two men listened courteously and included the remark in their conversation, or even used it as the germ of an investigation. They tracked down many things in the course of an afternoon. Every day there were several raids on Junius' Encyclopedia. (p. 70)

It is easy to sympathize with father and son in their cheap new clothes and unfamiliar shoes, heading for San Francisco at Christmastime so that Junius can get a job. But if Junius Maltby's philosophy has failed him now after supporting years of indolence (and possibly salving his conscience for his indirect contribution to the deaths of his wife and her children), it is doubtful that the self-righteous interference of Mrs. Munroe was enough to change him by itself. Junius had seemed to be the man who had an answer for everything (as for why Robbie must go to school: "We have to balance the pleasure of breaking the law against the punishment"). He must have believed in the need to leave the Pastures or he would have given Robbie a palliative for the social wounds they would suffer there. Their idyllic existence has given them no defense against consciousness. Junius was dismayed when he was confronted by the realities
of his situation because he simply never faced them so
directly before. Just as it had not occurred to him that
Robbie should go to school, it did not occur to him until
now that Robbie "shouldn't be brought up in poverty." Ad-
mitting he doesn't know how to make a living on his ranch,
he tells Molly Morgan, "when I can, I'll sell the ranch so
Robbie can have a few things he never had" (p. 87). After
earnestly explaining his position to Molly, Junius is sur-
prised that she argues with him: he sees Molly no more
clearly than he sees anyone else. To him she should stand
for the establishment's values rather than for values very
close to his own (Molly celebrates "unreal" life and en-
courages her students' fantasies). In talking to Junius,
Molly must have thought of the enchanting day she spent on
his farm and not of the essential "things" that now worry
him. Steinbeck does not explain what "things" Junius has in
mind, but it would be entirely out of character for Junius
to pursue money now simply to conform to society. After his
shock, Junius must have thought about neglected present
needs (such as proper nutrition, medical and dental care),
as well as the future (Robbie's need to support himself some
day, his care in the event of Junius's death). The only
answer his philosophy could offer against such an argument
was surrender.
The Lopez Sisters

The Lopez sisters differ from Junius Maltby on the subject of food: they like it and they don't like being hungry. With their industry and Junius's farm, everyone in the two families might have had enough to eat; but life does not work out that way in The Pastures of Heaven. The sisters' farm seems to be located in the hills above the fertile valley: they have forty rocky, unproductive acres. Their only other tangible inheritances from their parents are a shack, a shed, a well, an outhouse, their mother's recipes, and a legend that they have the pure blood of the conquistadors in their veins.

The story of Maria and Rosa is charming. To take any of it, even the ending, very seriously is to misread it. Peter Lisca's argument that the sisters' "decision to go to San Francisco and accept 'the money of shame' is a tragic blow to them"31 is not plausible because it ignores the flexibility which is the key to these women: in spite of outward appearances, they are always able to compromise and to rationalize threats to their professed beliefs about themselves in the face of practical considerations. If one considers the Lopez sisters in the company of the jolly whores with hearts of gold on Steinbeck's Cannery Row, it is difficult to see the ending of the story as tragic. The interest here is not a moral one, for the tale is a
simple fabliau. The only moral questions should be directed toward discovering what the Lopez morality really is and what it costs to maintain. Although society ostracizes the sisters, they suffer less from alienation than most characters in the book, and their good-naturedness, as well as the light, semi-ironic tone, makes the story stand out from other episodes in *The Pastures of Heaven*.

Rosa and Maria resemble Steinbeck's later *paisanos* in *Tortilla Flat* and *To a God Unknown*: in spite of their mixture of Spanish, Indian, Mexican, and Caucasian bloods, they fiercely claim that they are pure Spaniards. They boast, "General Vallejo is nearly our ancestor, so close as that we are related. In our veins the pure blood is" (p. 92). They roll "their sleeves to the elbows to show the whiteness of their skin in passionate denial of Indian blood" (p. 89). Rosa and Maria are also passionate about their Catholic faith and the memory of their mother. These convictions about their lineage and their religion cause conflicts when the sisters have to find a way to support themselves. They try to capitalize on their inheritances to keep from starving: they whitewash their little house and place a couple tables in the front room to convert it into a restaurant; they use their mother's cooking methods and brag to customers about their ancestry. But none of this is enough to earn a living. Then one day, when Maria is away, a man surprises Rosa by buying three enchiladas. Rosa later
confesses to Maria:

"Today," she said solemnly, "today I gave myself to a customer."

Maria sobbed with excitement and interest.

"Do not make a mistake," Rosa continued. "I did not take money. The man had eaten three enchiladas--three." (p. 90)

Rosa thinks that they can succeed financially if they will encourage the customers as she did. The two women are nervous, excited: their only concern is that they will be sinning in the eyes of the church, but they believe that they can take care of this problem by praying after each offense.

They remained persistently religious. When either of them had sinned she went directly to the little porcelain Virgin, now conveniently placed in the hall to be accessible from both bedrooms, and prayed for forgiveness. Sins were not allowed to pile up. They confessed each one as it was committed. Under the Virgin there was a polished place on the floor where they had knelt in their nightdresses. (p. 91)

Nevertheless, family pride requires Rosa and Maria to persuade themselves that they are not prostitutes.

On an unfortunate night, a man whose appetite was not equal to three enchiladas offered to Rosa the money of shame. . . . She panted with emotion and her eyes sparkled. . . . But when she spoke, it was with a curious emotional restraint. "It is an insult to me," she said huskily. "You do not know, perhaps, that General Vallejo is nearly our ancestor, so close as that we are related. In our veins the pure blood is. What would General Vallejo say if he heard? Do you think his hand could stay from his sword to hear you insult two ladies so nearly in his family? Do you think it? You say to us, 'You are shameful women!' We, who make the finest, the thinnest tortillas in all California." She panted with the effort to restrain herself. (p. 92)
The Lopez house is always "filled with laughter and with squeals of enthusiasm, "For these sisters knew how to preserve laughter, how to pet and coax it along until their spirits drank the last dregs of its potentiality" (p. 91). The sisters find the "ultimate" pleasure in a simple luxury they buy themselves with their profits, "boudoir caps like inverted nests of blue and pink ribbons" (p. 92). Yet because they fear their happiness cannot last, Maria keeps flowers in front of the Virgin.

Fate falls on them in the form of an irrationally jealous wife. Bert Munroe tells the wife he saw her husband accept a ride in Maria's wagon. The friendly sheriff must act on the wife's complaint, although he makes it clear to Rosa that he is not the one who wants to stop them "from running a bad house" (p. 98). Unable to dismiss the sheriff as she did the offensive customer, Rosa is forced to admit to herself what she really is and to choose between returning to the old life of poverty or continuing her career without her illusions. She breaks the news to Maria: she will go to San Francisco and make "a great deal of money" (p. 98) as a prostitute there. Maria again follows her sister's initiative. She cries shrilly that she, too, "will be a bad woman," and the two sisters sob "hysterically in each other's arms" (p. 99).
The tearful ending of this story is not as sad as it seems. The Lopez women must give up the life they have been enjoying, but they have not really expected it to last. They have tried hard to deny the reality of what they have been doing, but they have made easy adjustments right along. It is significant that Maria's initial response to Rosa's first act of prostitution was to sob "with excitement and interest." The new announcement sends Maria scuttling into the hallway. Her prayers show plainly that she considers her fate to be out of her hands; if the Virgin lets something happen, Maria can accept it.

"I have placed candles," she cried. "I have put flowers every day. Holy Mother, what is the matter with us? Why do you let this happen?" Then she dropped on her knees and prayed, fifty Hail Marys! She crossed herself and rose to her feet. Her face was strained but determined. (p. 98)

With good humor Steinbeck again portrays people who attribute responsibility for their actions to the workings of Providence. Placing responsibility safely in the hands of the Virgin, Maria declares her loyalty to Rosa: she will go with her.

There seems to be no serious moral dilemma for Rosa and Maria, nor any primarily personal shame. Their main concern is for the family name, something very likely not as important to them as they pretend, for even they probably do not quite accept the authenticity of their claims about pure Spanish blood. These claims are a custom, like
their religion, learned from their mother. But from life they have learned adaptability, that great Steinbeckian virtue. Like Sancho Panza, they happily pay lip service to conventional morality by means of rituals, parables, and proverbs, but their first allegiance always goes to the needs of the body and the messages of common sense. They have enjoyed their illusions of being middle-class ladies, but they are also strong enough to sacrifice these illusions rather than cling to them at the cost of poverty and starvation. The sisters look upon the Virgin as their most important judge: they will not feel badly alienated by attacks from outsiders so long as they feel that the Virgin understands and forgives them for what they do. Rosa, more the leader, makes the initial suggestion to change the nature of their restaurant and is the first to suggest leaving the Pastures; both times Maria is excited, not repelled by the prospects. Her "horror" comes at the thought of prostituting herself "for money," not at the work itself. They both have seemed more liable to become obsessed with the things money can buy than with the intangibles that have given meaning to their lives so far. There is no certainty that their employment in San Francisco will be significantly more unpleasant to them than it has been in the Pastures, and they may make "a great deal of money." In short, Rosa and Maria Lopez seem never to have seriously deluded themselves. In
Steinbeck's world, they are essentially happy, healthy, flexible, and good-natured, and they are therefore fairly well assured of continual, relatively happy adjustment throughout their lives.

To put it another way, the Lopez sisters have flexible ego defenses which allow them to adjust to the unforeseeable. These women could be among the most alienated characters in the book: they are poor paisanos and they have ideals about themselves which, if threatened, might cause painful conflicts. As it turns out, their ideals are not so rigid as they appear, and Rosa and Maria therefore make better adjustments to reality than almost anyone else in the Pastures. They adapt themselves to comfortable if irregular lives and then can change again when the residents of the Pastures make them see themselves as they are seen by others.

Molly Morgan

There are two aspects of Molly Morgan's fragile self-image which cause her alienation, and both of them are founded on her unwillingness to accept the truth about her father. First, Molly finds happiness in the Pastures of Heaven because she feels valuable and important as the schoolteacher there. The new way she feels about herself is so pleasant and unexpected, and so unlike anything she has experienced before in her nineteen years, that she wants to protect the feeling at any price. When she sees that if she
stays in the Pastures people may discover her father is a drunkard, she runs away. She does not have enough self-confidence to realize that the love and respect she has won are hers because she is the person she is, and that her father's shame need not affect her.

This leads to the second aspect of her alienation. She cannot let herself acknowledge independence from her father because the most satisfactory part of her past was her childhood relationship with him. Her dependence augments her alienation. If Molly remains in the Pastures, she will have to face the fact that her father may not have loved her as much as she needs to think he did. Therefore, because she has been unable to outgrow her worship of George Morgan and to accept his fallibility without losing her own self-esteem, Molly chooses to run away from an impending confrontation with reality. If she can keep from seeing her father or from hearing his name, she can go on saying what she told John Whiteside, the clerk of the school board: that her father died in an accident when she was twelve.

Molly's pride depends upon the image she wants to project to the community and upon her childish memories—both artificial constructions. She cannot value herself except as she sees herself in her fantasies; she perceives no alternative but to bolt in order to protect her precarious fantasy-world. Molly was alienated in the first place
because her need for love made her live in chronic conflict with herself; her feeling that she was lovable constantly competed with the suspicion that her father had abandoned her. She compounds her alienation by avoiding intimacy in situations that threaten her various fantasies.

Molly's estrangement began in her childhood in her relations with her mother. Neglected by her husband, Mrs. Morgan had alienated her three children by constantly demanding their love. She could not freely love or be loved, and her importunities repelled her children. As soon as Molly's brothers were old enough to leave home, they joined the navy to escape near starvation and their neurotic mother. The boys changed so much that Molly was soon quite estranged from them, too. The only warm human contact of Molly's life occurred during her father's occasional visits home, but his visits stopped with no explanation. When Molly was nearly grown and working her way through teachers' college, she seems to have had no boyfriends. At night, after work, she would imagine how her father, finely dressed, would come for her, buy her fancy clothes, and take her to New York.

Earlier tales in *The Pastures of Heaven* have shown both that Molly is trying hard to play a role as ideal teacher and that she thinks her love of fantasy makes her superior to ordinary people (she even judges others according to their
acceptance of the unreal as real). She seems to want to identify with those cultures which believe in fairies, elves, and gnomes; and she may have a good reason for wanting others to believe as she wants to believe: while fantasies satisfy a need in her, she doubtless feels uncomfortable with them in her adulthood. Therefore, bored with reading "realistic" adventure stories in Tularecito's class, Molly decides to read fairy tales: with children she can let herself become childlike and freely enjoy fantasies.

Molly is ambivalent regarding myths about fairies as well as about the myth of her father. She seems really to believe in supernatural creatures, but she seems at the same time to try to deny her belief. When she encourages Tularecito to identify himself with gnomes, she enjoys thinking how he will search for them at night. She honestly believes that he may even succeed in finding what he is looking for—a race of his own that loves him, people he can live with and talk to. At one moment she is rationalizing condescendingly that she need not deny gnomes to him; in the next, she is thinking he may find some and is delighted that she has been able to make his life "unreal." In all of this there is the implication that she identifies with Tularecito in his search. She, the educated, self-conscious schoolteacher cannot go out at night to look for the mysterious people she wants to believe are somewhere, just waiting to fill her
loneliness; but so far she has not found her "people" any other way. If Tularecito can find his people, she will be justified in believing in hers.

What Molly lacks in fondness for fictional adventure stories, she makes up with her own tendency to fictionalize: she enthusiastically tries to relive earlier events, but she alters and embellishes them with her romantic imagination. She has a chance to indulge this taste with Junius Maltby. Molly "had heard all the bad stories of Junius, and in spite of them had approved of him. But now she began to have a strong desire to meet him" (p. 76). She found something appealing in the idea of a man who had rejected ordinary life in favor of his own ideal, artificial society. Eventually she acts upon her desire and sets out for the Maltby farm. The wildness of the place attracts her at once: it is "rundown and slovenly" but "lovely and slipshod" (p. 79)—a description that fits her charming but irresponsible father. Molly unwittingly walks into a mad game of make-believe in which three hundred Indians are burning the President of the United States at the stake. Junius then charms Molly when, in "torn overalls and a matted beard" (p. 80), he greets her with a ridiculous bow. She joins the group on the sycamore limb for the rest of a delightful day.
But later that year, when Molly sees the two Maltbys waiting for a bus to take them to San Francisco, she sees "Junius shorn of his beard" (p. 86). Molly feels like crying when Junius tells her why they are leaving; he reacts with surprise at her dismay. Until now "She hadn't realized that he was so old. Even his eyes, which had been young, looked old. But of course he was pale because the beard had protected his skin from sunburn" (p. 86). It is as though Junius's tangled beard, like the wild vines clambering around his farm, lent an appealing, romantic aura to his face. Shorn, the man looked ordinary, and it is the ordinary that Molly abhors. She remembers Junius as being younger, just as she remembers that when she was a child, her father seemed twenty years younger than her mother. The men who appeal to Molly are older men who look young: they can be both fatherly and playful, and she can remain a child with them. She does not like to see Junius look his age; she does not want to see her father past his prime.

Molly seems to have no interest in eligible bachelors. She ignores Pat Humbert, who picks her up at the bus stop when she first arrives in the Pastures of Heaven; and Bill Whiteside, who is definitely attracted to her, is quite wrong for Molly. The reason she rejects Bill is simple: he will not support her fantasies. Practical and forthright, Bill is not even tactful; he is probably the most relentless
facer of facts in all the Pastures. Molly learns very quickly that she must avoid intimacy with Bill:

One evening, with a kind of feeling of thanksgiving for her happiness, Molly told Bill about her father. They were sitting in canvas chairs on the wide veranda, waiting for the moon. She told him about the visits, and then about the disappearance. "Do you see what I have, Bill?" she cried. "My lovely father is some place. He's mine. You think he's living, don't you, Bill?"

"Might be," said Bill. "From what you say, he was a kind of an irresponsible cuss, though. Excuse me, Molly. Still, if he's alive, it's funny he never wrote."

Molly felt cold. It was just the kind of reasoning she had successfully avoided for so long. (pp. 111-12)

Soon after this conversation, Molly decides to indulge her romantic interest in the past by hiking to an old cabin thought to have been used by the bandit Vasquez. Bill wants to go with her, but Molly pointedly refuses to let him.

She was sorry not to let him accompany her, but his remark about her father had frightened her. "I want to have an adventure," she said to herself. "If Bill comes along, it won't be an adventure at all. It'll just be a trip." (p. 112)

The hard climb leaves her winded, but it is not the only cause for her heart to beat violently when she reaches the cabin. "'Now I'm having an adventure,' she whispered. 'Now I'm right in the middle of an adventure at Vasquez' cabin" (p. 112). Filled with excitement, Molly imagines how splendid Vasquez looked and what he did. "'Unreal,' Molly whispered, 'fantastic. It's a story, a real story, and I'm having an adventure" (p. 113). Molly convinces herself
that she has evoked actual events, but her fantasy has been constructed from hearsay and only minute shreds of evidence. She goes on to fancy young Vasquez beside her: he has the gay face, the shining eyes of her father. "This was the kind of adventure her father had. Molly shook herself and stood up. 'Now I want to go back to the first time and think it all over again!'" (p. 113). Molly has created a fantasy about a man who has loved her, and she plans to make a ritual of reliving it.

Molly's fantasy, which involves her father at close to her own age, is evidence that Molly's feelings for her father suggest unresolved Oedipal confusions. Certainly Molly's early rejection of her mother's love and her shamed but more or less indifferent reaction to her mother's death are classic signs of such a problem. That Molly remembers how her father's semi-annual visits to the family seemed to begin and end in her parents' bedroom also suggests sexual envy. The usually disheveled Mrs. Morgan would appear first on the eventful mornings after George had slipped in during the night. Her hair smooth, her eyes sparkling, she would announce to the children that their father was home. George would emerge gustily around noon. About two weeks later he would go into town and the children would have to go to bed early. They would hear him stumble in quite late. "In the morning, he would be gone, and their hearts would be
gone with him" (p. 107). The children would begin arguing about the adventures he was having, and Molly would insist that although she was a girl she would someday go with him.

In rejecting her mother, Molly Morgan may also have been trying to reject some rather frightening prospects that identifying with her mother could involve. Certainly the Morgan children are aware of the anxiety their mother suffers about the quality and consistency of George Morgan's love. They see her happiness during his visits, and then they see her turn to her children to compensate for her loss when he leaves her. She demands from them something they cannot provide; she is frustrated by their inability to satisfy her; and finally her anxiety is increased by her guilt about her demands. In turn, she even compounds the anxiety they feel about the loss of their father's love with guilt about rejecting her. Steinbeck discloses this state of affairs in a flashback:

High in the great willow tree [Molly's] two brothers, Joe and Tom, crashed about crying, "Now I'm an eagle." "I'm a parrot." "Now I'm an old chicken. Watch me!"

The screen door on the back porch opened, and their mother leaned tiredly out. Her hair would not lie smoothly no matter how much she combed it. Thick strings of it hung down beside her face. Her eyes were always a little red, and her hands and wrists painfully cracked. "Tom, Joe," she called. "You'll get hurt up there. Don't worry me so, boys! Don't you love your mother at all?" The voices in the tree were hushed. The shrieking spirits of the eagle and the old chicken were drenched in self-reproach. Molly sat in the dust, wrapping a rag around a stick and doing her best to imagine it a tall lady in a dress.
"Molly, come in and stay with your mother. I'm so tired today."

Molly stood up the stick in the deep dust. "You, miss," she whispered fiercely. "You'll get whipped on your bare bottom when I come back." Then she obediently went into the house.

Her mother sat in a straight chair in the kitchen. "Draw up, Molly. Just sit with me for a little while. Love me, Molly! Love your mother a little bit. You are mother's good little girl, aren't you?" Molly squirmed on her chair. "Don't you love your mother, Molly?"

The little girl was very miserable. She knew her mother would cry in a moment, and then she would be compelled to stroke the stringy hair. Both she and her brothers knew they should love their mother. She did everything for them, everything. They were ashamed that they hated to be near her, but they couldn't help it. When she called to them and they were not in sight, they pretended not to hear, and crept away, talking in whispers. (pp. 103-4)

The boys need for childish, imaginative play is thwarted when their mother thrusts her own needs upon them. Perhaps Mrs. Morgan nags her sons with the demands she would like to make of her husband: Don't get hurt, for that will hurt us; don't worry me so; don't you love me? Maybe she also projects onto her sons' indifference to her concerns her convictions of her own unworthiness. She may think they don't care about her because she is not worth caring about.

In Molly's identification with a make-believe doll can be seen the child's projections of hostility toward the mother as well as the child's guilt. The stick is guilty of some misconduct worthy of a whipping. As the tall lady in a dress, the stick may have scorned Molly's mother and gone to New York with Molly's father. Split from her natural
impulses, which she leaves behind with the figure in the dust, an obedient Molly gives in to her mother. Even as a child Molly must see that her mother believes herself inadequately loved by Morgan. Molly must like to think she herself is safe from this feeling and she may do so by fancying herself more desirable to her father than her mother is. Yet Molly must constantly fear that she also may be rejected as her mother has been.

Molly grows up to be more like her mother than she may realize (and more than is apparent to a reader at first glance). Both women are persons in whom "self-esteem is regulated by the anxiety over loss of love," and who therefore experience "secondary anxieties and guilt feelings" because "they try to enforce the necessary [narcissistic] supplies" to their egos "by objectionable means." It is less obvious in Molly than in Mrs. Morgan how her demands for love are objectionable and why she suffers guilt from her fear of loss. Molly's manipulation of Tularecito shows how she controls others to fill her needs. She fears loss because she imagines that the people of the Pastures of Heaven love an image she is merely pretending to fit, and that the love will last only as long as she can maintain the image. In other words, she must remain alienated from her self to keep their love. Her belief in her father's devotion is also fragile: she knows that this belief, too,
hangs upon an illusion. Mrs. Morgan had dealt with her husband's disappearance by rationalizing that he must be dead. Molly had found no satisfactory way to deal with his disappearance except to fantasize his romantic return. Having met the needs of her ego unrealistically, Molly is forced into a new defense when the daydreams are threatened with destruction. She must deny her father's existence to avoid admitting he abandoned her. If she acknowledges her loss, there is a good chance that she would augment her anxieties with guilt, because she might irrationally feel responsible for her "punishment."\textsuperscript{33}

Like some of Molly's other escapist devices, denial is a childish defense. In fact, it is a "counterpart" to her "hallucinatory wish fulfillment,"\textsuperscript{34} another of Molly's defenses. When, while living at the Whitesides', Molly hears Bert describe his new hired man, a "dirty, periodic" drunk with all the gay stories and delightful games with children her father had, Molly feels "a sick dread rising in her" (p. 115). For several weeks, while she tries to avoid running into the man, her terror makes her pale and ill. Then when she learns that the man is in Bert's car while Bert is at the Whitesides', Molly heads for the car to see her father, thinking, nevertheless, that if she does this, she will be "throwing everything away" (p. 116). But the smell of vomit and the sound of a drunken snore send her running
back inside. After Molly persuades John Whiteside to release her from her teaching position at once, she openly confesses her obsession with her fantasies: "'I don't want to go, I love it here--But I'm afraid. It's so important to me. . . . Once I'm away I'll be able not to believe it,' Molly whimpered" (p. 117). Molly flees, preferring to live in painful uncertainty about the drunk in the car to confronting a reality which may overwhelm her sense of herself and make impossible her ritualistic returns to the warm moments of her childhood and her father.

Raymond Banks

Raymond Banks was a chicken farmer who "had developed an appetite for profound emotion,, and his meagre imagination was unable to feed it" (p. 124). The most important things in Raymond's life were the invitations he periodically received from his friend, Ed, the warden of San Quentin Prison, to witness executions; the intense emotional atmosphere of executions fed this "appetite." Many people thought Banks strange for his hobby but this did not bother him until Bert Munroe backed out of going to an execution with him. Peter Lisca asserts that Bert's "attitude toward violence is morbid. He enjoys shivering at the horrible images of suffering which his mind readily conjures up. . . . It is obvious that Steinbeck intends to show that Raymond has the healthy attitude and that it is Bert Munroe
who has the sick one." But the important issue here is not which of the men is "sick" or "healthy": it is why Bert is able to disturb Raymond so deeply. The focal point of the story is Bert's vivid account of a grotesque incident from his youth which forces Raymond to confront his own "appetite" and the inadequacy of his present life. Bert's squeamishness made Banks feel alienated and aware for the first time of just how alienated he had always been.

The excitement of executions had stimulated Banks as had nothing else in his life. Quite indifferent to the condemned, he had thrilled to the drama and "submerged hysteria" felt by other men at the prison (p. 123). That the occasions were a ritual for him is clear in the routine he always followed: the arrival at Ed's house the night before, the same conversations about their school days, and the climax in "the sharp, keen air of the whole proceeding" as he watched the condemned man march slowly to his death. "It was like a superchurch, solemn and ceremonious and sombre," and Banks felt "a holy emotion" (p. 123). After it was over witnesses gathered in the warden's office, where with nervous hilarity they scorned those who had fainted or cried. Raymond's trips to San Quentin served the same purposes as Peter Randall's whoring excursions to San Francisco (in "The Harness," The Long Valley). At home, both men restrained their emotions for long intervals, but the
emotions had to be released. The extravagance of the releases reflected the amount of energy required in the day-to-day repression of feelings.

Banks' friendship with the warden extended to exchanges of occasional letters and Christmas gifts. Their friendship made Banks feel important, for Ed was often named in the newspapers, and if it was a dubious distinction to get invited to hangings, it was also a rare distinction shared by no one else in the Pastures of Heaven. Perhaps the visits to the penitentiary were particularly important to Banks, though, because the rituals seemed to him to be a specifically masculine activity. There is a hint of this when, after Bert backed out of the trip, Mrs. Banks tried to comfort her husband by saying that she herself would not like to see an execution. Raymond argued, "You're a woman, but he's supposed to be a man" (p. 133).

Besides the trips to San Quentin, so much that Raymond does is ritualistic or compulsive that he seems to be dominated by some unexplained neurosis. His other habits seem also to be rituals associated with manliness or at least to be shields for his anxiety.

At first glance, Banks seems to have no problems. He has the most beautiful farm in the Pastures, where he and Mrs. Banks are the most popular entertainers. The two of them are called "jolly." But Steinbeck makes so much of
the word "jolly" that it comes to have special significance. Banks has "jolly" black eyes and a "jovial" mouth. He is considered "very jolly" but he rarely laughs. Instead, he affects "a sullenness so overdrawn that it was accepted as humour" (p. 123). Although Mrs. Banks is said to be "so jolly" and laughs often she rarely says a word to her guests. Steinbeck says her laughter indicates "mild amusement or even inattention" (p. 122). Banks calls the warden "jolly"; and Steinbeck says that after an execution the men in the warden's office are "jolly." The word becomes increasingly ironic, as though the author is calling attention to superficial gaiety in people who want to camouflage quite different emotions. Steinbeck never uses the word "happy" here and he says nothing about the relationship between Banks and his wife.

At their frequent barbecues, Banks enjoys playing the host, a beneficent patron to his neighbors (a traditional manly role). He encourages admiration at the barbecue pits, cooking chickens he has grown and killed himself, and he proudly serves his home brew. Banks seems to subscribe to the masculine cliché that associates the ritual of beer-drinking with manliness, a cliché which prepares for his judgment of Munroe later on. He says of the warden, "Say, you should see how Ed loves his beer" (p. 134). He sets hundreds of bottles of his icy beer out in washtubs at the
barbecues. Then, when Munroe becomes nauseated while talking with Banks about the executions, Banks thinks Munroe (whose manliness he later questions) is upset by the beer.

When Bert drops by after the barbecue, Banks asks him in at once for a glass of beer. To Banks's question, "It's good and cold, isn't it?" Bert merely agrees "absently" and says he must get Raymond's recipe: "A man ought to have a little beer ready for the hot weather" (p. 129).

Banks loves children but he and his wife seem to have none. Banks is a sort of Santa Claus to the children of the Pastures and a hero to the boys. A ritual he enjoys with the boys is showing them how he kills chickens:

With sure, quick hands, Raymond grasped the chicken's head and forced the beak open. The knife slipped like a flash of light along the roof of the beak and into the brain and out again. The wings shuddered and beat against their clamp. For a moment the neck stretched yearningly from side to side, and a little rill of blood flowed from the tip of the beak.

"Now watch!" Raymond cried. His forked hand combed the breast and brought all the feathers with it. Another combing motion and the back was bare. The wings were not struggling so hard now. Raymond whipped the feathers off, all but the wing tip feathers. Then the legs were stripped, a single movement for each one. "You see? You've got to do it quick," he explained as he worked. "There's just about two minutes that the feathers are loose. If you leave them in, they get set." He took the chicken down from the frame, snicked another knife twice, pulled, and there were the entrails in a pan. He wiped his red hands on a cloth. (pp. 121-22)

What Banks wants to pass on to the admiring boys is the lesson of his life—that sheer fascination with the process transforms killing into an objective action unrelated to
life or death. This transformation is perhaps a professional necessity to Banks. The chickens must be killed the same way every time: the process is an essential ritual. But in the context of everything Steinbeck shows about Raymond's life, the ritual becomes merely part of an overall pattern of compulsive behavior.

The appearance of Banks's farm is a sign of his compulsiveness.

Raymond had laid out his land in squares of alfalfa and of kale. His long, low chicken houses were whitewashed so often that they looked always immaculate and new. There was never any of the filth so often associated with poultry farms, about Raymond's place. (p. 119)

The house was also whitewashed. A thousand white ducks enjoyed fresh water flowing from a pipe; thousands of clean white chickens scratched in the dark green squares of alfalfa. Linked to Banks's other rituals, his obsession with tidiness seems to be part of a larger pattern.

There is nothing bad about anything Banks does; in fact he seems to be a genial, gregarious person. That he is nevertheless alienated is clear because Bert Munroe's squeamishness upsets him enough to alter his longstanding habit. Banks cannot accept Munroe's refusal to attend an execution with him after he has arranged for a special invitation. Upon reflection Bert has decided, "I'm scared it would be bad for me. Everybody don't see a thing the same way" (p. 131). The last statement is crucial; Raymond
cannot tolerate the idea that the way he witnesses executions is different from the way "everybody" should witness them. Bert tries to explain his feelings by a story from his youth which unintentionally links the symbols of Raymond's major rituals:

"When I was a kid, about twelve years old, I used to deliver a few groceries before school. Well, out by the brewery an old crippled man lived. He had one leg cut off at the thigh, and, instead of a wooden leg, he had one of those old fashioned crutches--kind of a crescent on top of a round stick. You remember them. He got around on it pretty well, but kind of slow. One morning, when I went by with my basket of groceries, this old man was out in his yard killing a rooster. It was the biggest Rhode Island Red I ever saw. Or maybe it was because I was so little that the chicken looked so big. The old man had the crutch braced under his arm pit, and he was holding the rooster by the legs."

Bert stopped and picked another pruning from the ground. This one, too, bent under his hands. His face was growing pale as he talked.

"Well," he continued, "this old man had a hatchet in his other hand. Just as he made a cut at the rooster's neck, his crutch slipped a little bit, the chicken twisted in his hand, and he cut off one of the wings. Well, then that old man just about went crazy. He cut and cut, always in the wrong place, into the breast and into the stomach. Then the crutch slipped some more and threw him clear off balance just as the hatchet was coming down. He cut off one of the chicken's legs and sliced right through his own finger."

"Well, when that happened, the old man just dropped the rooster on the ground and hobbled into the house holding on to his finger. And that rooster went crawling off with all its guts hanging out on the ground--went crawling off and kind of croaking."

"Well, Mr. Banks, I've never killed a chicken since then, and I've never eaten one. I've tried to eat them, but every time, I see that damned Rhode Island Red crawling away." For the first time he looked directly at Raymond Banks. "Do you see how that would happen?"

Raymond dodged his eyes and looked away. "Yes, yes, sir, that must have been pretty awful."
Bert crowded on. "Well, I got to thinking about this hanging. It might be like the chicken. I dreamed about that chicken over and over again, when I was a kid. Every time my stomach would get upset and give me a nightmare, I'd dream about that chicken. Now suppose I went to this hanging with you. I might dream about it, too." (pp. 131-32)

The sheer power of Bert's grotesque narrative penetrates Raymond's defenses against identifying himself with the victims of executions and forces him to confront what Steinbeck has called his "meagre imagination." Bert, stung by Raymond's contempt, says, "If you had any imagination, I wouldn't have to tell you. If you had any imagination, you'd see for yourself, and you wouldn't go up to see some poor devil get killed" (p. 133). Banks protests furiously that an execution is not so terrible: "It's nothing." He adds, "You're just yellow" (p. 133).

But after Munroe leaves, Banks looks sick, complains of a headache, and then, the next day, thinks a cold is going to keep him from going to the prison. Banks may have come to see the hangings differently, but it is more likely that he suffers from being forced by Bert's story to face underlying anxieties. What Bert confronts in Banks is not perversion, as he suspects, but some vague fear of inadequacy. Regardless of the fact that Munroe is one of the "morbidly curious" that the warden tries to keep away, his attitudes are surely common enough. If Banks had not been somehow insecure about himself, he could not have felt threatened by Munroe's story or his remarks.
French calls the Munroes "insensitive" and "callous" and says that "it never occurs to them that other people could feel differently from them." In this story Bert is fully aware of his difference from Raymond, and it is in the area of sensitivity that they differ: he makes Raymond examine his own insensitivity. And Bert is not indifferent to the problems he creates. He does not, as French says, set out "wantonly and quite deliberately . . . to destroy another man's illusions in order to protect his own." It takes courage for Bert to change his mind, knowing that his vacillation may destroy his burgeoning friendship with Banks, and it takes courage to confess his fears and anxieties. Banks's obsessiveness indicates his alienation; Bert's ambivalence indicates a struggle, at least, to be authentic.

Pat Humbert

The story of Pat Humbert resembles a case history of alienation containing far more reasons for the subject's problems than are ordinarily found in Steinbeck's fiction. The deterministic plot, which takes Pat from birth to middle age, accounts for his estrangement and for the mistakes he makes in trying to escape from isolation. Pat has never been loved by anyone. He has had no opportunity to know himself nor to learn how to relate to other people because he was dominated by his parents until he was thirty. When at last he appears to be free to do as he likes he
remains hopelessly bound to the values of other people. He indiscriminately transfers his fealty from his parents to anyone who seems like a leader.

Pat's parents "were middle-aged when he was born; they had grown old and stiff and spiteful before he was twenty" (p. 135). The parents' envy of their son's youth caused estrangement between the generations. The couple always held themselves aloof from him; they forced him to share their belief in the superiority of their generation and what it was owed by youth. "Toward the end of their lives, they really hated Pat for being young" (p. 135). When Pat was sixteen his father retired from work on their farm, and the boy did everything from then on, including nursing the bitter old couple until they died. Never during their lifetime did Pat go out in the evening because they would not have liked it. Yet they neither loved him nor appreciated anything he did for them.

His parents' deaths put Pat into "no agony of grief" (p. 138) nor did he pretend to any feelings about them that he did not have. The evening of the second funeral he told the Allen family that his parents would not miss the spring because "They didn't ever ask about the crops, and they hated the rain because of their rheumatism. They just wanted to live. I don't know why" (p. 138). While the Allens served him supper, Pat noticed that they were telling nice lies to him about his parents, not knowing that he did not need
this. His mind wandered back to an accident at the funeral. The pallbearers had tipped over one of the vases of everlastings and pushed the Bible askew on its tapestry. Pat knew that in decency he should restore the old order. The chairs should be pushed against their walls and the Bible set straight. Finally he should lock up the parlour again. The memory of his mother demanded these things of him. (p. 138)

He remembered the same thing the next morning "with a cold sense of a duty to be performed" (p. 140), but in a belated surge of rebellion he locked his parents' sitting room without setting the adjoining parlour straight. The tipped vase and the empty rocking chairs haunted him for years.

The house was unbearably lonely to Pat after his parents died because he was lost without the compulsions of his lifetime. "He didn't know what to do now there was no one to demand anything of him" (p. 137). He could only substitute a new compulsion: he began searching for company, desperately joining and attending things. Yet he never became one of a group; he stayed in the background. "He did not often think of people as individuals, but rather as antidotes for the poison of his loneliness, as escapes from the imprisoned ghosts" (p. 143).

Then, after ten years of compulsive work and socializing, he overheard Mae Munroe praise a lovely Banksia rose covering his porch and he "wondered why he had never noticed it before" (p. 145). He began to think of his place in an entirely new way. Without admitting it to himself, he began
to fantasize what it would be like to share the house with Mae. This daydream gave him a new obsession. Inspired by her remark that his house looked like a house in Vermont, he determined to convert part of it to fit that image of hers. To do this, he had to overcome his dread of staying home and overcome his fear of entering and altering his parents' sitting room. It took thousands of dollars and all Pat's spare time to create a room to match a picture he posted in the kitchen. While he hid his motive from himself, he developed a ritual of imagining how it would be when he finally showed Mae the finished room: what each of them would say and do, and how Mae would get a faraway look in her eyes. After much delay Pat worked up the courage to go to the Munroes' to invite Mae to his house, but Bert Munroe greeted him there with the news that Mae was to marry Bill Whiteside the following week. Miserable with disappointment, Pat fought the urge to lock the room up again.

The reason Pat had never noticed the rose before Mae mentioned it is the same reason that he slavishly tried to duplicate the room pictured in the magazine: he lacked feelings and ideas of his own. Imitating something that is already approved by someone is one way of gaining approval. Pat's attempt to conform actually makes him more freakish: a picture-book room in the midst of a nondescript house is bizarre. This situation underscores the acuteness of Pat's
alienation because, in his isolation from normal life, he could no more realize how odd the room made his house than he could imagine a difference between possessing Mae in his fantasies and having her actually dwell in his room.

Working on his project had benefited Pat in some ways. He overcame the dread of opening the locked rooms, and "For the first time in his life, Pat was anxious to go home" (p. 146). The project taught him hope and light-heartedness. But since life had not prepared him to appraise the difference between reality and illusion, the benefits of his experience could hardly ofset the overwhelming disappointment he suffered at the news of Mae's engagement. Crushing loneliness had led him from one obsession to another as he tried to endure his deeply alienated existence.

Richard and John Whiteside

The aborted dreams of Richard Whiteside underlie the final tale in The Pastures of Heaven. This story, much broader in scope than others in the collection, introduces themes and methods Steinbeck uses two decades later in his sprawling novel East of Eden. In both the story and the novel three generations of a family are traced in their migration from New England to California. Both illustrate how the sins of the fathers are visited upon their sons. In both, sons are estranged from their fathers, and the hopes of fathers to build family dynasties are destroyed. The
Whiteside episode anticipates a great deal of the material in other later fiction by Steinbeck, as well, for it shows that Steinbeck is comfortable handling the world outside his valley. The portrayals of Richard and John Whiteside suggest the breadth of Steinbeck's sensibility and foretell the diversity of his future work.

The beginning of this story introduces Richard Whiteside, a man with a dream. Richard was the only son of an only son; he moved to California in the mid-nineteenth century with a single idea in his mind: to found a dynasty. Others came west to find gold; Richard was possessed by a sense of the past and a vision of the future. At the top of the hills above the Pastures he remembered "the colonists from Athens and from Lacedaemon looking for new lands described by vague oracles." When he looked for an omen, "a tiny whirlwind picked up a few leaves and flung them forward. Richard chuckled. 'Answer! Many a fine city was founded because of a hint from the gods no more broad than that'" (p. 154). As he beheld the valley at dusk,

The light became uncertain and magical. Richard saw a beautiful white house with a trim garden in front of it and nearby, the white tower of a tank house. There were little yellow lights in the windows, little specks of welcoming lights. The broad front door opened, and a whole covey of children walked out on the veranda—at least six children. They peered out into the growing darkness, looked particularly up at the hill where Richard lay on his blankets. After a moment they went back into the house, and the door shut behind them. With the closing of the door, the house, the garden and the white tank house disappeared. Richard sighed with
contentment and lay on his back. The sky was prickling with stars. (p. 155)

Other migrants looked for a living in the soil, but Richard did not even begin his planting that first year. Instead, he began to build and furnish a house that for five centuries would be filled with Whitesides. "It sounds fine," said a neighbor, "but that's not how we work out here. We build a little shack, and if the land pays, we build a little more on it. It isn't good to put too much into a place. You might want to move" (p. 156). The neighbor, who knew that families in the West rarely resembled the family of Richard's dream, could not dampen Richard's enthusiasm. The neighbor's own "family was broken up before it was really started" (p. 156), but Richard was not concerned with what was usual. His house must be suitable to his vision of "welcoming lights" and a "covey of children."

Now that patterns of alienation have been discovered in earlier stories, the outcome of the Whiteside episode is predictable. The stories repeatedly show that people who try to live up to certain fixed goals or images of themselves encounter frustration when the images depend on uncontrollable circumstances. Maintaining an image at every cost leads to alienation: characters suffer from separation between their actual and ideal selves, and they often estrange themselves from others in order to keep up false appearances. They may separate themselves because they need
to feel special, even superior. Frequently after a neighbor says or does something to the protagonist which typifies ordinary conduct, the ending shows that the neighbor has either foreshadowed or precipitated an outcome which is reasonable from the standpoint of probability. With these patterns in mind the reader can expect Richard Whiteside to be alienated to the extent that he is too rigid in his self-image and in his expectations. The complete fulfillment of his dream depends too much on other people. From a practical standpoint, the neighbor will be proved right in thinking that Richard's dreams are foolish.

Patterns in the earlier stories should also lead the reader to expect Richard to be alienated in proportion to his ability to accept disappointment. If he can adjust to the dispensations of fate, he will feel less estranged from himself. As it turns out, Richard has one of the few happy marriages in Steinbeck's fiction. His love for his wife eventually compensates for the unfulfilled part of his dream. Richard never rejects or consciously alters his hope for a dynasty, but he becomes less obsessed with it in his later years (at least until the very end of his life).

Every step Richard Whiteside takes as a young man is carefully calculated to eliminate any possibility that his plan might fail. He intends his house to be a monument to the future, topped by a slate roof ordered from Boston and brought to California by ship.
To the people of the valley the slate roof was the show piece of the country. More than anything else it made Richard Whiteside the first citizen of the valley. This man was steady, and his home was here. He didn't intend to run off to a new gold field. Why--his roof was slate. Besides, he was an educated man. He had been to Harvard. He had money, and he had the faith to build a big, luxurious house in the valley. He would rule the land. He was the founder and patriarch of a family, and his roof was of slate. The people appreciated and valued the Pastures of Heaven more because of the slate roof. (p. 157)

Clearly succeeding in the first step toward realizing his dream for the future, Richard has achieved indisputable supremacy in the valley.

Richard next chooses a wife, and does this somewhat as he chose his roof--sight unseen. Marrying Alicia, a distant relative, assures him that there could "be no accidents of blood" (p. 157), an important matter to a man vitally interested in his progeny. When Alicia Whiteside becomes pregnant, Richard believes his dynasty has begun. Only then does he feel safe enough to tell his wife that they have been threatened by a family curse. Until his grandfather's time, the New England Whitesides proliferated. But after that, explains Richard,

"My father was an only child, and I was an only child. It was the sadness of my father's life. He was only sixty when he died, Alicia, and I was his only child. When I was twenty-five and hadn't really begun to live, the old house burned down. I don't know what started the fire." (p. 159)

Richard believes he has followed a tradition of ancient peoples who, when they felt their cities to be cursed or disfavored by a god, evacuated the cities; they would sail off
to establish new colonies. After his family's one hundred thirty-year-old New England home had burned, Richard found it too painful to consider trying to replace it. He came instead to the Pastures to change his fortune and to begin the Whiteside dynasty anew.

Richard tells his wife that he asked the gods for an omen. He asks her, "Is that good, Alicia? Shall I tell you about the omens and my first night on the hill?" But she wants to retire. Continuing to talk as he helps her toward bed, he speaks of their forthcoming child: "There's something mystic in the house, Alicia, something marvelous. It's the new soul, the first native of the new race" (p. 160).

While Richard and Alicia await their infant's arrival, They talked of the picture she should look at to influence the appearance of the firstling, and, to surprise her, Richard sent to San Francisco for a little bronze copy of the Michelangelo David. Alicia blushed at its nakedness, but before very long she became passionately fond of the little figure. When she went to bed it stood on her bedside table. During the day she took it from room to room with her as she worked, and in the evening it stood on the mantel in the sitting room. Often when she gazed at its clean, hard limbs a tiny smile of knowledge and of seeking came and went on her face. She was thoroughly convinced that her child would look like the David. (p. 158)

Alicia holds the statue in her lap while Richard speaks of his dreams of dynasty. When the child is born he looks like the David to her, as she had been sure he would; she says, "David will be his name, of course" (p. 160).

Unfortunately the child turns out to be the only "native of the new race" of his generation. Alicia's labor was
extremely difficult. Not until she has recuperated for six months does Richard dare to go to her with the doctor's warning that she must not have more children. But before Richard can tell her the bad news, Alicia says she wants to change the baby's name to John.

"That's a New Testament name--" She looked up for his approval--"and besides, it's my father's name. My father will be pleased. Besides, I haven't felt quite right about naming him for that statue, even if it is a statue of the boy David. It isn't as though the statue had clothes on--"

Richard did not try to follow this logic. Instead he plunged into his confession. In a second it was over. He had not realized it would take so little time. Alicia was smiling a peculiar enigmatic smile that puzzled him. No matter how well he became acquainted with her, this smile, a little quizzical, a trifle sad, and filled with secret wisdom shut him out of her thoughts. . . . It said, "How silly you are. I know things which would make your knowledge seem ridiculous if I chose to tell you." (p. 162)

Then replying to Richard's announcement about her condition, Alicia says, "Doctors don't know everything. Just wait a little, Richard. We will have other children" (p. 162).

Five years later Alicia's intuition tells her it is time to have another baby. Richard accepts her refusal to consult a doctor "because he was afraid of what the doctor would tell him. 'It's the grain of deity in women,' he explained to himself. 'Nature has planted this sure knowledge in women in order that the race may increase!'" (p. 163).

But a ravaging illness and a torturous delivery kill the second child and make Alicia an invalid for life. So much, Steinbeck seems to be saying, for women's intuition; so
much for magical insights and the dreams of men. The doctor who had warned Richard is furious with him.

Perhaps Alicia's intuition had told her something true, however. Several things about the changing of the infant's name from David to John suggest she knew from the first that this would be her only son, if not her only child. The David of the statue with whom she had identified her infant was, of course, the king of the Hebrews in the Old Testament who founded the great House of David; he was the source of the royal seed traced a millenium to Christ. Alicia decided to change her baby's name to a name from the New Testament—just "a New Testament name," not even specifically the name of the man said to be Christ's most beloved disciple. By giving her son a new name Alicia relinquished previous associations with dynasty, history, lineage. Moreover, Alicia may have begun to fear that she would not have another chance to name a son. What seems a non sequitur about the nakedness of the statue may betray her change of attitude about the human body in general and perhaps toward her own body in particular. A growing sense of inadequacy may have diminished her attraction to the figure she had formerly made into her personal totem. As Alicia had progressed in her happily fertile state, she had become "passionately fond" of that figure, which had made her blush at first; barrenness brought the return of her shyness.
What has happened to Alicia does not seem to damage the Whitesides' marriage. The love Richard and Alicia have for each other helps them to bear their great disappointment. Having other interests in their lives and having other means of satisfying their need to feel worthy as human beings, they do not turn to despair or violence when they cannot attain their desires. Influenced by his classical education and Harvard background, Richard benefits from a broad and flexible outlook on life, he commands and enjoys the respect of his fellow citizens, and he derives great pleasure from reading ancient history. He also appreciates his fine memories and various comforts in life and can measure these assets against his losses to avoid feeling empty. Furthermore, Richard and Alicia substitute a new ritual for the dream they lost: every night, after Richard carries Alicia to bed, he strokes her and she asks, "Are you content, Richard?" and he answers, "I am content" (p. 164). He then talks to her about the events of the day until she falls asleep and he blows out the light.

Yet it is not only their flexibility which keeps them relatively happy; it is doubtless important that they can put their hopes in their son. To this extent they are comforted by their illusions. They are never challenged to survive without being able to look to John to fulfill their dreams. Had fate deprived them of John, or had they actually been able, as they thought they were, to see the future,
they would surely have been less content. On John's tenth birthday Alicia reminds Richard of what it means that their son is growing up:

"You must not worry about the children, Richard," she continued. "Wait a little. Everything will be all right." This was her great, all-covering knowledge. "Wait a little. No sorrow can survive the smothering of a little time." And Richard knew that it was a greater knowledge than his.

"It isn't long to wait," Alicia went on.

"What isn't?"

"Why think, [Richard]. He's ten now. In ten years he will be married, and then, don't you see?--Teach him what you know. The family is safe, Richard."

"Of course, I know. The house is safe. I'm going to begin reading Herodotus to him, Alicia. He's old enough." (p. 165)

Richard dies while John is at Harvard. Alicia gives her son his father's final message— an urgent plea to keep the family going, a deathbed wish "to survive in the generations" (p. 166). For two days Richard deliriously fancied children running throughout the house and around his bed. In a lucid moment just before he died he said, "I have seen the future. There will be so many children. I am content, Alicia" (p. 166).

It was six years before John chose a wife and the withered Alicia could give up her tenacious grip on life. John loved the house even more than his father did. As its owner he succeeded to some but not all of his father's prestige. He and his wife, Willa, both seemed more approachable to the people of the valley than the older Whitesides had been. Also, "John was less stern, less convinced of everything.
Faced with an argument to decide, he was too prone to find endless ramifications of both sides" (p. 167). However, he inherited his father's love for the ancients, and most of all he loved the sitting room. "Here he was complete, perfect and happy. Under the Rochester lamps every last scattered particle of him was gathered together into a definite, boundaried entity" (p. 169). What Steinbeck says about this character is one of the most important and explicit statements he makes as a novelist defining his concept of a happy man:

Most lives extend in a curve. There is a rise of ambition, a rounded peak of maturity, a gentle downward slope of disillusion and last a flattened grade of waiting for death. John Whiteside lived in a straight line. He was ambitionless; his farm not only made him a good living, but paid enough so he could hire men to work it for him. He wanted nothing beyond what he had or could easily procure. He was one of the few men who could savour a moment while he held it. And he knew it was a good life he was leading, an uniquely good life. (pp. 169-70)

Curiously, if the references to property were disregarded, this description could be applied to Mack and the boys of Cannery Row and to Danny's friends in Tortilla Flat as aptly as to John Whiteside. Ambition is almost never a heroic trait in Steinbeck. Economically ambitious protagonists even harm, or at least alienate, themselves and others as they pursue their goals.

Although ambitionless (as Steinbeck uses the word here), John and Willa wanted children almost as badly as John's parents had wanted them. After eight barren years
Willa joyfully delivered a son, William, but she never conceived again. Willa took motherhood matter-of-factly and accepted her son as the normal child he was, but John changed; he came to be moved by a "strong desire for self-perpetuation. . . . Where he had been only a friend to the farm, the awakening duty to the generations changed him to a master" (p. 170). Suddenly reinspired with his father's dreams, John wanted to use Bill to duplicate his own relationship with Richard.

On Bill's tenth birthday, John begins reading Herodotus to the boy. After a week, Willa has to point out that their son is not interested in Herodotus and never will be. She knows Bill is different from John and Richard. John, who wants to believe he can see his father in Bill, is hurt to hear Willa say, "He isn't your kind, John, and you might just as well know it now as later" (p. 171). Gradually John's enthusiasm for farming declines as he begins to notice Bill's difference from him; yet "It was a long time before John would admit to himself that he could not communicate with his son" (p. 172). Still John remains confident that Bill will someday farm the Whiteside land.

When he adopted his father's fantasies, John submitted himself to their consequences. Had Bill fulfilled the dreams, John would have had the double pleasure of taking satisfaction for himself, on the one hand, and of seeing that his father's ambitions had been realized, on the other.
But when Bill announces his intention to marry he shocks his father with a decision John has never considered possible: to marry Mae Munroe, Bill will move into the town of Monterey. Bill finds that his talents are in business, and Mae does not like living in the country. Therefore, Bill explains, he has bought a partnership in the Ford agency and has begun building his own house in Monterey. Bill makes no attempt to cushion his announcement to his father. John becomes angry because Bill disregards Whiteside traditions; Willa becomes angry because Bill slights his father's feelings. Bill's plans come as no surprise to Willa, who learned them earlier from the Munroes. Yet the way Bill handles his news annoys her, particularly when he says he knows he can sell the old house in a week if his parents want to move, too.

Bill moves, but John won't give up his conviction that Bill will come back and rear children in the Pastures. Reinspired with the enthusiasm he had for the land when Bill was born, John wants to make his land more productive. Bert Munroe suggests he burn off the thick brush on it to get fine pasturage. One still day Bert, John, and three others undertake the job. For awhile things go well, and they successfully finish burning a wide strip, staying carefully between the fire and the house.

At that moment [a] little autumn whirlwind danced down the hill, twisting and careening as it came. It made
a coquettish dash into the fire, picked up sparks and embers and flung them against the white house. Then, as though tired of the game, the little column of air collapsed. (p. 177)

The men stamp out every visible spark, but sparks have reached the house and it bursts into flame. Dazed, John astounds Bert by merely watching the fire and by not even trying to save anything. "Then a very strange and a very cruel thing happened. The side wall fell outward like a stage set, and there, twelve feet above the ground was the sitting room untouched as yet by the fire" (pp. 178-79).

Finally John says, "Well, that's over... And I think I know how a soul feels when it sees its body buried in the ground and lost. Let's go to your house, Bert. I want to telephone Bill. He will probably have a room for us" (p. 179). John has watched the early demise of the second Whiteside dynasty; symbolically he turns toward his son in town for help. He appears to have lost everything, but he feels that his soul remains. Being the whole person he is, John did not lose his "soul" because he did not attach it to things that could be destroyed. Less rigid than his father, John doubtlessly can accept the loss better than Richard could have done. Again, Steinbeck shows that flexibility, combined with a multiplicity of values, prepares a person for uncontrollable circumstances.

Taking a final look at the ruins, John mentions the pipe he inherited from his father: "I wish I could have
saved my pipe." Bert responds, "That was the best coloured meerschaum I ever saw. . . . That pipe must have been smoked a long time." John agrees, adding: "And you know, it had a good taste, too" (p. 179). John's casual tone does not mean he is unshaken by the disaster, but it shows that he retains graceful self-control and accepts what he cannot change. He surely will not think of rebuilding the house: it would be too painful to contemplate. Like his father a half-century before, he will probably abandon an accursed site.

The unnamed neighbor who had skeptically tried to talk Richard Whiteside out of his fantasies seems to have acted as the "vague oracle" Richard remembered, who directed ancient peoples to new lands. At the same time, the neighbor is the stereotyped Steinbeck character who speaks for average people, a role usually played by a Munroe. Bert does his part in the next generation: when he anxiously wants to put out the fire, he is amazed at John's indifference. In his ignorance of John's feelings, Bert gave unwitting counterpoint to the event. In no way should Bert be blamed for the fire, even though he suggested burning the brush. The wind had died before John set the fire. Here, as in other places in the story, Steinbeck's technique is heavy-handed. Richard Whiteside had taken a whirlwind as an omen for the founding of his dynasty. The whirlwind was indeed an omen, but a bad one: it had portended the collapse of the dynasty.
as the result of another whirlwind. For the second time, the Whiteside mansion burns after two generations have produced only one new Whiteside each.

If the reader hasn’t noticed it before, he can see at this point that the author has borrowed considerably from the classics to tell his story. Characterizing Richard, Steinbeck explains that "the Ancient Times of Herodotus, of Xenophon, of Thucydides were personal things" to him (p. 159). Richard identifies himself with the ancient peoples who deserted their cursed cities to found new ones. Richard believes in the existence of a curse on his family house as an ancient hero would. His tale is as fraught with irony as a Greek tragedy. He looks for, and interprets, signs from the gods; he hears but ignores the choric warning of his neighbor. The conduct of the third generation of the family brings out a classic theme: through suffering comes wisdom; John learns from Bill that he must abandon his dynastic aspirations and relinquish his pride. Even Richard and his wife are guilty of a form of hubris, their classic flaw being one source of irony in the tale. Alicia, who enjoyed an "empire of her own" (p. 157), says repeatedly that she knows more than doctors do; Richard is persuaded to believe her because he believes in "the grain of deity in women" (p. 163) and in Alicia's "great, all-covering knowledge" (p. 165). But Alicia's two major intuitions are mistaken: she cannot have another child, and Richard's hope is
lost in John. The couple has ignorantly ignored fate. The personification of the whirlwind (a figure which only the reader can appreciate) strongly connotes the capricious power of destiny, which the protagonists have disregarded.

When Richard Whiteside introduced John to the histories of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, he told his son, "You may judge the future by these books, John, for nothing can happen which has not happened and been recorded in these books. Compared to these, the Bible is a very incomplete record of an obscure people" (p. 165). Yet Steinbeck has probably made more use of the Bible in his fiction than of the classics, this story being an exception. However, in addition to the evocation of King David in the naming of Richard's child, there is a hint of the twenty-third Psalm in the description of the night when Richard "lay on his bed and gazed down on the Pastures of Heaven which was to be his home" (p. 155). At the end of the tale, the vision Richard had that night becomes for John more like a twisted version of the prophecy of Ezekiel. In Ezekiel's vision the Lord set him down in a valley full of dry bones. The Lord told Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones that He would bring them out of their graves, put His spirit in them, and place them in their own land. The Lord thus revives the hopes of the people of Israel, promising to make them into one strong nation; David will be king, and they will dwell in the land where their fathers have dwelt, "and their children, and
their children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever" (Ezekiel, 37:25).

There are enough interesting points of contrast between Ezekiel's vision and the Whiteside situation to make it seem that Steinbeck may intend an allusion. Like a prophet, the early neighbor predicted the wandering of the Whiteside people. John, looking upon the skeleton of his house in the valley, has a spiritual sense of himself, feeling as though he is a soul which has lost its body. John once came very close to being David; now he abandons hope in his dynasty. There will be a settlement of Whitesides in a new land, however; and the Whitesides will no longer be divided, for John will move to Monterey.

The Whiteside story develops the theme based on Exodus 20:5 that children suffer for the sins of their fathers for several generations. If one remembers that Hawthorne employed this idea as a theme in The House of the Seven Gables, he may also realize that Steinbeck entwines other themes from Hawthorne's novel in his story: the domination of the present by the past, the sin of controlling another's soul, dreams of earthly immortality, and isolation. The novel also utilizes the devices of a dream of dynasty and a family curse in developing the themes. All these themes, considered evils by Hawthorne, lead to alienation. The tone of the two works is quite different: Hawthorne's tone is gothic and his atmosphere gloomy; nevertheless, the similarities
are interesting because they link Steinbeck to America's first psychological novelist and show that Steinbeck, conscious or otherwise, continues traditional American themes when he depicts alienated characters. Steinbeck's genial people hardly resemble the grotesque types of Hawthorne, but inasmuch as the craving for a dynasty implies an obsession with history, a sense of the past inevitably dominates the living in Steinbeck's story: the Whiteside fathers are driven by their desire to perpetuate their New England heritage.

Because the Whitesides' goal depends upon offspring, Richard, to his dying moment, tries to manipulate John's life in order to ensure progeny; and John, in a gentler way, tries to press Bill into fulfilling the dream. Richard and John show that the living can be controlled by the dead. Closely tied to this is the concept that it is evil for one human being to control the heart of another. Richard seems to have controlled John; John has failed in his attempt to do the same with Bill. The third Hawthorne theme which Steinbeck shares is the evil of pursuing earthly immortality. Dynasty builders try to immortalize themselves through their bloodlines: their ambitions lead them to the various sins, including pride and isolation. Richard Whiteside determines to build his house in the isolated Pastures even before he chooses a wife; he thinks of a wife as an object
to fulfill his plans. (Mae Munroe rejects this isolation.) Richard enjoys his position as "the first citizen of the valley" (p. 157); his wife Alicia makes people who call on her "feel like peasants calling at the castle" (p. 167).

None of the alienating practices in Steinbeck constitute evils in the Hawthornian sense, yet they do affect the characters. Gradually, through the three generations, these evils are overcome. Not only is John less rigid than Richard: Willa treats her neighbors more democratically than Alicia does and declines to force John's wishes on her son. Bill and Mae break away entirely. Bill refuses to pretend to be someone he is not. He says "no" to the evils his forebears would pass on to him. Yet these remarks about patterns of alienation in the Whitesides do not deny the gentle natures of the Richard and John Whitesides. In some Steinbeck stories the same patterns affect characters severely, but here Steinbeck's older generations, unlike Hawthorne's, appeal to the reader more than the younger ones. Bill escapes his grandfather's obsessions, but, although he is only slightly developed in the story, he betrays himself as an insensitive Babbitt. One anticipates that Bill will eventually be more acutely alienated than either John or Richard.
Conclusion

Conflicts within Steinbeck's alienated characters keep them estranged from themselves and from others. These conflicts derive from the characters' feelings about themselves. Some kind of pride or fear makes them act in ways that will protect their self-esteem. They are controlled by preoccupations with themselves and are rarely free to act naturally. Steinbeck believes that the natural impulse of man is to accept, then forget, himself and to turn his attention toward others. Strong individuals accept some alienation as an inevitable part of existence. They can even willingly choose alienation at times, when, for some good reason, they want something in life that will separate them from the crowd. Weak individuals who are self-alienated are turned inward, yet controlled by external forces. To maintain confidence in their importance or worth as human beings, alienated characters either let other persons or groups dominate them, or they try to prove that they are unique. If they follow the crowd, they are free from the frightening responsibility of being themselves or of being by themselves.

Some of the alienated characters in The Pastures of Heaven unquestionably imitate others: Pat Humbert is an example. Others who appear to be obsessed by a need to feel unique are nevertheless enslaved by external standards. All the major characters in The Pastures of Heaven display some concern with their uniqueness. Shark Wicks, Molly Morgan,
and Helen Van Deventer are the most conspicuously concerned with appearing exceptional. Raymond Banks likes the special feeling afforded by his friendship with Ed; Pat Humbert wants to make his house different from all the others he has ever seen; the Whitesides dream of founding a dynasty in California. Junius enjoys leading his alternative society, and the Lopez sisters like to believe in their supposedly pure Spanish blood.

Characters who alienate themselves are those who need something outside themselves to satisfy their egos. The patterns of alienation they follow make them feel important in fantasies they use to bolster their self-esteem. These patterns of alienation in *The Pastures of Heaven* are role-playing; controlling objects and controlling people as objects; following rituals; and creating myths. Shark Wicks, Molly Morgan, Helen Van Deventer, and Richard Whiteside are all concerned about their roles in society. These four characters also manipulate people to some extent to satisfy their chosen roles. Pat Humbert and Richard Whiteside manipulate objects to further their self-esteem: for both, the objects are their houses. (The imaginary fortune Shark controls is analogous to the real money controlled by later Steinbeck characters.) The rituals of Raymond Banks, Pat Humbert, Molly Morgan, and Helen Van Deventer are described overtly; other rituals include Shark's compulsive bookkeeping, the Whitesides' reading of the classics, the Lopez
sisters' praying, and the Maltby clan's gathering on the sycamore limb. Molly Morgan creates a myth about her father and worships his memory; Pat Humbert makes a myth about Mae Munroe. Most people who envision themselves fulfilling a specific role are, in effect, creating a myth to do so; it is when they worship the myth as Molly does that the myth is interesting to examine for its own sake.

Frederick I. Carpenter has stated that *The Pastures of Heaven* tells of dreamers subjectively, with imperfect realism. He thinks that the book fails "through lack of objective reality" because Steinbeck does not make clear the motivation of the dreamers, a fault which disappears in later works. After accurately observing that "the theme of romantic idealization, possession, and frustration" connects the stories, Carpenter categorizes the American dreamers of *The Pastures of Heaven* as psychopaths, outmoded idealists, irresponsibles, and the saved. Carpenter sees the first three types as essentially selfish dreamers who are vitirated by "some possessive egotism." Peter Lisca dismisses Carpenter's theory for the unity of *The Pastures of Heaven* as inadequate on the grounds that it does not apply to more than a few of the stories without distorting their importance as separate stories. This study of alienation strengthens Carpenter's early view that the unity of the book exists in the dreams of its characters, but it also demonstrates that the book does not fail at all "through
lack of objective reality" resulting from inexplicit motivations. Motivation begins and ends with alienation: for the sake of psychological self-preservation, the characters escape from universal estrangement into further isolation of their own making.44

Bert Munroe, seen by French as a "vicious mediocrity" who shows "just how much Steinbeck hates the middle-class respectability," is one of the few characters in the book who has said yes to life strongly enough to change the course of his life. Only the Lopez sisters have proved to be as flexible. On the whole, characters who inhabit the Pastures of Heaven are alienated because they allow the defenses they have adopted in previous experiences to control them in the present.
Notes to Chapter II

"Saint Katy the Virgin," which appears in The Long Valley, is a farce set in the fourteenth century.


3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., p. 60.


7 Ibid., pp. 42-43.

8 Fontenrose, p. 21.

9 French, p. 43


11 Ibid., p. 25.


14 Ibid., p. 171.

15 Ibid., p. 172.

16 Ibid., p. 189.

17 Ibid., p. 198.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., p. 200.
In The Sane Society (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Premier Books, 1965), Erich Fromm begins his definition of "alienation" with a discussion of "idolators," which includes persons "subject to irrational passions":

The person who is mainly motivated by his lust for power does not experience himself any more in the richness and limitlessness of a human being, but he becomes a slave to one partial striving in him, which is projected into external aims, by which he is "possessed." . . . In this sense, the neurotic person is an alienated person. His actions are not his own; while he is under the illusion of doing what he wants, he is driven by forces which are separated from his self, which work behind his back; he is a stranger to himself, just as his fellow man is a stranger to him. He experiences the other and himself not as what they really are, but distorted by the unconscious forces which operate in them. (p. 114)

Fromm explains that the pursuit of irrational passions shares with other idolatries "the process of alienation":

Man does not experience himself as the active bearer of his own powers and richness, but as an impoverished "thing," dependent on powers outside of himself, unto whom he has projected his living substance. (p. 114; Fromm's italics.)

Shark Wicks undoubtedly believes he is "doing what he wants," but his later collapse testifies to the extent to which he is "driven by forces which are separated from his self."


24 Ibid., p. 395.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., p. 465.
28 Ibid.
Rycroft defines "ritual" as "a form of behavior displayed by patients suffering from obsessional neurosis in which the patient attempts to reduce anxiety by carrying out a more or less complex and stereotyped series of actions" (p. 143). Compulsive symptoms, which include obsessive thoughts and actions (rituals), "correspond to thoughts and wishes which the patient rejects as incompatible with his self-image, or they are a means of keeping such forbidden thoughts out of mind" (p. 20). Omitting compulsive symptoms "leads to anxiety" (p. 20).

French, p. 43.

Ibid., p. 45.


Ibid., p. 69.

Ibid., p. 71.

Ibid., p. 69.

Lisca, p. 59.

The climax of Carpenter's discussion, which makes Junius Maltby something of a hero in The Pastures of Heaven, seems to confuse some facts. Carpenter says that Junius is the only citizen of the Pastures who "seems wholly admirable, and even he is forced to leave the valley at last" (p. 72). Not only does Junius have some weaknesses, but also Junius was not born in the Pastures as Carpenter says he was; he moved there from San Francisco when he was fully grown. Junius's son, Robbie, was born in the valley.
CHAPTER III

PATTERNS OF ALIENATION IN THE LONG VALLEY AND SOME CORRESPONDENCES IN SELECTED NOVELS

The Long Valley (1938) is not a unified collection of stories like The Pastures of Heaven, and some of its fifteen pieces are not even short stories in the conventional sense. "Breakfast" is a vignette which later became part of The Grapes of Wrath; it shows how communion can be effected with strangers. A touching illustration of Steinbeck's ideal of human relationships, the sketch fits this study by implication, but its substance does not invite discussion in the present context. The farce "Saint Katy the Virgin" satirizes some alienating aspects of human nature but contributes no new understanding of Steinbeck's treatment of characters.

"Flight" anticipates The Pearl (1947) in characterization, plot, and style, and some common traits make them equally unsuited to a lengthy analysis in a discussion of self-alienating characters in Steinbeck's fiction. The central figures are flat, their feelings simplified and stereotyped. Lack of psychological development in these characters is deliberate: Steinbeck is concerned with action, storytelling, and allegorical meaning. Motivation is patently attributable to external circumstances rather
than to qualities within the characters themselves. The characters may still be called self-alienated inasmuch as they put themselves into situations that separate them from the lives they want to lead; but their description does not encourage one to go beyond saying that what they do is externally motivated. Lacking opportunity to choose among modes of existence, they cannot be thought of as authentic or inauthentic.

Pepe Torres, the boy in "Flight" who becomes a man too suddenly at nineteen, flees for his life after he kills a man who insults him. Pepe and his Mama undergo the painful alienation that comes when parent and child separate, aggravated by their knowledge that Pepe may soon lose his life. The values they share with other paisanos determine Pepe's act of murder, and the customs of their people require that he be hunted to his death. Kino, the hero of The Pearl, is a Mexican-Indian peasant who aspires to improve the living conditions of his family by diving and finding a pearl of great price. When he does find such a pearl he quickly learns that it cannot easily be transformed into the things he wants. Before he can sell it for a fair price, mysterious persons begin to menace him and try to steal the pearl. He attempts to escape with his wife and child, but after the infant is killed by their pursuers, Kino returns to his home in La Paz and throws the pearl back into the sea. Kino's social system reminds him not to
try to change things, not to aspire to a higher position: when he had wealth, he made a stranger of his wife and lost his son. Kino must accept the social alienation enforced upon his race or else risk the personal alienation of losing his wife and even his life.

Stories like "Flight" and The Pearl show how pervasive is Steinbeck's concern with alienation, even when he makes little attempt to present psychologically credible characters. In his allegories, characteristics are symbolized rather than embodied in true-to-life figures. Nor is it always easy to distinguish between Steinbeck's realistic fiction and his allegories. He rarely develops his characters from the inside out, that is, by identifying with a character and writing about him as though about himself or about someone he has intimately known. Instead, Steinbeck seems to conceive characters intellectually, as elements whose characteristics will fit in a predetermined way into an allegorical structure; characters are usually more important for the characteristics they represent than for their wholeness as persons with lives and choices of their own. Steinbeck's most psychologically realistic characters are in some of his short stories and, perhaps, East of Eden, a book not widely admired among Steinbeck scholars. In East of Eden, Steinbeck seems more nearly to let his characters take over the book, doing and saying things which appear unplanned.
In the *East of Eden* journal, Steinbeck's occasional expressions of surprise at what his characters are doing makes it appear that after a quarter of a century of writing, he is not accustomed to letting his characters create themselves in this way. The journal shows that in this novel, his longest work, Steinbeck means to exercise careful control over his materials; yet the shifts in his attitude toward his characters show him alternating between careful planning for the meanings characters will symbolize and curiosity about what their reactions will be to future situations.

Flatness in the characterizations also limits discussion of "The Murder," one of the most anthologized stories in *The Long Valley*. Much can be inferred about its meaning, but the inferences are possible only because the characters are stereotypes and evoke stereotyped responses from the reader. The result is a fable which, like *The Pearl*, says more about cultural clichés than it does about human beings.

The plot of "The Murder" is based upon a woman's need for her husband to dominate her. It is little more than an ethnic joke which Steinbeck seems to take half-seriously. Jelka, a Yugoslavian, has an inflexible notion of the proper relationship between man and wife. Her husband, Jim Moore, does not understand the customs of his wife's family; he ignores Jelka's father, who tells him he must beat her. There is a paradox in this: by her unfaithfulness, Jelka manages to get across to Jim what she needs; hence she
forces him to dominate her and become what she thinks a manly husband must be. But this is no problem because Jim is flexible and her needs are simple. Jelka's self-contempt seems to cause the difficulty here, which can rather readily be attributed to conflicts between sexual stereotypes of two different cultures. Ultimately, different customs are responsible for preventing Jim and Jelka from communicating their needs and feelings. After Jim uses violence to break down the barriers between them, Jelka feels less estranged, for she finally believes she is the person she wants to be.

The flashback technique of "The Murder" prepares the reader for the story's happy ending. It also makes clear that the story is going to treat a crucial change in Jim. Jim is able to change because he is free: he supports the assumptions of his social class but he is not enslaved by them. Genuinely eager to improve his relationship with his wife, he finds his major problem is understanding her. For a while frustration causes him to mouth the notion of wives as chattels; he also begins going to a bordello in Monterey a year after his marriage to get the kind of feminine companionship he misses. But Jim changes his habits abruptly when he sees what is wrong with his treatment of Jelka: he kills her lover and whips her to make her happy and keep her faithful. Since she will not accept his concept of marriage, he will take his satisfaction from the ends rather than the means of his actions.
Steinbeck almost always uses flat characters in his so-called social or political novels, in which more realistic characters might distract from his ostensible social or political interests. Yet, paradoxically, Steinbeck is more interested in the effect of social organizations on individuals than he is in the organizations themselves. The result is not always a satisfactory integration of form and theme. The prototype of such works is "The Raid," first published in 1933.

In "The Raid" Dick and Root plan to hold a political rally. Although they suspect that the meeting will be raided by men who are hostile to their party (apparently the Communist Party), they proceed with their plans. Dick advises Root, a neophyte, to remember: "If some one busts you, it isn't him that's doing it, it's the System. And it isn't you he's busting. He's taking a crack at the Principle." Inside, they see men armed with clubs and sticks. As soon as Root begins his address, the men attack; Dick and Root wake up in the hospital cell of a jail. But Root is proud of himself, and he tells Dick that he forgives their attackers.

Root spoke drowsily. The pain was muffling him under. "You remember in the Bible, Dick, how it says something like 'Forgive them because they don't know what they're doing'?"

Dick's reply was stern. "You lay off that religion stuff, kid." He quoted, "'Religion is the opium of the people.'"
"Sure, I know," said Root. "But there wasn't no religion to it. It was just--I felt like saying that. It was just kind of the way I felt." (p. 108)

Anyone who has read *In Dubious Battle* (1936) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) can instantly recognize similarities between those novels and this short story. In *The Grapes of Wrath* Casy paraphrases the words of Christ as Root does here when he forgives his attackers. Like Casy, Root rejects any association with orthodox religion but adheres to a Christian ideal. The relationship between Dick and Root resembles that of Mac, the experienced Communist field worker in *In Dubious Battle*, and his trainee, Jim Nolan.

Dick and Root introduce a new type of alienated character: the one who has given himself over completely to an organization. Such people are more willfully alienated than those who fall into an inauthentic mode of existence, for the choice Dick and Root make is really to forgo future choices, to deny themselves their humanity. It is as though they attach themselves to a machine and function as impersonal parts of it. In such cases the characters go beyond the conflicts which keep people estranged from themselves and others: their authoritarian regimens grimly remove conflicts from their lives by depriving them of their freedom. Steinbeck's interest is in people, however, and not in political causes. "The Raid" bares the emotions of young Root in order to examine the motivations which will carry
him through the ordeal of the moment; it does not analyze what prompts him to join the party in the first place.

*In Dubious Battle* has the same emphasis as this story, although, being a novel, it provides somewhat more background information about the new recruit. Jim wants to join the Communist Party to put some meaning into his life. The depressing lives and deaths of his parents, the disappearance of his sister, and an unfair jail sentence make him susceptible to the arguments of a Party spokesman. A recruiter warns that Jim will be hated by almost everyone, even people he helps, if he is accepted into the Party, but he adds that the Communists usually lose their own hatreds. Working with Mac, Jim proves before long that his devotion to the Party is making him more valuable than Mac himself: Mac retains some sensitivity to humanity which adversely affects his judgment, from the Party's point of view. Like Root, Jim soon discovers a transcendental feeling of brotherhood in his work, but in both cases there is the terrible irony that the men must ignore individuals to pursue the abstract goals that inspire them. It eventually becomes clear that the Party not only does not care about people, but even subordinates isolated causes to maintaining an image favorable to itself. When Mac and Jim face certain failure in the strike they have organized, Mac directs every effort toward making the Communists look as good as possible. As a result, when Jim has his face blown off by
a sniper, Mac chooses to prop the faceless body up to be viewed by the fruit pickers at the funeral. Mac wants to incite them to make a final brave fight against the orchard owners, but to Steinbeck Jim's unidentifiable body is a symbol, instead, of man's loss of identity in an authoritarian system.

The Moon Is Down (1942) also asserts Steinbeck's belief that authoritarian systems depersonalize their members. The novel depicts the invasion of an unnamed country during a war (usually presumed to be Norway during World War II). Colonel Lanser directs the invading force (which corresponds with the Nazis). Lanser realizes that he must carry out orders without questioning them or thinking. He knows a soldier must become so insensitive in war that his loyalty blurs his feelings and the recollection of killings. At one point Lanser reminds one of his lieutenants that the life, much less the comfort, of a soldier is of little importance. A soldier has nothing but memories to count on, if he lives; and while he lives, he can but carry out orders. The young men under Lanser's command find this a bitter lesson. These soldiers are not automatons but men who long for warmth and love, girls and laughter. At first they cherish dreams of settling someday in the pleasant community they have seized and becoming a part of it; then they are appalled to find how much hatred they have aroused in the peaceful people.
They learn that they are safe nowhere: "Thus it came about that the conquerors grew afraid of the conquered."\(^3\)

In the novels whose characters are flat and which emphasize alienation caused by external conditions, the people who control society, or who are responsible for laws or standards, are usually the ones who are the most alienated. The people who are struggling against oppressive systems feel free to enjoy communication with one another. Thus the conquerors are more alienated than the conquered. One way to explain why people would willingly become part of a system which deprives them of their freedom and their identity is that a sense of inadequacy moves them to submit totally to external controls so that they can escape having to work out compromises between reality and desires. It is as if never having formed adequate superegos, they try to acquire them artificially by identifying with an established system of values. By conforming to a system outside themselves, they can satisfy their desire to feel that they are good and valuable.

Seven characters in the remaining stories of The Long Valley deserve careful examination in this study. Some of them strongly resemble characters in The Pastures of Heaven in their patterns of alienation. Other patterns emphasized in The Long Valley were less pronounced in the earlier book. After all the stories have been examined, it will be worthwhile to consider a few facts about Steinbeck's life and
especially to remember what he has said about the theme of
great literature. The key correspondences between Stein-
beck's short stories and novels may then readily be per-
ceived.

Emalin Hawkins

"Johnny Bear" is one of the few stories told by Stein-
beck in the first person; the author assumes the role of an
outsider temporarily in the town of Loma, California, with
a construction crew. He tells the story of Emalin and Amy
Hawkins, the aristocrats of the town of Loma. The daughters
of a congressman, they were symbols of propriety, symbols of
all the virtues the townspeople wanted to believe in. Emal-
iln attached more importance to the feeling of superiority
that came from their position than Amy did. Amy yearned for
a more ordinary life, but Emalin's ideal for herself re-
quired that she and Amy appear to hold identical values.
Since Emalin included chastity among the qualities that made
her feel special, she expected Amy to be celibate. Emalin's
attempt to control her sister's sex life for the sake of her
own self-image resembles Shark Wicks's attempt to protect
his daughter's virginity in The Pastures of Heaven, but the
results in "Johnny Bear" are far more serious.

Had it not been for a character called "Johnny Bear"
the town never would have known what great differences there
were in the Hawkins sisters. Johnny Bear is a cretin with
two extraordinary gifts: his memory and his talent for
mimicry. Johnny slips around town recording conversations in his head, then repeats them in the local bar. In this way he earns whiskey from the customers and provides them with the only entertainment in town. He imitates voices and duplicates conversations so faithfully that listeners always know at once whose conversations they are hearing.

One evening Johnny betrays the fact that Emalin chastizes Amy for wanting sexual relationships. In Johnny's mimicry Emalin says she would "cut that part of me away" (p. 153) if she had the same feelings as Amy; she threatens to get a doctor to control Amy's nerves and tells her to get to her prayers. Subsequent recitations by Johnny Bear divulge just how much Amy disappoints Emalin and the effect of Emalin's rigorous control on Amy. Amy attempts suicide and fails. Then, apparently with Emalin's collusion, Amy succeeds in her second try, seeking to escape a triple disgrace: one of the Chinese sharecroppers has made her pregnant.

Although the title of this story implies that Johnny Bear is the most important character, Amy Hawkins is the one who draws the reader's sympathy. Lisca believes that neither Johnny Bear nor Amy is the "central interest":

Rather, it is the social group within which these characters exist, and the conflict between its innate curiosity and its desire to perpetuate the symbols of its decorum despite the further revelation . . . that the spinster, aided by her sister, committed suicide—to hide her pregnancy.
Actually there are too many centers of interest in the story: instead of the deliberate but masterful diffusion of focus Faulkner achieves with similar material in "A Rose for Emily," Steinbeck gets lost in what Lisca calls "narrative style and setting . . . reminiscent of O. Henry and Bret Harte: the atmosphere of the outpost saloon and boardinghouse; the stranger in town; the unexpected twist in the last sentence." From the standpoint of this study, however, the focal point of "Johnny Bear" is the inauthentic life chosen by Emalin Hawkins. Emalin is one of Steinbeck's typical alienated figures: obsessed with the desire to feel special, Emalin tries to make herself and her sister fit the fantasies of the community about the Hawkins family. In doing this she isolates herself from others, denies her own nature, and tries to control Amy. Amy cannot bear self- estrangement as easily as Emalin and must end her life.

Peter Randall

"The Harness" tells the story of Peter Randall, a man who has much in common with Pat Humbert, the middle-aged bachelor of the Pastures of Heaven. Through Peter Steinbeck illustrates how compulsive habits can control men even when they see them for what they are, even when they try to abandon them.

For years Peter was dominated by his wife, much as Pat had been dominated by his parents. When Emma dies, Peter...
is as honest as Pat was in refusing to ascribe gentle or lovable qualities to the deceased, or pretending to affections he had not felt. Peter reveals that his tiny, sickly wife controlled everything about him ("I don't know how," he says again and again). She even made him wear a harness to improve his posture. Suddenly free of her, he wants to do many things she never allowed, such as slouch, and fill his entire river flat land with sweet peas. He believes that Emma kept him from being himself, and he wants to make up for it. Like Pat, Peter fills the lonely days by working obsessively on his farm, but despite his efforts on his sweet peas, he finds that he cannot escape Emma's control. Her presence in his memory continues to make him worry and suffer guilt. He too has tried to reject demands from the grave, only to find out that he is set for life into a pattern of alienation. He will never be free of the kind of compulsive behavior which makes him comfortable. Estranged from himself for years, he cannot suddenly be someone he does not know.

Peter also resembles Raymond Banks. In the earlier discussion of Banks (Chapter II), it was noted that both these restrained men must leave home from time to time for emotional stimulation. Raymond goes to executions at San Quentin; Peter goes to San Francisco for a week of whoring and drinking. Peter's farmhouse is as white and neat as Raymond's; it is "as restrained as its owners" (p. 112). Like
the Bankses, the Randalls have no children; their house "was unscarred, uncarved, unchalked. On the front and back porches footscrapers and thick cocoa-fiber mats kept dirt out of the house" (p. 113). Peter demonstrates his tidiness (and seems to hide the other side of his nature in a reaction formation) when he methodically dons a "neat, clean apron" (p. 114) to take care of Emma during her illnesses. Emma is sick frequently during the year, and invariably for a month or two after Peter has been to San Francisco. Emma seems to know that Peter needs these trips, yet she punishes him with her illnesses. The trips and the nursing which followed became a formal domestic ritual.

Peter's neighbor, Ed Chappell, sits with Peter the night Emma dies and he speaks as the voice of common sense. Ed is the spokesman for the ordinary man, the role a Munroe usually plays in The Pastures of Heaven. "You better wind that clock, Peter," he tells his friend. "It don't do a clock any good to stand not running" (p. 122). Peter, who tries for the first time in his life to let the mantel clock stop, and who wants to replace it with a cheerful, fast-ticking one, has the mantel clock running again before Ed's next visit. Ed is pleased to note this and to learn that Peter has not let the floor get dirty as he threatened to do.

It seems that Emma's demands on her husband neatly fit Peter's own compulsions. This is the answer to his question
about how Emma controlled him. For some reason he needed her domination. Here again, a Steinbeck character is alienated because he is oppressed by others, and the one who controls is alienated by controlling, rather than relating to other human beings. Both parties are victimized by their obsessions.

Carl Tiflin

In 1945 Steinbeck published four related stories under the title *The Red Pony*. Three of the stories had been published previously under this title in 1937, and all four had appeared in *The Long Valley* a year later. It best suits the purposes of this study to examine the four episodes as a novella, that is, to follow the form of the 1945 publication. Most readers remember *The Red Pony* for the boy in it, Jody Tiflin, who is central in two episodes. In another, the central figure is an old *paisano*, Gitano, who returns to die at his birthplace, now the Tiflin ranch. The final episode features Jody's grandfather. The self-alienated character in all the stories is Jody's father, Carl Tiflin. Carl's words and feelings separate him from others and prevent him from experiencing the warmth of human compassion.

Carl could not be tender without feeling himself weak, and he "hated weakness and sickness" (p. 225). His struggle to appear a man of strength and discipline makes him feel superior, but it costs him his son's affection, which goes
to Billy Buck, the cowhand. Billy is generally the epitome of respect toward his employer, but there are times when Carl's insensitivity toward Jody causes Billy to speak sharply, as at the climax of the first episode. When Jody's beloved pony dies, the boy attacks the buzzards feeding on the carcass.

He was still beating the dead bird when Billy Buck pulled him off and held him tightly to calm his shaking.

Carl Tiflin wiped the blood from the boy's face with a red bandana. Jody was limp and quiet now. His father moved the buzzard with his toe. "Jody," he explained, "the buzzard didn't kill the pony. Don't you know that?"

"I know it," Jody said wearily.

It was Billy Buck who was angry. He had lifted Jody in his arms, and had turned to carry him home. But he turned back on Carl Tiflin. "'Course he knows it," Billy said furiously. "Jesus Christ! man, can't you see how he'd feel about it?" (p. 238)

Because Carl's controlled response to the situation requires superficial logic and restraint, he cannot imagine how Jody is feeling about the pony and death, nor even what his son most needs from him at this moment: acceptance of "weakness," not demands for control. Obsessed with his notions about how things should be, Carl lacks Billy Buck's flexibility and gentle understanding.

Carl has no better understanding of adults. In the second episode, the old paisano, Gitano, tries to explain in his gentle, indirect way that he wants to die on the land where he was born. Carl's response to this sentimentality is practical and his solution conventional: the Tiflins do
need the simple services Gitano offers for his keep. Besides worrying about the cost of Gitano's food, Carl anticipates doctor bills; he therefore thinks that the man should go to Monterey and let his relatives care for him.

Carl Tiflin didn't like to be cruel, but he felt he must. "You can eat here tonight," he said. "You can sleep in the little room of the old bunkhouse. We'll give you your breakfast in the morning, and then you'll have to go along. Go to your friends. Don't come to die with strangers." (p. 246)

Carl reserved a "stern tone . . . for children and animals" (p. 259), but he was brutal in speaking to adults. Looking at Carl's decrepit thirty-year-old horse, Easter, Gitano says, "No good any more."

"Too old to work," Gitano repeated. "Just eats and pretty soon dies."
Carl Tiflin caught the last words. He hated his brutality toward old Gitano, and so he became brutal again.

"It's a shame not to shoot Easter," he said. "It'd save him a lot of pains and rheumatism." He looked secretly at Gitano, to see whether he noticed the parallel, but the big bony hands did not move, nor did the dark eyes turn from the horse. "Old things ought to be put out of their misery," Jody's father went on. "One shot, a big noise, one big pain in the head maybe, and that's all. That's better than stiffness and sore teeth."

Billy Buck broke in. "They got a right to rest after they worked all of their life. Maybe they like to just walk around." (p. 249)

After talking for a moment about what a good horse Easter once was, Carl "checked himself, for he hated softness" (p. 249). He has not succeeded in making cruelty and restraint natural for himself, nor is he always firm in his resolutions. Impractical enough to let the old horse live, Carl fears he might also "relent and let the old man stay,"
and so he continued to remind himself that this couldn't be" (p. 251).

Carl's chief defense against softness in himself is to attack others. "Jody knew how his father was probing for a place to hurt in Gitano. He had been probed often. His father knew every place in the boy where a word would fester" (p. 250). Jody was moved by Gitano's "dull dark eyes" behind which was "some unknown thing"; the boy noticed the old man's "gentle voice and its unanswerable, 'But I was born here'" (p. 252). When the Tiflins hear that Gitano has been seen riding old Easter "straight back into the mountains" (p. 255), Carl thinks the man has simply stolen the horse, but Jody, who has seen Gitano's rapier, "was full of a nameless sorrow" (p. 256).

Mrs. Tiflin's father is another who experiences the wound of a word from Carl Tiflin. Feeling stranded as a survivor of the "westering" generation (p. 302), Grandfather has one pleasure left in life: retelling what it was like to lead a wagon train west. Jody enjoys his tales; Billy Buck "held Grandfather in reverence" (p. 292); and Mrs. Tiflin tenderly suffers her father's repetitions. But Carl Tiflin finds Grandfather annoying. When Mrs. Tiflin defends her father to her husband,

There was more of threat than of request in her tone. And the threat irritated Carl.

"Well, how many times do I have to listen to the story of the iron plates, and the thirty-five horses? That time's done. Why can't he forget it, now it's
done?" He grew angrier while he talked, and his voice rose. "Why does he have to tell them over and over? He came across the plains. All right! Now it's finished. Nobody wants to hear about it over and over." (p. 299)

Grandfather overhears Carl and feels obliged to apologize. As Grandfather isolates what is important to him in his past, he seems unwittingly to pinpoint why Carl is so impatient with him.

"When we saw the mountains at last, we cried—all of us. But it wasn't getting here that mattered, it was movement and westering.

"We carried life out here and set it down the way those ants carry eggs. And I was the leader. The westering was as big as God, and the slow steps that made the movement piled up and piled up until the continent was crossed.

"Then we came down to the sea, and it was done." He stopped and wiped his eyes until the rims were red. "That's what I should be telling instead of stories."

When Jody spoke, Grandfather started and looked down at him. "Maybe I could lead the people some day," Jody said.

The old man smiled. "There's no place to go. There's the ocean to stop you. There's a line of old men along the shore hating the ocean because it stopped them." (p. 302)

Grandfather's repetitions may exacerbate Carl's feelings of inadequacy. In Grandfather's opinion Billy Buck "was one of the few men of the new generation who had not gone soft" (p. 292). Grandfather's sense of man's loss of the opportunity to fulfill himself as he and Billy have done may tell Carl that he has never been such a man.

Whatever the reason for his behavior, Carl seems to hide feelings of inadequacy with harshness and domination. Placing himself above others, he plays a role to prove his
superiority, but he remains unhappy because he is unconvinced. Carl's alienation seems to become acute when Grandfather and Gitano confront him with two irreversible facts that he may want to repudiate: man's declining usefulness in a world grown increasingly civilized, and man's inescapable mortality. An inauthentic person like Carl avoids such existential facts. He may try to control himself, as well as others, in order to deny that life is quite beyond his control.

The Woman in "The Snake"

In "The Snake" a woman persuades a young biologist, Dr. Phillips, to sell her a male rattlesnake and a rat to feed it. Dr. Phillips does not understand the woman; her strange requests and her identification with the snake make him afraid. Nevertheless he cooperates with her. He sells her the snake, puts it in a cage by itself, feeds it a rat, and agrees to keep the snake for her so that she can come to feed it again and again. However, she never returns, and the doctor, haunted by the memory of what happened, wonders what has become of the woman.

In his essay "About Ed Rickets" 6 Steinbeck says that the incident in the story is exactly what occurred one night in Ricketts's laboratory in Monterey. Steinbeck's summary of the incident in the essay shows almost none of his fascination with the characters evident in the fictionalized
version of it, and Steinbeck insists that he does not know what the incident means. Yet one of the most important aspects of the story is Steinbeck's utilization of two of his favorite character types. Representatives of these types have already been encountered in Helen Van Deventer and her physician, another Dr. Phillips. The biologist, obviously based on Ed Ricketts, will recur as "Doc" in *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday*, and he has certain qualities that appear frequently in Steinbeck's sympathetic characters. The mysterious woman, who is aggressive, controlled, and quite sure of herself and of what she wants, is analogous to women in novels from the first (Ysobel, "the Red Saint," in *Cup of Gold*) to the last (Margie Young-Hunt in *The Winter of Our Discontent*). Steinbeck's insistence that he does not understand the woman or the story is beside the point. Whether or not he understands this character, his repeated presentations of women with these traits suggest, at the least, his fascination with her type. He usually presents such women as mysterious or enigmatic. Of the woman in "The Snake" he says, "What happened or why I have no idea. Whether the woman was driven by a sexual, a religious, a zoophilic, or a gustatory impulse we never could figure out" (p. xxiv). He sees Cathy Trask of *East of Eden* as particularly unfathomable. In his journal Steinbeck describes Cathy as "a fascinating and horrible person," a "monster":
You can't go into the mind of a monster because what happens there is completely foreign and might be gibberish. It might only confuse because it would not be rational in an ordinary sense. (Journal of a Novel, p. 44)

The woman in "The Snake" seems cruel because she wants to make a sport of watching the snake eat the rat. Dr. Phillips "hated people who made sport of natural processes"; although he regularly feeds rats to snakes, he feels that "it was profoundly wrong to put a rat into the cage" for this woman, "deeply sinful; and he didn't know why" (pp. 80-81). The snake approaches the rat; the snake's "head weaved slowly back and forth, aiming, getting distance, aiming. Dr. Phillips glanced again at the woman. He turned sick. She was weaving too, not much, just a suggestion" (p. 83).

Once the rattlesnake kills the rat, "The woman relaxed, relaxed sleepily," and Dr. Phillips demands, "It was an emotional bath, wasn't it?" (p. 84). But the woman's interest turns to watching the snake eat the rat.

[The snake] seemed to measure the body and to kiss it. Finally it opened its mouth and unhinged its jaws at the corners. Dr. Phillips put his will against his head to keep it from turning toward the woman. He thought, "If she's opening her mouth, I'll be sick. I'll be afraid." He succeeded in keeping his eyes away. (pp. 84-85)

Steinbeck does not say in the story, as he does in the essay, that the woman in fact "moved her jaws and stretched her mouth just as the snake was doing" (p. xxiv). (Miss Martin, Tularecito's first teacher in The Pastures of Heaven
and another controlled, self-assured woman, made similar involuntary motions with her hand while she watched Gomez whip Tularecito.) The woman watches the snake until it has finished its meal and gone to sleep. Her dark eyes, which were glittering when she arrived, then "seemed veiled with dust" (p. 78), and finally appeared "misty" after the "emotional bath" (p. 84), now "came out of their dusty dream" for a moment as she tells Dr. Phillips to feed her snake plenty of rats and not to take his poison from him: "I want him to have it" (p. 86).

She leaves swiftly. Dr. Phillips thinks about all he has read "about psychological sex symbols," but "It doesn't seem to explain. Maybe I'm too much alone. Maybe I should kill the snake. If I knew--no, I can't pray to anything" (p. 86).

While many things in the story justify Dr. Phillips's thinking about sex symbols, even the symbols take on more meaning if the woman is linked to other Steinbeck characters who seem to find an important release of tensions (probably often, if not always, sexual tensions) in identifying with violence outside themselves. The physiological symptoms Dr. Phillips observes in the woman correspond to sexual satisfaction. Having no information about the woman except the description of her in the laboratory, the reader can no more judge her behavior than Steinbeck can; yet the woman resembles other characters who, alienated from others and from
their own feelings, turn to violence as substitutes for personal intimacy. In *The Pastures of Heaven*, Raymond Banks seems to release his feelings at prison executions; and this study will show that in *The Long Valley*, notably in "The Chrysanthemums," "The White Quail," and "The Vigilante," characters likewise release their emotions by identifying with violent actions.

Elisa Allen

"The Chrysanthemums," which begins *The Long Valley*, is one of Steinbeck's most famous stories. It is a good early example of Steinbeck's "non-teleological" intentions, his wish to show how things are without assigning blame. Whatever is responsible for the alienation between Elisa and Henry Allen is not clearly evident, and if either Elisa or Henry could improve matters, the facts of the story barely suggest how. Nevertheless, there are details enough for speculation about some causes of Elisa's frustration, and with these details and some previous familiarity with how Steinbeck represents alienation, the reader can justify making inferences about the couple's relationship.

Elisa Allen leads a pleasant life with her husband on their ranch in the foothills near the Salinas River in California, but there is a vague lack of fulfillment in her life, a loneliness that seems to come from the isolation and the limitations of her existence. Her most satisfying
employment is the work she does in her garden. She enjoys her gift for gardening, particularly for growing big chrysanthemums, although her energy requires more challenging work: her scissors are too eager, the stems of the chrysanthemums undersized for the effort uses cutting them.

Elisa's alienation emerges when someone reminds her of what she is missing in the world: a handyman comes by in his wagon on his travels between Seattle and San Diego. When the man shows interest in her flowers, Elisa feels very warm towards him and imagines that they understand each other in some special way. She confides to him her wish that women could live as he does, wandering and sleeping in the wagon. Her naked hunger for experience and for someone to understand her are clues to the emptiness of her life, and they make her oblivious to the fact that the man is manipulating her to make business for himself. Later, on the way to town with her husband, she discovers how the handyman has taken advantage of her. Painful rejection is added to Elisa's painful frustration, and she must resort to thinking of activities in Salinas that might relieve her feelings. Witnessing the violence of a prize fight appeals to Elisa for a moment, but she decides to settle for the more lady-like indulgence of having wine with her dinner.

There are many indications that Elisa is miscast in the role of housewife: her hands are over-powerful; her clothes
mannish; she has no children. But society offers her no other role. The stranger reminds her of that. Whether at this point in her life she would prefer being an itinerant pot-mender, or whether the thought is just symbolic of her desire to feel free, she clearly feels the limitations of her role as a female in rural America of the early twentieth century. It must be supposed that she does not have the liberty to choose among things she might like better than keeping house. However, Steinbeck is not concerned with the causes of Elisa's limited existence; he focuses upon her frustrations. Steinbeck's sensitive portrayal of Elisa reveals his awareness that sexual stereotyping creates alienation. But artificially conforming to notions of proper masculine and feminine behavior is just another form of role-playing, a self-alienating behavior pattern practiced by most major characters in Steinbeck's fiction. Whether these characters play roles because they know no better (like Pat Humbert, the dutiful son) or because they want to maintain an idealized image of themselves (like Helen Van Deventer, the enduring mourner), the roles they play isolate them.

In Elisa's case an interesting question arises regarding her own responsibility for her alienation, that is, whether her position may have more potential in it than she allows. For example, Henry suggests that she try her gift for growing things in the orchard, implying that he is willing to
accept her as a working partner on the ranch. Although Elisa is pleased at the thought, she does not seem to take him seriously. Nothing in the story proves that he would not have wanted her to work with the trees if she wanted to do this. This conversation is the first of several indications in the story that she is bound by what she thinks Henry expects of a wife instead of by an actual limitation he imposes.

In Elisa's relationship with Henry, certain things imply that he lacks understanding of her, but there is little to explain whether he just cannot understand or whether she has not given him an adequate opportunity. What is there, is ambiguous. Furthermore, since Elisa's reaction to the stranger seems to have a strong sexual element in it, it is worth considering whether Elisa's desire to live a carefree life may extend toward freer sexual expression than she knows. Perhaps her concept of proper huswifery precludes female aggressiveness in sex. The exchange of words between her and the stranger has distinctly sexual overtones, and Elisa seems sexually aroused after his departure. Although Elisa may have been unaware of what she sublimated by her talk about flowers, it seems probable that the man observed her heightened emotional state and the various meanings of their words.

Steinbeck seldom portrays major characters in genuinely happy marriages, and even less often does he make it plain
that there is a good sexual relationship between a married couple. There are almost no scenes making pleasurable conjugal sex explicit; the intimate, spontaneous, and enjoyable sex occurs most often between people not married to one another. Near strangers attract one another most strongly, as though outside matrimony's bonds individuals relate to others more freely. Furthermore, Steinbeck seems to think that people with brown skins are less restrained in sex. Nearly all the white women in his fiction who show the same freedom from restraint are whores. Sex seems best to Steinbeck when there is no potential for permanent commitment. There are indications that he believes that sex can be an expression of empathy through physical contact, that is, that when a man and a woman understand one another, they may experience an impulse to complete, through sex, the closeness they feel. In such instances sex culminates the experience of each saying "I" to the "other." In marriage, the vitality of this recognition expires, if it ever exists. A poignant aspect of "The Chrysanthemums" derives from Elisa's sensation that she has experienced a moment of intimacy with the stranger, but her impression of the man is created by projection: she convinces herself that the man who stopped at her fence has qualities she needs momentarily to feel fulfilled, satisfied, and self-confident. Therefore she loves her creation. To feel loved in return reaffirms what she wants to believe about herself: that she is strong,
wise, independent, free. However, with the habits of her life still operating, she can only complete her affair symbolically: she gives her flowers to the man, the knife-sharpener and pot-mender.

In brief, the steps of their encounter are as follows: as Elisa is working in the garden, the man approaches in his wagon, ostensibly to seek directions. He makes a point of telling her he is in no hurry. After he describes his lackadaisical life, she pulls off her heavy leather work gloves and says his kind of life sounds "nice" (p. 14). He then leans confidentially over the fence and asks whether he can mend anything for her. Twice she resists his requests with quick, negative replies. But when he asks about the plants she is working on, she softens. From then on he follows her lead as she becomes eager and enthusiastic. She tears off her mannish hat, shakes out her pretty hair, and invites him into the yard. She excitedly digs up a flower for the man's imaginary acquaintance, having entirely forgone her protective gloves. The image of Elisa using her bare fingers to scoop soil into a "big," "bright," "new," "red flower pot" (pp. 16-17) conveys the impression that Elisa has abandoned her concern for protection in her eagerness to give the man something special. As she hesitates before telling him her gardening secrets, she looks deeply and searchingly at him: "Her mouth opened a little, and she seemed to be listening" (p. 17). Then she describes how her "planting hands" work,
following an instinct and a sureness all their own. She says, "When you're like that you can't do anything wrong. Do you see that? Can you understand that?" At this moment "She was kneeling on the ground looking up at him. Her breast swelled passionately" (p. 18). The man replies, self-consciously comparing his own feelings at night in his wagon. Elisa breaks in, sure she knows what he means. She says, "When the night is dark--why, the stars are sharp-pointed, and there's quiet. Every pointed star gets driven into your body. It's like that. Hot and sharp and--lovely" (p. 18). She reaches out, almost touching his legs before her hand drops and she crouches "low like a fawning dog" (p. 18).

The man's abrupt reminder of his need to make a living disrupts her mood and shames her into getting some pots for him to fix. As soon as he leaves, she tears off her soiled clothes and scrubs herself with pumice in a tub of hot water. Supposedly getting ready to go out with her husband, she seems also to be rid of unrecognized shame for being sexually excited by the stranger. Then Elisa dons her nicest clothes. When Henry comes in, he sees a change in his wife and he tells her she looks "different, strong and happy" (p. 31). Her reaction to his compliment understandably bewilders him: first she agrees that she feels strong; next she asks him what he means, as though she takes offense; but then she grows "complete again" (p. 22) and
says enigmatically that she is stronger than she ever knew before. Henry looks away; when he looks back at her his eyes have become "his own again" (p. 22).

It seems that Elisa cannot appear forceful without appearing to be a different person to her husband. She seems to want to be herself and at the same time to fear impropriety. Henry hardly recognizes her when she feels excited, vibrant, and aggressive; but after her lingering excitement attracts his attention, she rebuffs him and turns him back into the person he usually is. Perhaps if Elisa responded to Henry with the openness she showed the stranger, the two might have achieved the kind of "I-Thou" communion she thought she had earlier in the afternoon. Here also is a chance for a spontaneous sexual encounter. Perhaps Elisa rebuffs Henry to protect her ego because past experience has taught her not to hope for understanding. Or perhaps she fears that if she tells her husband how she feels she will intimidate him. Possibly, too, she is trying to hide the cause of her excitement from both of them because sexual aggressiveness is somehow taboo for her. Whatever the reason, she sends Henry back inside himself. Steinbeck's description of Henry here says a great deal about Henry in a very few words and implies that ordinarily this husband is veiled and humdrum. Henry drops the subject of Elisa's appearance and offers to get the car. After he leaves, Elisa takes particular pains in putting on her hat. Hatless,
glowing Elisa with her bare hands busy in the dirt contrasts significantly with the scrubbed, pumiced, hatted Elisa who stiffened and tightened at the sight of her husband. From the beginning to the end of this conversation, Steinbeck shows how alienated these two are from each other as well as from themselves.

The Allens, unable to communicate their most important thoughts, will try to relieve frustrations caused by repression. The discussion of an outlet for their feelings reminds the reader that early in the story Henry "put on his joking tones" to ask whether Elisa would like to go to the prize fights; Elisa gave her negative answer "breathlessly," then repeated, "No, I wouldn't like fights" (p. 12). Henry said that he was fooling and that they would see a movie. As with the apple-growing suggestion, Henry actually seemed to be serious; Elisa was the one who rejected his idea on the grounds of its inappropriateness or out of fear of what he might think of her, should she take up his suggestion. But after she sees that the stranger dumped the chrysanthemum she gave him in the middle of the road, Elisa surprises Henry by talking about the bloodiness of prize fights and asking whether women ever go. She refuses his renewed invitation in spite of her obvious interest, apparently because she thinks her interest too masculine. Her words betray her: "It will be enough if we can have wine. It will be plenty" (p. 23). Both of the Allens keep themselves
under such tight control that they need to identify with violence outside themselves to relieve pent-up feelings. They really want to watch the violent fights, for violence seems to be a substitute for the intimacy they cannot handle.

Mary Teller

The marital problems in "The White Quail," which follows "The Chrysanthemums," are openly described and are attributable directly to the obsessions of the wife, Mary Teller, who is another Steinbeck woman driven by her need to feel unique. Mary tries to control her environment as well as herself in order to feel special. She avoids sexual intimacy and identifies herself with her perfect, changeless garden because she values the privacy of her person as paramount. Mary selects Harry Teller for her husband because she thinks he will fit in with the dream of a garden that preoccupies her. She acquires him like a piece of property, one that is chosen to blend in with a more valuable acquisition to be made later on. When poor Harry proposed marriage, he had to agree perfunctorily to Mary's plans for a garden before she "let him" kiss her (p. 28; Steinbeck uses "let him" three times). She was startled and annoyed when Harry then expressed a hunger for her, but she controlled her reaction (as she controls everything else) in order to pursue her design.
Once married, Mary loves Harry for not asking to put flowers in the garden that will not suit her, although "after all, it was her garden. She had invented it, and willed it" (p. 29). The day she finishes the garden, Harry reaches out for her but then withdraws his hand. He declares that his love is mixed with fear, and he explains, acknowledging Mary's uniqueness, "You're kind of untouchable. There's an inscrutability about you. Probably you don't even know it yourself. You're kind of like your own garden--fixed, and just so. I'm afraid to move around" (p. 30). Mary seems to miss the point although she does--let him kiss her.

Harry tries hard to understand his wife, yet she tires of trying to explain things to him and she treasures her secret thoughts. "He didn't want to spoil the things she told him, but he just couldn't help it. He needed too much light on things that light shriveled" (p. 34). Since the Tellers have separate bedrooms, Mary avoids directly refusing her husband's sexual advances by locking the door between them when she wants him to stay away from her. "It was a signal; there were things Mary didn't like to talk about. The lock was an answer to a question, a clean, quick, decisive answer" (pp. 35-36). She finds it "peculiar" but "sweet" that Harry turns the knob carefully, trying to keep her from knowing that he feels ashamed to find the door locked.
Meanwhile, Mary maintains her exquisite garden, keeping it changeless and free from harmful things like slugs and the dog she will not let Harry have. Mary and Harry like to go out at night to kill slugs and snails: she holds a flashlight while he crushes the invaders. Surprised that the nasty business does not seem revolting to her, he observes that her beauty hides a certain sturdiness. The two are in high spirits after the hunts, for Mary makes the discovery of the creatures and their extermination an exciting event. She has in common with Elisa Allen ("The Chrysanthemums") her hardiness, her heavy work gloves, and the way her garden inspires the swell of her breast.

Mary's greatest "ecstasy" occurs when a white quail begins to visit the garden. Her identification with the quail shows how strongly Mary believes that anticipation or initial appearance delights one far more than experience or reality.

"Why," Mary cried to herself, "she's like me!" A powerful ecstasy quivered in her body. "She's like the essence of me, an essence boiled down to utter purity. She must be the queen of the quail. She makes every lovely thing that ever happened to me one thing."

The white quail dipped her beak again and threw back her head to swallow.

The memories welled in Mary and filled her chest. Something sad, always something sad. The packages that came; untying the string was the ecstasy. The thing in the package was never quite--

The marvelous candy from Italy. "Don't eat it dear. It's prettier than it's good." Mary never ate it, but looking at it was an ecstasy like this.

"Mary dear, be very brave now. Your father has--passed away." The first moment of loss was an ecstasy like this.
The white quail stretched a wing backward and smoothed down the feathers with her beak. "This is the me that was everything beautiful. This is the center of me, my heart." (pp. 38-39)

Here Mary betrays her feelings of inadequacy by including herself among things which appear more delightful in the first moments of perception than they are in actuality. This view of life and of her own being explains why she wants to make her garden appear unchanging and why, to keep it perfect, she keeps out tangled thickets, slugs, cats, and dogs. She wants to control the garden in an ideal state suspended from natural events, because she wants to identify with it in this condition. Therefore "She had invented it, and willed it." Her irrational desire to maintain her garden in an artificially perfect state parallels her irrational feelings about herself, which require denying her sexuality. The quail, pure in its whiteness and unique among its species, immediately attracts her as embodying all things meaningful to her: "This is the me that was everything beautiful." She wants to believe that in her essence she is still an innocent girl with a more beautiful vision of life than experience has shown her can exist. Her rejection of her husband and her obsession with inviolability, purity, and uniqueness suggest that she finds sexual intercourse obscene. Once Mary (who has the name of the Virgin Mother) even says that the cool, utterly calm and orderly garden is her. Harry notes a resemblance without remarking
specifically that both Mary and her garden are exciting to
see but must not be touched, are lovely but unnatural. As
with the other "ecstasies" of her life which turn sad upon
fulfillment, she may enjoy exciting her husband, but sexual
intercourse is another matter: "the packages that came; un-
ty ing the string was the ecstasy. The thing in the package
was never quite--"

In her obsession with controlling her environment and
herself, Mary resembles Helen Van Deventer. Each of these
women loves her garden for its peace and for the way it
seems to shut out the rough world. (Helen foreshadows Mary
by encouraging a quail.) Both women have rapturous ex-
periences alone in their gardens, during which they sense
separation of two aspects of themselves. Finally, like
Helen, Mary experiences a moment of ecstasy at the news of
her father's death. Death provides for both an opportunity
to worship an idealized father who replaces a real one.

Steinbeck indicates that Mary experiences herself as a
person with a double on two occasions. First, standing in
the garden, Mary imagines that she sees herself sitting in
her chair in the house. She is conscious that the self she
is looking at is the one other people see. Later she iden-
tifies the white quail as the "me that's way inside." These
occurrences make Mary one of the most explicitly self-
alienated figures in Steinbeck's fiction.
When a cat threatens the birds in her garden, Mary tries to persuade Harry to poison the cat because she feels it is after her, and she confesses her identification with the quail. Having known in advance that Harry will fail to appreciate the importance of the quail to her, Mary pleads hysterically, but for the first time in his life Harry continues to disagree with her. Refusing to put out poison because he is afraid it will kill dogs and other animals (which Mary does not want in the garden either), Harry offers an alternative that displeases Mary: he will get up early to frighten the cat with an air gun. Mary locks her door that night. The next morning Harry shoots the quail instead of the cat. He thinks himself "a skunk," but he says to himself, "I'm lonely... Oh, Lord, I'm so lonely!" (p. 42).

Once again the person who feels hurt uses violence as an outlet for his feelings. Like Elisa Allen, Harry knows he will continue to feel estranged after the emotions of the immediate episode are spent. And once again Steinbeck presents a situation in which a selfish, manipulative person rejects someone who wants to share love.

At first glance the unhappiness of well-meaning Harry seems to be the unfortunate by-product of Mary's obsessions with fantasy and control. But Harry may also be responsible for his alienation. Harry's feelings about Mary correspond
with Pat Humbert's reaction to Mae Munroe: attracted by women they actually know very little about, these men imagine ideal relationships with them. These men do not love real women but creatures embellished by their fantasies. The men like believing that the women of their dreams can love them in return, for this gratifies them by proving their own worthiness: ideal ladies could only love fine men. Just as Pat would not have been devastated by Mae's marriage if he could have perceived his prospects more realistically, Harry Teller could have understood more about Mary's personality before they married if he had not been overwhelmed by her prettiness and his expectation that his physical desire would be fulfilled. Sexual stereotyping, an important factor here, may be as much Steinbeck's stereotyping as Harry's. Harry admires Mary's appearance as though he assumes that a sexually attractive woman will be sexually pleasing. He overlooks indications that Mary is less interested in satisfying him than in pleasing herself: she even delays accepting his proposal of marriage to describe the garden she must have when she marries. She elaborates with vivid details, but he merely laughs and kisses her.

Once they are married Harry learns just how seriously Mary is obsessed with the garden, but he gives in to her whims and her frequent avoidance of sex. Since he does not want her to know when he tries her locked door, it is
possible that he himself may be timid about sexual intimacy. By cooperating with her he may be protecting his own ambivalent feelings, projecting his sense of inadequacy upon her. Because Mary is a very private person, Harry too can avoid intimacy. That he has never refused Mary anything before the day he refuses to poison the cat could be further indication that he is insecure and enjoys her passive domination. His final rebellion seems related to the simple fact that Mary refuses to let him have a dog. He gives up having the dog he wants (which could give him undemanding affection) so that Mary can maintain her garden; but he will not endanger neighborhood dogs with poison.

Steinbeck probably did not intend the reader to focus upon Harry's weaknesses. The author seems to be on the man's side, for Harry, the businessman, is shown trying unsuccessfully to understand his fanciful wife and being at the same time sensitively concerned that Mary does not understand his job. But Mary is no more perfunctory about Harry's work than Harry was, at first, about her garden. Steinbeck seems to believe that the husband is the one with the right sense of things. Whatever Steinbeck intends, "The White Quail" shows little hope for this marriage.

Mike: The Vigilante

"The Vigilante," Mike, experiences emotional starvation, loneliness, and hunger for human fellowship, as well
as a craving to feel special, feelings which repeatedly affect Steinbeck's alienated characters. This story is so brief and terse that patterns of alienation are but slightly developed; yet there are hints that Mike tries to raise his self-esteem through rituals and mythmaking. It is truly significant, however, that he attempts to satisfy his emotional needs by brutally treating another human being as an object to hate. Mike seems to project guilt and self-hatred onto the man he lynches: knowing virtually nothing about the victim, he eagerly calls him a "fiend."

At first "The Vigilante" seems radically different from the story of Raymond Banks, the prosperous, genial chicken farmer in The Pastures of Heaven. But Mike's story curiously repeats many details from the story of Raymond Banks; the repetition of these details makes the two stories ultimately say similar things. Since "The Vigilante" has as givens certain facts that could only be inferred about Banks's story, a comparison of the similarities strengthens the argument previously made about Banks.

The setting of "The Vigilante" is not specific: it is a small town. The title of the collection implies that the town is in the Salinas Valley of California. By calling Mike "The Vigilante" in his title, Steinbeck ironically contrasts the favorable image of vigilance inherent in the noun with the appalling mindlessness of Mike as a part of a self-righteous lynch mob. The high point of the story's central
episode comes just before the story itself actually begins and is revealed through Mike's memory: forty men have seized a Negro from jail and have lynched him. Action in the opening sentence is anticlimactic, and from there on the interest in the story is the unraveling of Mike's thoughts and feelings about the event.

The great surge of emotion, the milling and shouting of the people fell gradually to silence in the town park. A crowd of people still stood under the elm trees, vaguely lighted by a blue street light two blocks away. A tired quiet settled on the people; some members of the mob began to sneak away into the darkness. The park lawn was cut to pieces by the feet of the crowd.

Mike knew it was all over. He could feel the let-down in himself. He was as heavily weary as though he had gone without sleep for several nights, but it was a dream-like weariness, a grey comfortable weariness. He pulled his cap down over his eyes and moved away, but before leaving the park he turned for one last look. (p. 133)

Mike is annoyed when someone tries to set fire to the hanging body with a newspaper torch. He thinks, "That don't do no good" (p. 133), yet he cannot stop looking.

Mike filled his eyes with the scene. He felt that he was dull. He wasn't seeing enough of it. Here was a thing he would want to remember later so he could tell about it, but the dull tiredness seemed to cut the sharpness off the picture. His brain told him this was a terrible and important affair, but his eyes and his feelings didn't agree. It was just ordinary. Half an hour before, when he had been howling with the mob and fighting for a chance to help pull on the rope, then his chest had been so full that he had found he was crying. But now everything was dead, everything unreal; the dark mob was made up of stiff lay-figures. In the flamelight the faces were as expressionless as wood. Mike felt the stiffness, the unreality in himself, too. He turned away at last and walked out of the park. (p. 134)
Mike had sat in a bar near the jail all afternoon hoping the rumored event would take place. Then "in the front line of the mob when it crushed the closed jail door," Mike hardly noticed that "a driving line forty men deep" had smashed him against the door (p. 135). But now after the exhilarating moments of the violence have passed, Mike realizes that the titillation lasts little longer than the experience of killing a man. The men of the mob never meant anything to him, and now they are less than men: they are not priests engaged in a ritual, but "lay-figures," "stiff" and "expressionless"; "The moment he left the outskirts of the mob a cold loneliness fell upon him" (p. 134). He heads for a bar hoping "there would be people there, and talk, to remove his silence; and he hoped the men wouldn't have been to the lynching" (p. 135).

The bartender, Welch, had hurried away from the lynching hoping that some of the men would want a drink when it was over. His excitement resembles Bert Munroe's during his first conversation with Raymond Banks about the subject of hangings. Eyes bright, Welch leans over the bar and asks Mike, "Was you there all the time--to the jail and everything?" Mike answers, "Everything. . . . I was one of the first in the jail, and I helped pull on the rope. There's times when citizens got to take the law in their own hands. Sneaky lawyer comes along and gets some fiend out of it" (p. 137). Mike then theorizes that the victim actually died
in the jail after several men hit him.

"Because I helped get his clothes off, and he never made a wiggle, and when we strung him up he didn't jerk around none. No, sir. I think he was dead all the time, after that second guy smacked him."

"Well, it's all the same in the end."

"No, it ain't. You like to do the thing right. He had it coming to him and he should have got it."

Mike reached into his trousers pocket and brought out a piece of torn blue denim. "That's a piece of the pants he had on." (pp. 137-38)

After treating Mike to another beer, Welch barters for a piece of the cloth. For the second time Welch expresses disappointment that no other customers have come to the bar. After he closes up, the two men head home in the same direction. "The loneliness had fallen on Mike again" (p. 139). Welch, a relative newcomer to the town, introduces himself; Mike responds, "I was born right in this town, right in the house I live in now. I got a wife but no kids. Both of us born right in this town. Everybody knows us" (p. 139).

Welch begins to wonder what kind of man the victim was. "Mike answered out of his loneliness. 'The papers all said he was a fiend. I read all the papers. That's what they all said'" (p. 139). Welch says he, too, read the papers, but he has "known some pretty nice niggers" (p. 140). Seeing that he is annoying Mike by persisting with the subject, Welch pauses a moment before he asks another question: "I never been to a lynching. How's it make you feel--afterwards?"
Mike shied away from the contact. "It don't make you feel nothing." he put down his head and increased his pace. The little bartender had nearly to trot to keep up. The street lights were fewer. It was darker and safer. Mike burst out, "Makes you feel kind of cut off and tired, but kind of satisfied, too. Like you done a good job--but tired and kind of sleepy." (p. 140)

After the two men part, less than a page of narrative remains. The scene and the characters shift, and the story takes on additional meanings. Mike goes into his house. His thin, petulant wife was sitting by the open gas oven warming herself. She turned complaining eyes on Mike where he stood in the doorway. Then her eyes widened and hung on his face. "You been with a woman," she said hoarsely. "What woman you been with?" (p. 141)

Mike's sarcastic answer brings doubt "into the dissatisfied eyes" of his wife until she guesses correctly: "Did they get the nigger?" (p. 141). Mike retorts, "Find out yourself if you're so slick." But when he goes into the bathroom and sees his face in the mirror, he is shocked. "'By God, she was right,' he thought. 'That's just exactly how I do feel!'" (p. 141). What he discovers is that he does feel as if he has "been with a woman."

The significant characteristic Mike has in common with Raymond Banks is emotional starvation. Both men resort to participating in executions to feed their appetites for emotion. Mike participates more directly than Raymond, but both find that the stimulation of sharing the excitement with a crowd offers them the ultimate sensation in their anaesthetized lives. Evidence that Mike wants to be able to
feel that his experience makes him unique is analogous to Raymond's pleasure in knowing an important man like the warden and in getting rare invitations to San Quentin. Mike thinks, "Here was a thing he would want to remember later so he could tell about it"; he hopes no one else at the bar will have seen the execution; and he likes saying that he was "one of the first in the jail" and that he "helped pull on the rope." These clues, together with Mike's repetitions of phrases and details, suggest that he has begun already to form a myth around the event. Mike also displays some appreciation for ritual, which was such an important part of Raymond's life. Raymond had made rituals of many things, but especially of attending hangings and of killing chickens. Mike's impulse toward ritual causes him discomfort because he thinks his victim was dead before he was hanged. Mike denies what Welch says, that "it's all the same in the end." Mike wants to believe that the man deserved his death and that he was killed in the "right" way—not too soon, not without realizing what was happening. Furthermore, Mike keeps a relic of the event, the scrap of cloth, which will doubtless become part of a ritual of retelling.

Raymond always joined the men in the warden's office after hangings to enjoy the nervous fellowship there. Afterwards, "he had a good dinner with the warden before he started home again. To some little extent the same emotion occurred to Raymond when the little boys came to watch him
kill chickens. He was able to catch a slight spark of their excitement" (Pastures, p. 124). Mikes seeks the same kind of emotional afterplay at Welch's bar. In the bar Mike slakes his thirst with beer while he brags about his unique experience. Similarly, Raymond basks in Bert's praise of his exceptional farm, then offers him a beer while he enjoys Bert's envy over the prison trips and they discuss going to an execution. There seems to be a relationship in Raymond and Mike between the hungers (including thirsts) of various kinds, physical and emotional. When an emotional need has been titillated, the physical is also stimulated and wants satisfying. Of course beer-drinking is also part of a manly ritual. Drinking effects cohesiveness among men and reinforces a man if his faith in himself wavers.

Mike must avoid thinking of the Negro victim as a man, or else he will be overcome with revulsion and guilt. (Mike's conviction that the Negro was dead before the lynching because of another man's blow may be another device for avoiding guilt.) The idea of setting fire to the body disgusts Mike. Having passed the peak of his excitement in this affair, he judges the burning as excessive. It is as though the earlier action could be accommodated only as ritual: through ritual and myth Mike gains distance from the event and depersonalization of himself and the victim. Once he has spent his emotions, he can again perceive cruelty. Although his reason for objecting to the burning is that it
"don't do no good," Mike's understated objection seems linked to his later eagerness not to see the Negro as a man. For his peace of mind Mike must believe the victim was a "fiend" and that the job was "good" for saving "the county a lot of money and no sneaky lawyers getting in." If Mike entertains, as Welch does, the possibility that the mob may have killed a "nice" man, he cannot tolerate the toll on his senses. Once again Welch is to Mike as Bert Munroe is to Raymond Banks: Welch is curious about the lynching, but he has too much imagination really to enjoy the violent event (Welch saw nothing but "the last, after he was up and it was all over," p. 135). Both Mike and Raymond can witness a hanging and suppress its human aspects: the crowd, as well as the condemned, are not persons to them; the excitement is all. Bert and Welch see the condemned as people and are troubled by their deaths. Just as Bert could upset Raymond by confronting him with his inadequacies of feeling, Welch provokes a protest in Mike by wondering "what kind of fella he was" (p. 139).

That Raymond is dissatisfied with his life can only be inferred. As noted in Chapter II of this study, Steinbeck says nothing about Raymond's relationship with his wife, although he says that Mrs. Banks seldom talks with their guests; Raymond likes children but appears to have none; Raymond seems jolly but he rarely laughs. His only stated problem is his "appetite for profound emotion" which his
"meager imagination" cannot fill. Steinbeck says more than this about Mike's feelings and about the signs and immediate causes of those feelings. Mike makes a point of how everyone in the community knows him and his wife (the Bankses were popular in the Pastures), yet Mike is desperately lonely. He volunteers that he has no children, as though the state of parenthood is an important part of a man's identification. He hangs around a bar a whole afternoon waiting for something to happen to take him out of himself. He longs to share the comradeship of men when the excitement is over. Finally, his relationship with his wife seems unpleasant; the only communication between them is an exchange of sarcasm. Whether the unhappy marriage is the cause or a symptom of Mike's despondency cannot be determined on the evidence in the story, but frustration in marriage occurs so frequently in Steinbeck's short stories that the author appears, at the very least, to have a strong interest in such frustration. Mike's wife is "petulant" and "complaining"; she speaks "fiercely" and accuses him of infidelity. Although Mike does not seem innocent of wrongdoing, the story shows that he lacks positive emotional gratification at home, and his loneliness leads him to find other means to satisfy his needs.

"The Vigilante" explicitly compares the effects of violence and the effects of sex on Mike. Working backward with the information about Mike, one can see how the story
prepares for this comparison. The story concludes as Mike discovers that after his day's ordeal he looks and feels exactly as though he has "been with a woman." Previously, Mike's description of his feelings "afterwards" could describe a man's post-orgasmic depression as well as it describes his reaction to the violence. Mike first says "you feel nothing"; then he admits to feeling "cut off and tired, but kind of satisfied, too." At the beginning of the story, right after the violence occurred, Steinbeck says "dull tiredness" overcame Mike: "his eyes and feelings" no longer confirmed the excitement his brain registered; he could remember "howling" and "crying" only thirty minutes before, only to feel so soon that "everything was dead, everything unreal." And then the loneliness fell upon him.

The unpleasant scene between Mike and his wife suggests that there is no comfortable personal intimacy in their marriage. The wife's accusations and Mike's sarcastic responses imply that she has reasons for being suspicious. But Mike's lonely search for excitement and male companionship makes him appear to be seeking substitutes for intimacy rather than to be looking for other women. The physical sensations violence gives him simulate sexual excitement and its aftereffects, but the substitute proves a dismal disappointment. Just as sex motivated by purely physical impulses would leave him feeling "nothing" later, violence leaves him feeling "nothing." The most dreadful part of
this analogy is that the incidence of violence in a normal life is too seldom for it to be a reliable substitute for intimacy. If Mike feels a let-down so soon after this horrible event, he cannot depend upon violence to compensate for what he is missing in his life.

Conclusion

In *The Long Valley* and particularly in "The Vigilante," the substitution of violence for intimacy emerges as a fully developed pattern of alienation. A review of other stories shows that this pattern exists elsewhere in Steinbeck's two short story collections, though it is usually less explicit than in "The Vigilante." When characters either have been unable to express their feelings or, for some reason like pride or fear of loss of self-esteem, have been unwilling to express them, they have turned to violence. Sometimes they have identified with violence as an outlet for their feelings; sometimes they have committed violent acts to relieve their feelings or to remain in control of themselves or of a situation. Like other patterns of alienation, utilizing violence to release pressure or avoid intimacy involves fantasies. The alienated person vicariously satisfies his needs by identifying with someone else's violence, or he bolsters his idealized image of himself by performing a violent act. In addition to Raymond Bank's case, instances of vicarious identification with violence
include Elisa Allen's identification with the boxers in "The Chrysanthemums," Harry Teller's fantasy-murder of his wife when he kills the quail, the woman's identification with the snake eating the rat, and Miss Martin's identification with Gomez as he whips Tularecito. Jim Moore and Helen Van Deventer commit murders to maintain an image that will make life more tolerable for them (although Jim kills Jelka's cousin to change her view of himself, rather than to satisfy his own feelings about himself). Peter Randall's weeks of debauchery fit this pattern: his excesses make him think he is free for awhile and probably relieve his fear of being emasculated by his wife.

Identifying with violence indirectly is almost always more satisfactory than actually performing violent deeds; vicarious fulfillment therefore generally indicates better social adjustment. Since letting someone else act out one's violent impulses is not overtly hostile, it leaves a person relatively free of guilt and fear of punishment. It often allows him to keep his frustration and its causes a secret even from himself, thus saving him further loss of self-esteem. Vicarious violence can also safely replace verbal confrontation or conflict, and the alienated person may fear evoking rejection if he confronts the person he blames for his frustration. Fear of rejection is likely to be very strong in him: previous rejection could be the reason he avoids further attempts at intimacy. It is difficult to
imagine a happy verbal resolution of hostility between most of Steinbeck's alienated couples discussed in depth so far. For example, Harry Teller could hardly achieve reconciliation with Mary by saying, "I want you to show that you enjoy making love with me." He has tried various indirect approaches without success. Having already suffered rejection he is inhibited from trying a direct verbal approach to resolve his anxieties. In Steinbeck rejection is tantamount to a withholding of love. It signifies alienation between individuals and creates self-alienation in the rejected person, who finds himself unlovable.

Violence, to Steinbeck, is a point on a vicious circle that goes from alienation to pain to aggression and violence and back to alienation. Steinbeck considers rejection the great motivating force in the history of mankind and the great theme of all literature. How seriously he believes this can be seen in *East of Eden* and his *Journal of a Novel*. In an essay chapter in *East of Eden* Steinbeck says:

Humans are caught—in their lives, in their thoughts, in their hungers and ambitions, in their avarice and cruelty, and in their kindness and generosity too—in a net of good and evil. I think this is the only story we have and that it occurs on all levels of feeling and intelligence.

In uncertainty I am certain that underneath their topmost layers of frailty men want to be good and want to be loved. Indeed, most of their vices are attempted short cuts to love. When a man comes to die, no matter what his talents and influence and genius, if he dies unloved his life must be a failure to him and his dying a cold horror.
We have only one story. All novels, all poetry, are built on the never-ending contest in ourselves of good and evil. And it occurs to me that evil must constantly respawn, while good, while virtue, is immortal. (pp. 413-15)

Earlier in the novel Samuel Hamilton, Lee, and Adam Trask discuss the pattern of rejection-pain-violence, and Steinbeck makes his strongest statement about rejection through Lee's comments on the story of Cain and Abel:

I think this is the best-known story in the world because it is everybody's story. I think it is the symbol story of the human soul. . . . The greatest terror a child can have is that he is not loved, and rejection is the hell he fears. I think everyone in the world to a large or small extent has felt rejection. And with rejection comes anger, and with anger some kind of crime in revenge for the rejection, and with the crime guilt--and there is the story of man-kind. I think that if rejection could be amputated, the human would not be what he is. Maybe there would be fewer crazy people. I am sure in myself there would not be many jails. It is all there--the start, the beginning. One child, refused the love he craves, kicks the cat and hides his secret guilt; and another steals so that money will make him loved; and a third conquers the world--and always the guilt and revenge and more guilt. . . . Therefore I think this old and terrible story is important because it is a chart of the soul--the secret, rejected, guilty soul. (pp. 270-71)

Samuel is stunned by the implications of this interpretation. He admits to Lee, "You've disturbed my pretty universe. You've taken a contentious game and made an answer of it" (p. 271). Lee wishes that this interpretation could be the "accepted truth" for it would lead to understanding causes of "some pains and insanities" which "could be rooted out if the causes were known" (p. 271).
Steinbeck's Journal of a Novel: The East of Eden Letters, which was written to Pat Covici, Steinbeck's friend and editor, while Steinbeck was writing East of Eden, shows that Steinbeck meant what he said as author in the novel as well as through his characters' words. Steinbeck tells Covici his belief that "there is only one book to a man" and says that East of Eden is possibly "the only book I have ever written" (p. 50). He remarks, "The gifts of Cain and Abel to their father and his rejection of one and acceptance of the other will I think mean a great deal to you but I wonder if it will be generally understood by other readers" (p. 25). Several entries in the journal reveal Steinbeck's sensitivity to rejection in his own life and show that it is out of his sensitivity and his personal experience that he has reached the conclusions he has about his theme. He says to Covici, "You know . . . what this book means to me. Do you remember the struggle in the Bedford Hotel when I knew and did not know that Gwyn [Steinbeck's second wife] had rejected me?" (p. 112). When Steinbeck worries about the "deep emotional trouble" of one of his sons, he says, "I am pretty sure it is a simple feeling of rejection, of not being loved. . . . I'm going to take him into the country Saturday and Sunday to see if I can help him" (p. 25).

Steinbeck wants his characters in East of Eden to be "doubly understandable as people apart from their symbols," because he aspires to "a semblance of real experience both
visual and emotional and finally intellectual" (p. 27). He wants to make the reader see himself in the novel; he repeats this idea and once says that he will surely be understood because "every man has Cain in him" (p. 128). He ardently desires to explain the need of every man to be loved and accepted by another individual, as well as to show the important connection between the love of others and self-love and self-acceptance. Rejection by a loved one leads to feelings of inadequacy; compensation for the rejection is often sought in hostile acts; both inadequacy and guilt cause self-estrangement as the alienated person sees the dichotomy between the beloved or lovable person he would like to be and the person he believes he actually is.

Not enough biographical information has been published about Steinbeck to substantiate speculation about his early home life or his three marriages. The bare facts are interesting when juxtaposed with the patterns in his fiction. Steinbeck married his first wife, Carol Henning, in 1930 when he was twenty-eight. They had no children. They were divorced in 1942. In 1943 Steinbeck married Gwyn Conger; the next year his son Thomas was born; two years later came young John. In 1948 Steinbeck and Gwyn were divorced. In 1950 Steinbeck married Elaine Scott. Besides indicating the author's deep love and fatherly concern for his sons and the anguish of the second divorce, Steinbeck's journal makes
his third marriage seem quite happy. He was still married to Elaine when he died in 1968.

Whatever Steinbeck's personal beliefs about the potentiality for happiness within the family, his allegories show that he prized a strong family, but most of his realistic fiction (at least until after his third marriage in 1950) tends to represent married people as alienated from each other. Couples have no children or have only one child, and when they have one, they often misunderstand, neglect, or abuse it. In the short stories, childless parents include the Bankses (in *The Pastures of Heaven*), the Allens (in "The Chrysanthemums"), the Tellers (in "The White Quail"), the Moores (in "The Murder"), the Randalls (in "The Harness"), and Mike and his wife in "The Vigilante." Those with only one child are Shark and Katherine Wicks, Helen Van Deventer, Junius Maltby, the Richard and John Whitesides, and the Carl Tiflins (in "The Red Pony" stories). Only the Munroes, of all the important characters in these stories, have more than one child (they have three): the Munroes, the average, middle-class people. Most of the remaining major characters are frustrated bachelors, widows, widowers, or spinsters, or else they are mentally incompetent. Amy and Emalin Hawkins and Pat Humbert are among the former (Molly Morgan is young to be called a spinster but she seems on her way to becoming one). Johnny Bear, Alice Wicks, Tularecito, and Hilda Van Deventer are mentally defective.
Steinbeck's preoccupation with marriage and children is a concern which links nearly all his fiction, early and late; it is a subject he approaches from many angles and in many different fictional forms, yet the conclusion he reaches is nearly always the same. No major characters are married in *Tortilla Flat*, *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*, or *Cannery Row*. *Sweet Thursday* farcically presents the struggle to get two characters to accept the idea of marrying (but this novel was written after Steinbeck's third marriage). Major characters are married and have one child or no children in *Cup of Gold*, *To a God Unknown*, *The Moon Is Down*, *The Wayward Bus*, and *The Short Reign of Pippin IV*. The married characters are either patently estranged from one another or give no more than limited understanding to one another. In the allegory of *The Pearl*, Kino and Juana have one child, and Kino alienates his wife while he pursues wealth. In *Burning Bright*, another allegory, the central issue is the obsession of Joe Saul to become a father; Joe Saul also alienates his wife by his obsession. The only child of the Pritchards in *The Wayward Bus* is estranged from her parents.

*East of Eden* has two important families: Sam and Liza Hamilton have many children, but Liza's religious dogmatism prevents really close communion with Sam. Adam and Cathy Trask are the parents of fraternal twins, but Cathy says one of these sons is not Adam's. The Trask marriage is the
most grotesquely estranged in all of Steinbeck's fiction. Both Adam and his father, Cyrus Trask, who also had two sons, are, in ways, bad fathers. There are enough good qualities in the marriage of Ethan and Mary Hawley in Steinbeck's last novel, *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961), to make it seem moderately happy.

The soundest marriage in Steinbeck's novels appears in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Yet for all the social realism of this novel, Ma and Pa Joad are not psychologically credible; they symbolize good, whole, natural people, but they are not developed fictionally as individuals. They are allegorical figures like the two other basically happy couples in his novels (in *The Pearl* and *Burning Bright*). There are virtually no well-developed, psychologically credible major characters who are unequivocally portrayed as having sexually and emotionally happy marriages. For Steinbeck, marriage itself almost always implies alienation all the more painful for the promise it seems to make of intimacy and fulfillment.
Notes to Chapter III

1 In The Wide World of John Steinbeck (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1958), Peter Lisca presents a convincing reading of "Flight" as an allegory of Pepe's initiation into manhood (pp. 98-100). Chester F. Chapin, "Pepé Torres: A Steinbeck 'Natural,'" College English, 23 (May 1962), 676, has adduced evidence that Pepé is one of Steinbeck's mental defectives. Chapin's view may ultimately be compatible with Lisca's, but regardless of whether it is, Pepé would remain beyond the limits of this study if he is mentally defective.


4 Lisca, p. 96.

5 Ibid.

6 "About Ed Ricketts" is a prefatory chapter to The Log from the Sea of Cortez (New York: Viking, 1951).

7 Lisca says:

Elisa's silent rebellion against the passive role required of her as a woman (symbolized by her masculine manner of gardening) is triggered by the old potmender, who throws away the chrysanthemums she has given him. However, in rejecting her first impulse to violence (which is to witness a bloody boxing match), she lapses into frustration, and the story ends with her "crying weakly--like an old woman." (p. 95)

Elizabeth E. McMahan expands Lisca's argument in "'The Chrysanthemums': Study of a Woman's Sexuality," Modern Fiction Studies, 14 (Winter 1967-1968), 453-58. Lisca and McMahan, as well as William V. Miller, "Sexual and Spiritual Ambiguity in 'The Chrysanthemums,'" Steinbeck Quarterly, 5, Nos. 3-4 (Summer-Fall 1972), 68-75, anticipate some of the observations that will appear in this study; however, this study differs somewhat from the others regarding the effects of sexual stereotyping on Elisa and regarding the nature of Elisa's responsibility for her alienation.
CHAPTER IV

PATTERNS OF ALIENATION IN NOVELS BY STEINBECK

Virtually every novel Steinbeck wrote iterates the patterns of alienation discernible in the characters of The Pastures of Heaven and The Long Valley. By juxtaposing Steinbeck's first novel, Cup of Gold (1929), with his last, The Winter of Our Discontent (1961), one may immediately establish the continuity of his major theme. Steinbeck approaches his theme, man's alienation, by means of a variety of techniques, modes, settings, and intellectual perspectives. Some of his work is romantic, some realistic or naturalistic, some satirical, some transcendental, some allegorical or fabulous. Steinbeck examines his novelistic worlds from perspectives which are informed at various times by existentialism, by evolutionary biology, by depth psychology, and by Marxist sociology. His setting is usually California (the Monterey peninsula or the Salinas Valley), but sometimes it is New England or Europe or the Caribbean. Yet whatever his approach and wherever his setting, his concern is always alienated man, and his conclusion is always that alienation is a fundamental fact of life which man must accept.
Henry Morgan

_Cup of Gold_ (1929), Steinbeck's first published novel, is almost unread these days. In it Steinbeck has written a fictionalized account of the life of the pirate Henry Morgan which is more than a romantic tale of Morgan's life. The principal meaning of the novel lies in Henry's sense of separation from others. Although he finds adventure, fame, and wealth, he never overcomes his basic loneliness.

The narrative begins with Henry as an adolescent in Wales. The boy sets his heart on going to the Caribbean after he hears the tales of Dafydd, a Welshman just returned from many years at sea. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Morgan can dissuade Henry from his goal. To please his father, however, Henry consults the seer Merlin in his strange stone house on Crag-top. Before approaching the subject of Henry's ambitions, Merlin says, "I think you should be speaking to Elizabeth, not to me." Henry has been strongly attracted to Elizabeth, the daughter of a poor tenant, but he denies his interest to Merlin. Seeing Henry's embarrassment, Merlin turns to the matter of Henry's leaving. Merlin looks out his windows "and a great love for the land shone in his eyes; but when he turned back to the boy there was the look of pain on his face" (p. 25). Since he cannot deter Henry, Merlin tells him:

"You are a little boy. . . . All the world's great have been little boys who wanted the moon; running and climbing, they sometimes caught a firefly. But if one
grow to a man's mind, that mind must see that it cannot have the moon and would not want it if it could—and so, it catches no fireflies." (p. 27)

Merlin admits that he, too, wanted the moon until he grew to be a man. As a man, he knew failure; but he learned that people are kind to failures because they understand and share the same fate. The one who catches a firefly "is doubly alone; he only can realize his true failure, can realize his meanness and fears and evasions" (p. 28). He predicts to Henry, "You will come to your greatness, and it may be in time you will be alone in your greatness and no friend anywhere; only those who hold you in respect or fear or awe" (p. 28). This is the beginning of one of the two myths of his greatness to which Morgan orients his life.

The other myth begins with an experience which occurs after the boy leaves Merlin. Henry wonders whether he should indeed see Elizabeth before he leaves.

He did not like her; sometimes he thought he had discovered hatred for her, and this he nursed and warmed only to feel it grow to a desire to see her.

She was a thing of mystery. All girls and women hoarded something they never spoke of. ... Another life went on inside of women--some women--ran parallel to their outward lives and yet never crossed them.

... A year before, Elizabeth had been a pretty child. ... It frightened him, this wisdom which had come all at once to Elizabeth.

Then there was her body--different somehow from his, and capable, it was whispered, of strange pleasures and alchemies. ...

Sometimes he dreamed of her, and waked in agony lest she should ever know his dream. And sometimes it was a strange, shadowy composite of Elizabeth and his mother that came to him in the night. After such a dream, the day brought loathing of himself and her.
He considered himself an unnatural monster and her a kind of succubus incarnate. (pp. 29-30)

As much as Henry wants to go to Elizabeth, he merely stands outside her cottage to catch a glimpse of her. Then he runs away, gasping and filled with shame.

Other boys might have gone to her in the night and kissed her, after they had boasted a little of their going; but then, the other boys did not dream as he did, nor did they think of her, as he sometimes did, as a loathsome being. (p. 31)

Steinbeck offers here for the first time his often repeated notion that women have secret transcendental knowledge. Then, describing Henry's Oedipal dream, Steinbeck gives a pseudo-Freudian foundation for Henry's alienation, as well as the motivation for his future actions: women and girls, a mystery to Henry, both attract and repel him. Considering Elizabeth in her developing sexuality, thinking of her body as "different somehow from his," frightens and embarrasses him. His unguarded dreams combine Elizabeth with his mother in a forbidden fantasy, making him hate himself for having the dreams and hate Elizabeth for being a part of them.

For the rest of his life Henry will be trying to disguise his fear and self-disgust. Conquering, killing, plundering, and fornicating in decades of violence, he will try to feel powerful while he knows he is afraid to face a woman as an equal, as a person of independent character. The little boy who conquers the world before he grows up
will win the awe of thousands, but he will never escape Elizabeth. Throughout the years he will keep retelling and embellishing his myth about himself and Elizabeth. His re-iteration of their great love in ever grander terms proves only that all the while his actual failure with her has been extremely important to him. The girl Elizabeth never appears again in the novel, but the name recurs: Morgan calls his ship "Elizabeth" and he eventually marries a cousin named Elizabeth; the "Red Saint" of Panama, for whom he conceives a grand passion on the basis of a legend, is named Ysobel, a Spanish form of Elizabeth. 

Unable to realize that his dreams about Elizabeth and his mother are not unnatural, Henry is alienated from himself, and his fear and loathing cause him to avoid intimacy with anyone. He soon develops ways of dealing with people which satisfy the needs for power and control that take the place of love for him. His first voyage lands him in Barbados, duped into being a bonded servant for a wealthy planter, James Flower. Before long he has become master of Flower's plantation, hated by white men and feared by the blacks, whom he treats as objects to achieve wealth and prestige. To control the slaves Henry never lets them know what he is thinking; he is "cold and distant and insulting to those below him. With few exceptions, they would take insult as the sign of his superiority" (p. 84). He wields whips with terrifying lack of feeling in order to increase
production. He uses the prostitutes in the slave huts with disgust and pity: "Henry went to the brown women and the black in the slave huts, striving to dull his hungering if he could not satisfy it; and they received him, cow-eyed and passive, anxious to please" (p. 89). When he takes a mistress, he answers her hope that he will marry her with an insulting rejection. Telling her of the Elizabeth he loved with his "soul," he asks, "What can you know of love that lies without your fleshly juggling?" (p. 96).

Henry evolves a method of cheating Flower in order to amass a fortune. Yet, in spite of himself, Henry develops a "curious, shame-faced love for James Flower" (p. 88) apparently because Flower shows affection for him and appreciates his special qualities. When Flower frees him Henry presents himself to his father's brother, Sir Edward, Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica, and meets his cousin Elizabeth. Henry feels alienated from these "proud relatives who seemed to edge away from him as though he were foul" (p. 107). He cannot see them as silly in their shallowness and artificiality, "for they had impressed him too deeply. They had succeeded in making him feel alone and helpless and very young" (p. 107). Later, as a sea captain, Henry struts in the streets of Tortugas and Goaves decked in duplicates of Edward's clothing and rapier.

As a captain Henry no more allows his sailors to be comrades than he did the slaves. But having thought that
he would be gratified by adulation, he finds that he despises the people who flatter him. "Henry had grown lonely in his glory. Old Merlin had spoken truth so long ago, for Captain Morgan had come to his success, and he was alone in his success, with no friend anywhere" (pp. 122-23).

He had gone out with Grippo in the Ganymede, assured that when his guns roared into a Spanish hull, when he stood embattled on a Spanish deck with cries and clash of iron weapons about him, there would come that flaming happiness his heart desired. These things he had experienced, and there was not even content. The nameless craving in him grew and flexed its claws against his heart. (p. 122)

Knowing that his men feel only fear, respect, and sullen awe for him, Henry considers whom among his followers he might make his friend. He decides to ask Coeur de Gris, a young Frenchman, to talk with him once in a while. The young man agrees to be Henry Morgan's lieutenant and his friend. Still, a nameless hunger drives Henry. "'I will take Maracaibo,' he cried in desperation. 'I will drown this lusting in a bowl of horror. I will pillage Maracaibo, tear it to pieces, and leave it bleeding in the sand!'" (p. 134). But ravaging Maracaibo can fill Henry's longing no better than anything else. It is his own love he seeks, his own self-acceptance. No amount of external gratification can replace that need or afford him the kind of intimacy he might enjoy, could he accept himself as an ordinary man. Yet self-hatred may be intrinsic to his need to feel unique. A vicious circle evolves: his monstrosity
sets him apart from other people, but it is the mark of his uniqueness. Seeing himself as extraordinarily vile is another way to feel unique.

Henry hears the legend of Ysobel, "La Santa Roja" of Panama, and becomes convinced that having her will answer his need. Henry's ambition of taking Panama and capturing the Red Saint shocks his lieutenant, who tries to explain that Henry's dream of her is every man's dream. Coeur de Gris cries, "This gigantic conceit will not allow you to believe that this Cockney behind you--yes, he who sometimes rolls on the ground in fits--might have the same hopes and despairs as yourself" (p. 176). Henry finds the possibility revolting. Nothing he has done has satisfied him; it would be horrible to believe, in the end, that he was ordinary, not in the least unique. He must cling to the fantasy of his uniqueness and prove his uniqueness to himself and everyone by being the man who has had Ysobel.

But when Henry takes Panama his dream is shattered. Ysobel has heard Henry's kind of flowery speech far too often and she is "tired of these words that never change"; she had hoped for a "wordless, reasonless brutality" from him. Ironically, Henry loses her because he is no more able to approach her with honest passion than he could his childhood sweetheart. The Red Saint defeats him with "laughter--sharp, cruel laughter which took his motives out and made sport of them" (p. 207). The most important thing to Henry
has been his uniqueness, but she rejects him because he is ordinary. Henry submits to her contempt but soon after, on a pretext, he kills the epileptic Cockney. He then shoots his beloved Coeur de Gris as well. These acts, committed to eliminate the revolting reminders of Morgan's humanity, fail to restore his sense of power.

In disillusionment Henry decides to substitute wealth for his losses in love. He ransoms Ysobel to her husband for an enormous sum and sets out for Jamaica craving peace, comfort, and security. He marries his cousin Elizabeth and accepts knighthood and the position of Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica.

In his new role Sir Henry sentences a pair of former comrades to be hanged. When they tell him that he seems changed to them, he explains, "Civilization will split up a character, and he who refuses to split goes under" (p. 255). Looking at his new life as a compromise, Henry even closes his mind to his wife, whom he thinks he lives with in a marriage of convenience. Upon his deathbed he is shocked to see that Elizabeth has really loved him. Her affection has been "an efficient thing, but her love—that which glittered in her wet eyes—was frightful" (p. 262). Even in his final moment Henry still fears love. In a vision he sees his first Elizabeth:

She was girdled with cornflowers, and her eyes were strangely puzzled and bright. With a little start of surprise she noticed Henry.
"I am Elizabeth," she said. "You did not come to see me before you went away."

"I know. I think I was afraid to talk with you. But I stood in the darkness before your window, and I whistled."

"Did you?" She smiled at him gladly. "That was nice of you. I cannot see, though, why you should have been afraid of me--of such a little girl. It was silly of you."

"I do not know why," he said. "I ran away. I was motivated by a power that is slipping out of all the worlds. My memories are leaving me one by one like a colony of aged swans flying off to some lonely island in the sea to die." (p. 268)

Henry cannot remember the way he had "split" his "character" much earlier when he denied his attraction to Elizabeth and rejected that part of himself that he found loathsome. Having struggled all his life to avoid intimacy and to dispel his fears of mediocrity, Henry is the first of several Steinbeck heroes who dies a lonely man.

The Freudian motivation Steinbeck provides for Morgan may seem trite and contrived, but it should not obscure a more important matter: that Steinbeck's first fictional character creates his own alienation by the same devices which recur again and again. Trying to fulfill myths of his greatness through his piracy and through the fantasy of young Elizabeth's grand passion for him separates Morgan from his authentic self and from all the people around him until the end of his life. Among the major Steinbeck characters Morgan anticipates are Joseph Wayne (To a God Unknown), Joe Saul (Burning Bright), Adam Trask (East of Eden), and Ethan Hawley (The Winter of Our Discontent).
Steinbeck rarely searches any more deeply for motives than he does with Morgan; instead, his interest lies in describing the phenomenon of self-alienation in apparently dissimilar characters who turn out to have a common problem. Steinbeck was interested not in why alienation exists in life, but rather in identifying various species of alienated men. Steinbeck's mind is opposed to the analytical spirit of his times, which asks above all, "Why?" When one goes from *Cup of Gold* to Steinbeck's last novel, *The Winter of Our Discontent*, he finds interests and concerns which strikingly recall the novel written more than three decades before.

Ethan Hawley

In *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961), Ethan Allen Hawley, a twentieth-century American, follows Henry Morgan's pattern of alienation. Like Morgan, Ethan successfully pursues wealth and respect, but ambition makes him a lonely man. Steinbeck even suggests that Ethan has pirate blood. His ancestors in his New England home, New Baytown,

were sons of those restless, treacherous, quarrelsome, avaricious seafaring men who were a headache to Europe under Elizabeth, took the West Indies for their own under Cromwell, and came finally to roost on the northern coast, holding charters from the returned Charles Stuart. They successfully combined piracy and puritanism, which aren't so unalike when you come right down to it. Both had a strong dislike for opposition and both had a roving eye for other people's property.

Unfortunately the pirate and puritan blood mixed awkwardly in Ethan because he has the conscience Morgan lacked.
Henry Morgan's rapaciousness satisfied a need in him, albeit temporarily and incompletely, but Ethan's experiment with avarice proves he cannot tolerate its desserts.

As the novel begins, Ethan feels alienated because he believes he has not lived up to the name of Hawley. Having inherited money and property from staunch forebears (Pilgrim Fathers and whaling captains), Ethan and his father so mismanaged their wealth that Ethan has had to become a clerk in the grocery store he once owned. Because Ethan is already convinced that this work should not be his destiny, prodding from his family and outsiders stirs his ambition. Considering now whether his business failures could have come from laziness rather than from his scrupulous honesty, as he believed, he begins to look at his life differently, to become "doubtful of the constancy of the realities outside himself... It was the shocking discovery that makes a man wonder: If I've missed this, what else have I failed to see?" (p. 26). He thinks he may be the kind of man who fails because he is afraid to take risks. Barely able to pay the light bill or each installment on the refrigerator, he is haunted by remembering how, in his first business venture, he lost all that was left to him by his father except his house.

Ethan's wife, Mary, and their two children suffer in more tangible ways: they miss having prestige and the things money can buy. Mary tells Ethan that everyone
laughs at him because "a grand gentleman without money is a bum" (p. 40). Ethan realizes that in wanting money Mary really wants "new curtains and sure education for the kids and holding her head a little higher and, face it, being proud rather than a little ashamed of me" (p. 53). Ethan's fourteen-year-old son, Allen, complains that the family lacks, among other things, a car and a television set; Ethan's daughter, Ellen, thirteen, cuts her father by saying that she wishes he would hurry up and get rich because she is sick of being poor. Ethan begins to realize how much the feeling his family has about him is affected by the materialistic values society has taught them, and that he must raise himself according to the standards of his society if he is to earn greater esteem from his wife and children. Knowing no way to make money that he approves of, Ethan reexamines his morals. He thinks that since everyone is "gobbled up by the earth" (p. 54) in the same way in the end, perhaps no eaters are necessarily more immoral than the eaten. Ethan decides to set a financial objective, compromise his former values to reach it, and pay for success with whatever scars he may earn in the process. But he wonders several times whether, if he "opened up that door," he could "ever get it closed again" (p. 105), and he knows he will not know unless he tries.

His change is reflected at once in the confidence he shows as he announces to Mary that he is going to make their
fortune. Taking a sudden interest in money, Ethan begins to absorb the philosophy of people who revere financial success. He listens to his banker, Mr. Baker, who encourages him to believe that Mary does not appreciate economic security as much as she would appreciate gains from speculative investments. Ethan also ponders what his Sicilian boss tells him: "You don't look after number one, whose'll do it [sic]?" (p. 25). To Marullo, money isn't friendly; even friendly businessmen are not nice when it comes to making money. Ethan likewise considers the advice of Joey Morphy, a bank employee, to take the bribe offered by a supplier since it is not illegal and because anyone else who could would take it. Ethan initially rejects these opinions, but eventually he accepts the belief that "In business and in politics a man must carve and maul his way through men to get to be King of the Mountain. Once there, he can be great and kind—but he must get there first" (p. 173).

Ethan finally rationalizes sacrificing his high principles. First he gets control of land owned by Danny Taylor, a lifelong friend who is an alcoholic. The land is the only thing saving Danny's self-respect. Danny is not misled by Ethan's pretense of helping him with a loan that is secured by the land: both of them know that Danny will drink himself to death with the money. Yet Ethan fears that someone else will get control of the property if he does not, and its possession means wealth and the awe of the business
community. Next Ethan anonymously notifies federal authorities that Marullo, a Sicilian, entered the United States illegally. Expecting Marullo to be deported, Ethan hopes to buy the store cheaply. A third plan, in which Ethan would rob the bank to get operating capital for the store, is aborted, but it proves to be unnecessary when other things work out unexpectedly well. A series of successes and fortunate coincidences seem to sweep Ethan along from his turning point on Easter weekend to the culmination of his plans during the Independence Day holiday. In this time he has learned to lie facilely, even to his wife; to hedge on direct questions from people like his banker until they apologize to him; to create fear in eyes that overlooked him before.

But as Ethan begins to see evidence of the irreversible consequences of his selfish actions, he is driven to new problems of conscience that he thinks "old residents" of the "strange, uncharted country" in which he finds himself have solved for themselves long ago (p. 210). He begins to get the answer to the question of whether he could control the process he has started if he wanted to: he feels a growing conviction "that such a process may become a thing in itself" with "its own ends and means . . ." (p. 210). Now believing it possible that he did not ever control the process but merely failed to resist, he fears he may no longer have a choice of outcomes. As he deliberates over the definition of morals, Ethan thinks, "To most of the world success is
never bad. . . . The only punishment is for failure" (p. 211). He recalls to himself the necessity for the process he set in motion, but he resolves never to "start another. I did not need or want to be a citizen of this gray and dangerous country" (p. 212).

Having made a conscious choice to act in a way that is unnatural to him, Ethan was fully aware of the inauthentic role he was playing in society. When he set out to make money, he knowingly created a new outer man to do the job. He did not consider whether the inner man would change to fit that image although he did consider whether he could change the outer man again. That he knew he remained, and expected to remain, the same man he had been inside is proved by his relationships with Mary, Ellen, and especially Allen. If he had changed internally, or if he had been trying to reconcile his real self with his new image, he would not have continued to be so perturbed by his son's unscrupulous attitudes. He would have embraced new values which might have brought him closer to Allen. Instead, Ethan found himself in a very strange position: he had acted according to Allen's immoral principles to provide the family with certain benefits, yet he wanted his family to revere his own true principles while they enjoyed the material things dishonestly gained.

Although expected, news that numerous city officials will be investigated for various charges upsets Ethan. He
knows that even though the men may be guilty, they are so accustomed to doing what they did that they have no sense of wrongness. Ethan knows that Baker caused the trouble for a political advantage. Because the news literally chills Ethan, Mary tells him that he is too sensitive. "You can't take other people's troubles on your shoulders," she says. He disagrees: "I can because I do" (p. 239). He feels that everyone shares in the crime. It is ironic that Mary thinks Ethan is too sensitive and too much affected by the problems of others, for it was largely out of concern for her and the children that Ethan began the corrupt affairs which make him feel guilty.

As he thinks further about his maneuvers, Ethan decides that the real crimes are not those that merely involve money, because money does not have feelings. The real crimes are "against men, against Danny and against Marullo" (p. 241), and theft is nothing in comparison. When the feeling of guilt begins to overwhelm him, Ethan decides that he does not need further thought, but some kind of shelter for his mind until he can rebuild the structure of his life. Wondering what he must pay in atonement, Ethan considers throwing his family's talisman into the sea as penance. Kino, in The Pearl, could throw the pearl into the sea and return to his simple life, but Kino was not morally implicated in what had affected him. There is no simple solution for Ethan, no way to save Danny and Marullo, for example.
The same night that he hears of Danny's death, Ethan learns that his son plagiarized the words of great Americans in an essay which won him honorable mention in a national contest. Abject loneliness engulfs Ethan; he sees the futility of his aspirations and finds his mistakes unbearable. However, on the verge of escaping his despair through suicide, he refrains from cutting his wrists at the last moment for the sake of his daughter. In *Cup of Gold* Henry Morgan said, "Civilization will split up a character, and he who refuses to split goes under." Morgan could "split," successfully shifting from one inauthentic role to another; Ethan "goes under," not because he refuses to split but because he has too much self-awareness to live divided against himself.

The alienated condition of loneliness in man is a motif keynoted early in the novel. On the first day of the action, Good Friday, Ethan speaks of the meaning of that day to him: "Even as a child I was deep taken with sorrow, not at the agony of the crucifixion, but feeling the blighting loneliness of the crucified" (p. 42). Ethan's progress through the novel shows Steinbeck's conviction that a man with high principles is a man apart from the crowd.

In *The Winter of Our Discontent* money leads the herd to disaster. Afraid to be different and afraid of rejection, most people seek the same things, believe the same things, admire the same things. Moreover, the pursuit of success
costs them the honesty required for communication with one another. Ethan discovers that people are so unaccustomed to complete honesty that the truth is never believed. This idea seems to trouble Ethan: he expresses it to Mary (pp. 38-40), to Marullo (p. 159), and to Margie Young-Hunt (p. 203). Ethan is also troubled that people, including himself, seldom really see one another. He finds himself seeing Margie as though for the first time, and he wonders how many people he has looked at all his life without ever seeing them. From this thought, which he finds scary, he moves to another idea: "When two people meet, each one is changed by the other so you've got two new people" (p. 70). This resembles Marcel's idea that one's relationship to oneself is changed by another person because of what each is to the other. Ethan's concern about the way people see one another may also be compared to the discussions of the "I" and the "Thou" found in Buber and Marcel. Ethan wants the experience Marcel describes as an encounter between persons that can lead to true friendship or love. Ethan seems to miss sharing the presence of another person through which, as Marcel observes, a man can intensify his own being.

As he struggles to be the kind of person who succeeds in business, Ethan becomes increasingly conscious of the loneliness of man. He repeatedly expresses his convictions that man is a lonely thing and no man ever really knows another. Once in reminiscence about his beloved grandfather,
he imagines Cap'n Hawley telling him that men are really not different now from what they were in his day. The Cap'n seems to stress the need for a man to accept his lonely state and to be self-reliant in it: "Only in a single man alone--only in one man alone. There's the only power--one man alone. Can't depend on anything else" (p. 55). In "taking stock" at his secret refuge, Ethan thinks, "No man really knows about other human beings. The best he can do is to suppose that they are like himself" (p. 52).

Although Mary and Ethan love each other, he acknowledges that they are not entirely in communication with one another. As Steinbeck presents Ethan's thoughts of Mary "asleep with the smile of mystery on her lips," he depicts woman yet another time as having secret knowledge. Ethan thinks "that Mary, for all that she seems to tell everything, tells very little" (p. 52). In spite of the more than three decades between *Cup of Gold* and *The Winter of Our Discontent* and of the great superficial differences in Henry Morgan as a youth and the mature Ethan Hawley, Ethan's thoughts here are remarkably like Henry's about the girl Elizabeth: "She was a thing of mystery. . . . Another life went on inside of women--some women--ran parallel to their outward lives and yet never crossed them" (pp. 29-30). Dealing in *Winter* with the mature and more internally developed character Hawley, and having consistently made similar remarks about women throughout his works, Steinbeck
seems unequivocally to be expressing his own beliefs about women through Ethan. If a reader wonders whether Henry's ideas are merely those of an ingenuous character or whether the author shares them, the repetitions should persuade him that Steinbeck held these views. Yet Ethan extends concern for the inscrutability of the "Other" to male as well as female when he asks himself, "Does anyone ever know even the outer fringe of another?" (p. 59).

At this point in his thinking, it seems that Ethan has reached Sartre's conclusion in L'être et le néant that man is inevitably and permanently estranged from himself and from others; one person is never more than an object to another, who, in fact, turns him into the object he perceives as he looks upon him. Unlike Buber and Marcel, Sartre believes that there is never any ground upon which "I" can say "Thou" to the Other. Experiencing at last the nadir of self-estrangement, the need to end his intolerable existence, Ethan thinks,

It isn't true that there's a community of light, a bonfire of the world. Everyone carries his own, his lonely own.

My light is out. There's nothing blacker than a wick. (p. 311)

Danny of Tortilla Flat

Flexibility, generally a key to survival in Steinbeck's world, gives no protection against alienation if adjustment goes against what seems right to an individual. Cheating on
a small scale was a way of life for the Sicilian Marullo—something he learned after he came to America in order to survive. He tells Ethan it is "Good business... I try to show you business. Maybe you don't learn. Most people they don't learn. Go broke" (p. 26). Marullo becomes a sympathetic character when he gives Ethan his grocery store, wanting to reward Ethan for his honesty. The Okies in *The Grapes of Wrath* and the *paisanos* in *Tortilla Flat* are not censured for taking what is not theirs to meet the essentials of life. But when a man like Ethan compromises what he has lived by for the sake of wealth and position, he alienates himself. *The Winter of Our Discontent* shows how desiring money and acquiring it alienates man; *Tortilla Flat* illustrate how merely possessing property can alienate a man. In spite of being a comic novel, *Tortilla Flat* has for its hero another very lonely man who dies a lonely death. Hard as it is to ignore the humor in the book, it is appropriate to consider here the sadness of the hero, Danny, and even to look at similarities between him and another lonely Danny, Ethan's friend in *The Winter of Our Discontent*.

*Tortilla Flat*, a district in the hills above Monterey, is inhabited by *paisanos* like Danny and his friends. These people know that economic conditions as well as geography separate them from the residents of Monterey, but they are happy. Steinbeck likes them because they "are clean of commercialism, free of the complicated systems of American
business, and, having nothing that can be stolen, exploited or mortgaged, that system has not attacked them very vigorously.\(^6\) In this novel conventional attitudes are represented by Torelli, the storekeeper, who, being a businessman and an Italian, is an alien in Tortilla Flat. When they can the paisanos outwit Torelli because they consider people with commercial interests to be natural thieves and fair game. The paisanos ridicule Torelli because he is unfriendly toward people who lack money or property.

But Danny soon shares the problems of people with property. At first Danny and his friends (Pilon, Pablo, Joe Portagee, and Jesus Maria Corcoran) enjoy an easy life, working only infrequently when they can find no other way to get wine or a little money. But then Danny inherits two tiny houses and he becomes estranged from his friends and neighbors. From the moment he hears of Danny's windfall, Pilon anticipates the end of equality between Danny and himself. He insists that the property lifts Danny above his friends. Danny's protests do not comfort him: if Danny does not change, says Pilon, it will be a wonder for men to see. Soon Pilon's fear proves justified when Danny ceases to enjoy breaking other people's windows, now that he has some of his own. Danny himself senses that life is becoming more complex as he begins to feel like a property owner.

Danny tells Pilon, who is renting the smaller house, that he wishes Pilon owned the houses. Pilon, however,
already feels elevated socially by becoming a renter. Of course he has no intention of paying rent, nor does Danny expect to collect any. Pilon goes so far as to earn two dollars for rent cleaning squid, but the money goes for wine. Then Pilon persuades Pablo to share the house with him and pay Danny fifteen dollars. Pilon knows that Pablo will be no more liable for the rent than he was, but Pilon feels relieved of responsibility. When Danny offends the two by hinting about money, Pilon, exaggerating willfully, calls Danny names and accuses him of crushing their friendship with his miserliness.

The dispute is resolved when Pablo's carelessness causes the house to burn. Danny's indulgence in anger and regret over his loss of status as a landlord hides his relief that his burden of ownership has been reduced. He is pleased that the rent will no longer stand between him and his friends; they will henceforth be his guests in the house that remains. He yearns "to be once more that Danny whom every one loved. . . . As the owner of two houses he had been considered rich, and he had missed a great many tidbits" (p. 82).

Three other friends join them, but owning a single house is still a burden to Danny. He mourns for the times when he slept in woods and barns, times when he pilfered chickens and borrowed love from other men's wives, things which are now beneath the dignity of a man of property.
Unable to bear the restraints which he feels civilized society has put upon him, Danny runs away to chase recklessly after his old happiness. He makes forays on his house, stealing his own possessions. When he steals Pablo's shoes, his friends resolve to catch him and cure him for going too far, for committing "a crime against friendship" (p. 269), the greatest sin. But being captured and made to conform to the standards of their group crushes Danny's spirit. Danny becomes so apathetic that when Big Joe gets into Danny's bed one evening, Danny is too indifferent to protest, and Pilon and Pablo must "beat Big Joe for him" (p. 283). No one, including Danny, knows why he feels as he does.

The great cosmic estrangement that is to land heavily upon Danny in his last days is foreshadowed in a scene with Pilon and Joe Portagee on the beach:

The night was cold and aloof, and its warm life was withdrawn, so that it was full of bitter warnings to man that he is alone in the world, and alone among his fellows; that he has no comfort owing him from anywhere. (p. 151)

When Danny goes into despair, the author paraphrases the thoughts of Danny's friends:

Poor Danny, how life has left thee! Here thou sittest like the first man before the world grew up around him, and like the last man, after the world has eroded away. But see, Danny! Thou art not alone. Thy friends are caught in this state of thine. (p. 286)
But Danny's friends cannot help.

Lonely as smoke on a clear cold night, he drifts through Monterey in the evening. . . . What is it, Danny? What makes you feel this way? Danny didn't know. . . . There was an ache in his heart like the farewell to a dear woman; there was vague sorrow in him like the despair of autumn. . . . Back to the wharf he went. He leaned over the rail and looked into the deep, deep water. Do you know, Danny, how the wine of your life is pouring into the fruit jars of the gods? (pp. 292-93)

Finally Danny's life ends in a last frenzied burst of drinking and fighting.

Once Danny is gone, the friends watch his house go up in flames, knowing that the cord that bound them together has been cut. "And after a while they turned and walked slowly away, and no two walked together" (p. 317).

Danny resembles Danny Taylor in The Winter of Our Discontent when he begins to be seen wandering around the town at night. Danny Taylor had been expelled from the Naval Academy:

It killed his parents, they say, and it killed most of Danny. All that remained was this shuffling sorrow—this wandering night sorrow cadging dimes for a pint of skull-buster. . . . When he asks for a quarter for skull-buster his eyes beg you to forgive him because he can't forgive himself. (p. 48)

Alcohol contributes to the deaths of both Dannys, but there is an ironic difference between the two men. Danny Taylor kills himself with drinking when he gives up the one thing that has saved his pride, the family property; it has been essential to his image of himself. Danny the paisano, on the other hand, finds it impossible to live up to the image
he has acquired with his property; he escapes his burden in wild behavior that leads to his death.

Alienation by ownership in the paisano Danny differs radically from alienation by ownership in people of higher social standing. The latter, who are accustomed to owning things, are alienated when their system of values is based on possessions: money and property earn them self-esteem and take the place of love. Shark Wicks represents this type of person in the short stories, even though his valued possessions (his daughter's intact hymen and his imaginary fortune) were not material. Characters alienated by their roles as property owners figure in small but consistent ways in *In Dubious Battle*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *Of Mice and Men*. Steinbeck's perspective is hardly one-sided, however, as can be seen in his attitude toward Mr. Anderson of *In Dubious Battle*. It is difficult for the reader not to sympathize with this farmer, who, having let the strikers use his land, loses his barn and his apple crop through arson. Mr Anderson is forgivable when he turns against the strikers, yet Steinbeck is on the strikers' side no matter how questionable he thinks the Communists' operations.

Similarly in *The Grapes of Wrath* property owners are selfish, insensitive, and inhumane because what they own is threatened when the American economy fails to support everyone adequately. Fear overtakes men with property; from the rich owners of great corporate farms down to simple home
owners, they react hostilely toward the invading strangers from the dust bowl. But while Steinbeck shows that the alienation of the Joads comes from external sources, he shows that the wealthy are inherently discontented. Describing "little pot-bellied men in light suits and panama hats," he generalizes about a type he later particularizes in the person of Elliot Pritchard in *The Wayward Bus* (1947):

Clean, pink men with puzzled, worried eyes, with restless eyes. Worried because formulas do not work out; hungry for security and yet sensing its disappearance from the earth. In their lapels the insignia of lodges and service clubs, places where they can go and, by a weight of numbers of little worried men, reassure themselves that business is noble and not the curious ritualized thievery they know it is; that business men are intelligent in spite of the records of their stupidity; that they are kind and charitable in spite of the principles of sound business; that their lives are rich instead of the thin, tiresome routines they know; and that a time is coming when they will not be afraid any more.

Critics have made much of Steinbeck's affection for the down-and-out and his disgust with men of property. His disgust emanates from his concern for the way such men alienate themselves and others.

Curley, the ranch-owner's son in *Of Mice and Men* (1937), is an early example of the sort. A small man sensitive about his size, Curley compensates for feelings of inadequacy by abusing people, something he can do because of his social position. The difference between the owners and the workers on Curley's ranch illustrates fundamental Marxist ideas about alienation. Marx was primarily concerned with
the alienation of man by his labor. He considered work to be an intrinsic part of man's nature; that is, he saw the need to labor as inherent in the human species. Since he believed that "The whole character of a species--its species character--is contained in the character of its life-activity," he concluded that when "productive life" does not allow the worker to satisfy basic human needs, the labor alienates the man from his nature.\(^8\) In an agrarian society the results men produce through their efforts are things they themselves can use or enjoy. In an industrial society alienation of labor results from

> the fact that labour is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind.\(^9\)

Labor fails to satisfy a human need but satisfies instead needs external to the workers; it becomes an act of "self-sacrifice, or mortification"\(^10\) because the worker has sold his labor, a part of himself, to another. His "inner world" suffers because he is not creative: his work is not an object of his own will, it does not allow him to express his unique capabilities, it does not permit him to demonstrate his social nature, and it is merely a means to maintain subsistence.

The workers on the ranch in *Of Mice and Men* are not so alienated from their labor as men in industry, for example,
since men on a ranch can perceive the immediate usefulness of their work. However, they become commodities by selling their labor, and they partake little in its results. Furthermore, because the owners utilize the workers as objects for increasing wealth, the groups are alienated from one another as persons. In *Escape from Freedom* and *The Sane Society*, Erich Fromm's expansion of Marx's theories explains further the alienation which comes from ownership and labor, and from the manipulation and consumption of people and property.

Alienation as we find it in modern society is almost total; it pervades the relationship of man to his work, to the things he consumes, to the state, to his fellow man, and to himself. Man has created a world of man-made things as it never existed before. He has constructed a complicated social machine to administer the technical machine he built. Yet this whole creation of his stands over and above him. He does not feel himself as a creator and center, but as the servant of a Golem, which his hands have built. The more powerful and gigantic the forces are which he unleashes, the more powerless he feels as a human being. He confronts himself with his own forces embodied in things he has created, alienated from himself. He is owned by his own creation, and has lost ownership of himself. Explaining how the possession of objects causes alienation, Fromm points out that nothing ever loses its "quality as a commodity" for men, even if the object is something they take great pleasure in owning; the comfort or beauty an object renders is inseparable from its market value. Not relating himself to an object "in its full concreteness" so that "the object appears with all its specific qualities,"
man relates to the object only in an abstract way that appraises but a limited number of qualities, and he is therefore alienated from the object. Another detrimental habit in man's life which results from a lack of concrete relatedness to things is man's compulsive consumption. Not understanding or sharing in the production of things that become a part of our lives, says Fromm, we do nothing but manipulate or consume them. Indeed, "we are never satisfied, since it is not our real concrete person which consumes a real or concrete thing. We thus develop an ever-increasing need for more things, for more consumption." Although "a natural need for more consumption" may increase with a rise in the standard of living, Fromm believes that "our craving for consumption has lost all connection with the real needs of man." Whereas it was once thought that man could be happier with more "things," consumption "has become an aim in itself."

A further experience of alienation from things is effected when men own things for which they are not responsible, things which they may never even see or understand. Again the quality of "concrete relatedness" to things is lacking when a stockholder or even a single owner of a large corporation has no active role in its operation. The importance of a man's possessions, whether they be corporations, or land, or other things, lies in their market value and not in their use.
Fromm's discussion serves as a good introduction to Elliot Pritchard in the novel The Wayward Bus. In this novel published in 1947 Steinbeck castigates American society through his characterizations of a motley group of men and women thrown together by chance on a bus ride in California. The sympathetic characters behave naturally and contrary to convention; the rest are inhibited and artificial and seem permanently alienated. The dishonest businessman, Pritchard, is contrasted with the honest, confident, and capable bus driver, Juan Chicoy. Juan is alienated because of his Mexican nationality, but, indifferent to racial discrimination, he is free to communicate with others. Yet his foreignness invites weaker people like his wife and Mrs. Pritchard to condescend to him in defense of their own insecurity.

James Gray remarks that Elliot Pritchard's type is a continual target for Steinbeck's ire: "A willingness to prey on others in the interest of self-aggrandizement is, in Steinbeck's code, the bleakest of sins." Gray is correct, but his comment (and many others like it) fails to note the important similarity between Steinbeck's acquisitive types and his other unhappy characters. Even in The Wayward Bus, which deals superficially with a large number of characters, Steinbeck indicates that Pritchard's materialistic nature derives from his need for love and approval. Here again emerges a familiar pattern of alienation: a character with
inadequate self-esteem who needs to compensate for his feelings of inadequacy seeks ways to prove that he is worth more than he really believes. Pritchard and his wife typify middle-class Americans doomed to shallow satisfactions in life because they accept all the clichés of conventional society as their own personal standards. Pritchard's alienation is implied when Steinbeck introduces him in the novel. Although Pritchard gets satisfaction from being part of many organizations, he remains very much alone. He illustrates the dilemma of the man Buber describes who tries to escape cosmic and social solitude by participating in society \textit{en masse}. At best such a man merely deadens his feelings: the desecration of the spirit in depersonalized groups makes the bonds of true community impossible. The collectives keep men like Pritchard from having to face themselves, which they would have to do before they could know another person. Like Shark Wicks in \textit{The Pastures of Heaven}, Pritchard, who does not want to face himself, never genuinely communicates with his wife. Moreover, Pritchard's attempt to control his daughter (Mildred) and to know every detail of her life strongly echoes Shark Wicks's alienating possessiveness of his daughter (Alice).

Bernice Pritchard, Pritchard's wife, functions privately in a feminine domain just as her husband functions in isolation from her in the business world. Bernice drew a "magic circle around herself, with motherhood, or say,
menstruation, a subject like that, and no man could or would try to get in." Selfish and frigid, Mrs. Pritchard generally appears calm but stress brings out the hostile feelings she ordinarily manages to control. While she rarely admits her thoughts, she often punishes her family with her headaches, which are meant to attract sympathy. Bernice Pritchard resembles Mary Teller ("The White Quail") in many ways. She withdraws from Elliot into her private self just as Mary withdraws from Harry. Mary entices Harry to marry her in order to get her garden; Bernice manipulates Elliot with sex in order to get an orchid house. Further, the "beautiful marriage" Bernice has "built" (p. 251) is artificially perfect in the same way as Mary's garden.

Elliot Pritchard's need for love and the way he suffers from his wife's rejection emerge in his pitiful recollection of childhood loneliness:

Mr. Pritchard looked down at [Bernice]. Her eyes were closed and there was a small smile on her lips. He felt the sudden lonely sorrow that came so often. He remembered, really remembered, the first time it had happened. He had been five when his little sister was born, and suddenly there were doors closed against him and he couldn't go into the nursery and he couldn't touch the baby and the feeling came on him that he was always a little dirty and noisy and unworthy and his mother was always busy. And then the cold loneliness had fallen on him, the cold loneliness that still came to him now. The little smile meant that Bernice had retired from the world into her own room, and he couldn't follow her. (p. 275)

The bus trip forces Pritchard to talk with the less prosperous people he usually avoids and the results annoy
him. Ernest Horton, a traveling salesman who wants to believe in old virtues like honesty, thrift, self-reliance, and hard work, "bothered [Pritchard] because this was a bright young man, and he had a feeling of hopelessness. . . . Mr. Pritchard, like most of his associates, believed in miracles, but he was deeply shaken" (p. 279). Camille Oaks, like Horton, who becomes her friend, deals realistically with life; she rejects the job Mr. Pritchard offers her saying that she understands the actual nature of his proposition. Pritchard "felt naked before this girl. It bothered him to have her talk this way" (p. 286). Mr. Pritchard can feel comfortable only in a Babbitty world: as long as he is surrounded by others like himself, he is insulated from reality, but his consciousness of the truth outside seems to keep him constantly on edge and unhappily aware of his alienation.

The bus driver, Juan Chicoy, is the hero of The Wayward Bus. Juan is not really happy with his job or his life, but after a brief flirtation with the idea of escape, he chooses to remain with his responsibilities. Steinbeck implies that Juan is the kind of man the world needs: he is realistic, competent, and a natural leader. As Warren French says, "The world may still be if not saved, at least preserved, if those in the driver's seat accept it as it is and keep on going despite the difficulty of dealing with nasty and discourteous passengers." But as French and others have also
noted, there is a problem in the characterization of Juan:

As Peter Lisca points out, his initials, like Jim Casy's in *The Grapes of Wrath* are the same as Jesus Christ's. Charles Walcutt explains in *American Literary Naturalism*, however, why Juan fails to live up to his symbolic billing: "Juan's personal superiority is not justified... He is... set up before us as a noble savage who can repair a bus and haul it out of a hole better than a typical American can do. There is something phoney in this sort of primitivism, for neither Juan's Mexican-Catholic roots nor his mechanical competence go deep enough to account for his superiority to the group of travelers." Walcutt is right. Juan is one of Steinbeck's futile efforts to find an uneducated hero with the same qualities as Doc in *Cannery Row*. The trouble with this effort is that Doc's desirable qualities are the result of the discipline of his scientific training and his cultivated taste in the arts. Steinbeck has no more success than the eighteenth-century pursuers of the "noble savage" in proving that these qualities can be found in the untutored mind.

Even if the characterization of Juan had been more successful, an interesting question regarding the quality of his life would remain: if man does not escape through fantasy, must he accept alienation as Juan does? Juan longs for more familiar surroundings. "His mind plunged with pictures of the sun-beaten hills of Lower California... The taste of fresh oranges and the bite of chili. What was he doing in this country anyway? He didn't belong here" (pp. 234-35). He admits to the metal figure of his beloved Virgin of Guadalupe, "You know that I have not been happy and also that out of a sense of duty that is not natural to me I have stayed in the traps that have been set for me" (p. 221). Juan would like to leave his wife because she repels him with love that demands too much reassurance and she
indulges in drunken binges when she is depressed. He is annoyed by rude and fatuous passengers that he must tolerate to earn his livelihood. But Juan stays where he is because his wife is "insanely in love with him" (p. 6) and because he has adjusted to his life in Rebel Corners. Juan's choice says, "It is better to be than not to be; there is no escape from alienation."

Considering Steinbeck's strong tendency to show that economically successful people are inevitably alienated, one may be tempted to hope that Steinbeck's non-conformists could prove to have evolved a viable style of life. Steinbeck himself seems to wish that alternative societies he depicts in Tortilla Flat, Cannery Row (1945), and Sweet Thursday (1954) offer a possible escape from alienation, if not a solution. In The Pastures of Heaven Junius Maltby's farm is the forerunner of these groups which have Junius's loathing for work and his chronic need for, but basic indifference to, money. These male clans do not resemble Maltby's group in intellectual tone, but there is among them an appealing, homespun philosophy that makes the characters appear wiser, on the whole, than the rest of society. In the two later novels the character called "Doc" (modeled on Steinbeck's friend Ed Ricketts) is the ex officio mentor of the group. This marine biologist at least equals Junius in intelligence and wide-ranging curiosity. This Doc and
another, Doc Burton of In Dubious Battle, are most often identified as Steinbeck's principal spokesmen.

But Steinbeck does not rely upon spokesmen to express all his meanings. He does not hesitate to speak as omniscient author or to address his readers directly, as in the foreword to the second edition of Tortilla Flat. In the second chapter of Cannery Row he describes the group he calls "Mack and the boys":

They are the Virtues, the Graces, the Beauties of the hurried mangled craziness of Monterey and the cosmic Monterey where men in fear and hunger destroy their stomachs in the fight to secure certain food, where men hungering for love destroy everything lovable about them. . . . What can it profit a man to gain the whole world and to come to his property with a gastric ulcer, a blown prostate, and bifocals? Mack and the boys avoid the trap, walk around the poison, step over the noose while a generation of trapped, poisoned, and trussed-up men scream at them and call them no-goods, come-to-bad-ends, blots-on-the-town, thieves, rascals, bums.

This description would as aptly fit the group Steinbeck refers to as "Danny and his friends." In the preface to Tortilla Flat, Steinbeck explains that in this novel he tells the story of Danny, his friends, and his house, a tale which brings to mind the knights of the Round Table. Because early readers of the novel saw the characters as "curious, quaint, or underdoggish," Steinbeck insists in a foreword to a new edition that his subjects merely "merge successfully with their habitat." He regrets that he has exposed "to the vulgar touch of the decent these good people
of laughter and kindness, of honest lusts and direct eyes, of courtesy beyond politeness" (n. pag.).

Examining the works which feature such "knights" and "Virtues . . . of Monterey" can lead to the impression that either Steinbeck was being disingenuous or he was unaware of serious confusions and ambiguities in his attitude toward his subjects. In the first place, they do not merge successfully with their environment unless "merge" means to the author that their alienation is negligible compared with that of other characters. Moreover, in spite of the virtues of his "bums" Steinbeck shows that they have the same traits of envy, greed, false pride, selfishness, and cruelty that are found outside their havens. The difference, if any, is in degree. This is most readily illustrated by comparing Danny and his friends to Torelli, the storekeeper, who represents the conventional attitudes of the outside world (Monterey, to the paisanos of Tortilla Flat). Torelli is alienated from the paisanos because he is a businessman and an Italian; he is their natural enemy because he is aligned with the commercial interests of society. There is a certain subliminal understanding between the two sides, each expecting to cheat and be cheated in his way. (Actually the paisanos get the better of Torelli.) Nevertheless, Danny and his friends feel loyal toward Torelli and noble about buying all their wine from him after they have swindled him. Mack and the boys feel a similar loyalty to Lee
Chong, who, besides owning the store in Cannery Row, owns the building they sleep in. They pay him no rent, but they trade with no one else and they will not steal from him.

Doc believes that Mack and the boys survive far better than the people who are torn with "ambition and nervousness and covetousness" (p. 149). In Doc's opinion, all successful men are sick, in contrast with his friends, who seem healthy to him and free to do as they please. He knows that they are clever enough to make money if they want to, but "They just know the nature of things too well to be caught up in that wanting" (p. 149). Bums to the rest of the world, self-alienated from conventional society, these individualists have found an environment which offers them the greatest opportunity to be themselves and to find companionship with others like themselves. Doc knows enough about the world to know just how unusual, and how common, this kind of community is. "The sale of souls to gain the whole world is completely voluntary and almost unanimous—-but not quite. Everywhere in the world there are Mack and the boys" (p. 151).

When Doc analyzes the world's peculiar system of values, his understanding of the nature of society corresponds strongly with an observation of Richard Schacht in the conclusion to his discussion of alienation and societal values. Schacht points out a major conflict that ends in hypocrisy: the conflict derives from the difference between the values acted upon by "normal," "adjusted" adults and the ideals
these adults commonly profess. Actual values "seem far from consistent with the ideals of self-realization, personal growth, and the 'pursuit of happiness.'" It is difficult to exist in a society with conflicting values: "a division ... into mutually uncomprehending and hostile groups is a very real possibility." One large group hostile to prevailing values has been the subject of a book by Kenneth Keniston, *The Uncommitted: Alienated Youth in American Society*. Taking both psychological and sociological approaches, Keniston tries to answer the question of why youth are alienated in America today. Criticizing American society, he understands well what in America wealthy and talented youth would want to reject. Most of his subjects "'stuck' in late adolescence" after withdrawing or graduating from college, refused to accept "conventional adulthood," and wandered, observed, and searched for "identity, self-definition, philosophical position, and values which most 'normal' adults leave behind in adolescence." Keniston explains that the youths he studied would not adapt their egos to the state thought most desirable in our technological era. The "technological ego" is a "tyrannical" one which promotes problem-solving, cognitive control, work, measurement, rationality, and analysis. ... [It] rarely subordinates itself to other psychic interests or functions." Inclinations toward "playfulness, fantasy, relaxation, creativity, feeling, and synthesis" are
downgraded. The importance of feelings and of private life are minimized in our society, where cognition is valued over feeling, "and where fantasy, idealism, and the Utopian spirit must be subordinated to the 'practical' world." Keniston observes that alienation formerly was looked upon as a state "imposed" upon men by their "unjust economic system," while today it is a state men choose when they rebel against society. He attributes the new condition as it exists in America to a confusion about values; it is a "new form of rebellion without a cause, of rejection without a program, of refusal without a vision of what should be." Mack and the boys on Cannery Row may be compared to rebellious adolescents. They have escaped from more ordinary kinds of existence and regressed to a comfortable, pre-adult state in which they have greater freedom and less responsibility than they would have leading conventional lives. But these rebels are nevertheless alienated: again it appears that the amount of suffering from alienation depends more on the individual's adjustment to his environment than on how the environment suits the individual. Much of Cannery Row is devoted to sad tales of lonely characters who live in the Row or find their ends there. Only fantasy can offer escape from pressures of the world; reality reaches the people in Cannery Row just as it reaches the more affluent people in the Pastures of Heaven.
Mack and Doc himself know they suffer from alienation. Mack misses the wife who left him and he believes that nothing he does ever turns out right. Suddenly it seems that there are reasons for Mack's isolation from conventional society that were not previously apparent. Feelings of rejection and of personal inadequacy underlie his playful facade. But an immediate cause for Mack's depression is that a party the boys gave Doc turned into a riot and the community has ostracised Mack and the boys. The guilty bunch are so pained that they withdraw to themselves. Steinbeck comments upon the "two possible reactions to social ostracism--either a man emerges determined to be better, purer, and kindlier or he goes bad, challenges the world and does even worse things. This last is by far the commonest reaction to stigma" (p. 148). (If applied to Junius Maltby, this statement suggests that Steinbeck believed that society's ostracism eventually turned out to Junius's advantage.)

The important difference between Doc and the other characters in Cannery Row is that he understands the facts of existence and is therefore able to accept loneliness, as well as failure and disappointment. Doc's Weltschmertz makes him a man without illusions, and illusions may shore one up against loneliness. Yet illusions are too precarious to offer permanent defense: Doc has the only viable defense, acceptance, although things are not always easy for him.
Doc is discomfited when he tries to be himself because ordinary people find him odd: he feels awkward when he wants to wear a beard or when he feels an urge for a beer milkshake or when he takes an unusually long walk (once he walked from Chicago to Florida). He feels constrained to defend his impulses with conventionally acceptable reasons, yet lying makes him uncomfortable. "Doc's desirable qualities," which, French says, result from "the discipline of his scientific training and his cultivated taste in the arts," do not alleviate the alienation which comes from his essential loneliness. Even Mack senses this. When Mack knows Doc has a girl with him, Mack still gets "a dreadful feeling of loneliness out of it. Even in the dear close contact with a girl Mack felt that Doc would be lonely" (p. 104).

Steinbeck's most important concerns in the farcical Sweet Thursday (1954), the sequel to Cannery Row, are the examination and amelioration of Doc's loneliness. But to accomplish these ends, Steinbeck had to change his character in several ways. Perhaps Doc in Cannery Row resembles Steinbeck as much as he does Ed Ricketts; in Sweet Thursday the resemblance to Steinbeck seems to increase. In the years between 1945 and 1954, Ricketts died, and Steinbeck ended his apparently unhappy second marriage and began his apparently happy third marriage. In Sweet Thursday Doc sacrifices some of his independence to have a wife. He
plans to support her by leaving his self-regulated life in Cannery Row to take an endowed position doing research at California Institute of Technology. Doc knows he must always be alienated in some way: living in Cannery Row, he lacks the stimulating environment of educated men that he can enjoy at a university; nor can he marry and remain in the Row, for he is unable to offer Suzy the life she needs as his wife. Yet however pleasant his new job will be, it is bound to be more alienating to him than working in his own laboratory; and living with a wife will inevitably compromise his freedom to some extent. Doc examines his needs and pursues his greatest priorities.

Having returned Doc in *Sweet Thursday* to a life of greater responsibility, Steinbeck next begins to examine what happens when a cultured, educated man accepts the responsibility his society gives him and tries to use his position to improve the lives of his fellow men. *The Short Reign of Pippin IV: A Fabrication* (1957) seems to be a departure even for a novelist whose works are as varied as Steinbeck's. Comical throughout and set in France, *Pippin* differs in humor from books like *Tortilla Flat* because its farcical tone scarcely ever disappears; and it is one of the few works by Steinbeck not set in his native California. Although the lightness of the tone might seem to preclude the effectiveness of a somber theme like alienation, the simplicity of this work, on the contrary, makes it possible
for it to bear one of Steinbeck's strongest statements of that theme. The saddest and most serious parts of the story deal with a man's attempt to be a good king. Gradually Pippin becomes aware of the futility of his goal; eventually he realizes that he can find satisfaction in life, indeed, even safety, only if he abandons his dream and withdraws to the solitary life he led before his country tapped him to be monarch. He retreats to the privacy of his astronomical observatory and of his good if dull and commonplace marriage.

The hero of the novelette, M. Pippin Arnulf Héristal, seems to be an independent person from the start. His wife, Marie, is no person at all but an American caricature of French bourgeoisie wifeliness in her attitudes about her husband, her servants, proper dress, and her duty, which "as she saw it was to keep a good, clean, economical house for her husband and daughter, to do what she could about her liver, and to maintain the spiritual payments on her escrowed property in Heaven." In some ways she is a comic counterpart to women like Mrs. Pritchard (The Wayward Bus) and Mrs. Wicks (The Pastures of Heaven): she "was a good wife and a good manager who knew her province and stayed in it. . . . She admired her husband without trying to understand him and had a degree of friendship with him which is not found in those marriages where passionate love sets torch to peace of mind" (p. 14). Practical about money and
insensitive to needs of the spirit that differ from hers, Marie gets upset at the thought of her husband wanting to buy a new camera to photograph meteors. They cannot eat meteors, she argues. Pippin's twenty-year-old daughter, Clothilde, works so hard to be different that she becomes a stereotype who is imitated by millions of girls after she becomes princess.

Pippin himself, outwardly quite typical of a Frenchman of his class, derives his income from well-situated vineyards on slopes near the Loire. Yet Pippin, says Steinbeck, is "French plus. For instance, he did not believe it was a sin not to speak French and an affectation for a Frenchman to learn other languages. He knew German, Italian, and English. He had a scholarly interest in progressive jazz, and he loved the cartoons in Punch. He admired the English for their intensity and their passion for roses, horses, and some kinds of conduct" (p. 14). Pippin's principal interest and the cause of his only extravagance is astronomy. Equipped with instruments beyond the reach of most amateurs, Pippin is proud of a scientific discovery he has made as well as of his celestial photographs. Having a comfortable income without working, Pippin can study the stars, doing work which he chose freely out of genuine desire. His enthusiasm shows when he says to his uncle, "Who knows what is going on up there? Do not forget that it was I who first reported the Elysée Comet" (pp. 22-23).
The satisfaction of Pippin's quiet life is disrupted, however, when the chronic turmoil in French politics results in attention being paid to leaders of the Royalists, who successfully persuade other party leaders that it would be good for the country to return to monarchy. The question of who should be king is answered by the discovery that Pippin is a living heir to the line descending from Charlemagne. Although Pippin does not want to be king, he yields to the argument that his country needs him and once he accepts the throne, he makes up his mind to do something good for France.

Unfortunately, however, Pippin learns that people do not expect him or want him to make improvements. They are shocked and dismayed by the seven-point program that he proposes. Having defied warnings that his suggestions would take him to the guillotine, he learns after his speech at the constitutional convention that his life may be in danger. Bravely deciding to take the risk of staying in Paris on the belief that no harm will come to him if he resigns, Pippin quits his palace to return to his former residence with Marie, who is as satisfied as he is to be free of the obligations of royalty.

The Short Reign of Pippin IV abounds with humor and epigram; customs and attitudes are ridiculed left and right. In this respect it resembles Sweet Thursday. Pippin satirizes, for example, assorted groups or aspects of society:
politics, bureaucracy, religion, commercialism, fashion, popular culture, aristocrats, adolescents, citizens in general, Americans, servants, art dealers, businessmen. But as with *Sweet Thursday* there is one dominant concern in the novel. From the time he accepts kingship, Pippin begins to worry about how to be a king. In this frivolous tale there hides the existential dilemma of a man who, suddenly estranged from himself, must decide what to do.

Even before he has accepted his appointment as king, Pippin shows his awareness of the alienation the job may carry. He notes that "Frenchmen ... automatically detest any government in power" (p. 48). His uncle Charles warns him he has "been chosen for the role of what the Americans call a 'patsy'" (p. 53), and that, if he takes the job, there is no way to avoid being a patsy besides cutting his wrists. Pippin answers, "I don't want to be king. ... Can't I say no, Uncle Charlie? No, no, no, no!" (p. 53). But Charles says he is sure that Pippin will comply if he is told that his country needs him. Charles is right.

One of the adjustments Pippin makes is accepting a mistress (whom he never meets). Charles insists that refusing to have a mistress "would be like going without your clothes" (p. 63). This is the beginning of a series of references to the dress, or lack of it, of the king. It is as though the various kinds of attire, as well as Pippin's sense of nakedness, may be related to the problems
he has with his new image: his loss of his familiar identity, his insecurity in his new one.

The day of the coronation, Pippin sits in the royal coach, "an uncomfortable bundle of purple velvet and ermine" (p. 74). A casual reference is made to an attempt to assassinate the king which ended in the death of a horse. After the procession moves along for a while, Pippin props his royal robes up in his seat and disappears unnoticed. He is with his telescope when his wife finds him.

Pippin soon wonders how he let himself in for other discomforts of being king: the draftiness of Versailles, the creaky floors, the horrible beds, and two hundred "built-in guests" (p. 77). Nor is Marie very happy as queen: her husband is more distant than ever; she has few companions; and she lacks the releases available to men. Here Steinbeck repeats ideas used in much more serious contexts, particularly in stories of The Long Valley and The Pastures of Heaven. Elisa Allen of "The Chrysanthemums," especially, comes to mind as Steinbeck writes that for a woman a "man's releases are not available, the killing of small or large animals, vicarious murder from a seat at the prize ring" (p. 93).

But Pippin remains confused: "I am the king and I don't even know what a king is" (p. 96). In time he develops the suspicion that he is powerless, which is an
abominable thought to him. Twice he rejects the suggestion to yield his responsibility to others. Sister Hyacinthe (Suzanne) comforts him; a voice of wisdom in the book, she resembles Fauna and Suzy (Suzanne?) of Sweet Thursday. As Fauna did with Doc, Sister Hyacinthe tries to find out why Pippin is mourning. When he tells her that the best thing that ever happened to him was the wonder of discovering the comet, she knows that he should never have been king.

The ending of the novelette is as light as the rest of the story, yet it makes its point distinctly: a man faces self-estrangement when he undertakes to fulfill a role he does not want and for which he feels no natural inclination. A man who has found a comfortable niche and can live with the compromises he makes by staying there is better off than the man who tries to go against his nature for the sake of others, especially when others do not want help. Pippin's subjects are interested merely in the folderol of royalty. While he presents his "Code Pippin" to the constitutional convention, the delegates sit in horrified silence. Then, amused by his ridiculous costume, they laugh him off the rostrum. Pippin can accept their rejection of him with aplomb because his self-esteem does not depend on success in the kingly role. He rightfully accepts the failure as not his but society's.

This small point is highly significant to a study of the patterns of alienation in Steinbeck's characters. The
harmful patterns emerge in characters with inadequate self-esteem. If a character approves of himself and acts according to morals he has found acceptable, he can tolerate failure and rejection. It is a point made repeatedly in Steinbeck's later novels, and when it is related to Steinbeck's concept of failure, it proves that Steinbeck's measure of a man's success is related to the degree of a man's alienation. If, on the contrary, he can accept what he cannot change and be satisfied with what he is and what he has, he will be happier. If he also has love, he will be as happy as a man can hope to be.

Joe Saul, in the allegorical novel *Burning Bright* (1950), is a further case in point. Joe Saul, a man near fifty, is miserable because he has no children. His young wife, Mordeen, sure that Joe Saul is sterile, conceives a child for him by another man. The news that the child Mordeen is bearing is not his own sickens Joe Saul until he understands that Mordeen's sexual experience with another man was repellent to her. Joe Saul had placed great emphasis upon the traditional notion that a man needs to perpetuate himself, but in the final scene he admits that he was wrong to think that the blood or line of a man is more important for its own sake than that of any other man. "With all our horrors and all our faults," he says, it is the human race that is important, and "every man is father to all children and every child must have all men as
father." Joe Saul fails to become a father in the biological sense of the word, but by changing his values he avoids feeling failure. Once fertility becomes irrelevant to his self-esteem, he can enjoy great happiness knowing how much his wife loves him.

_Burning Bright_ continues the theme of fatherhood begun two decades before in the Whiteside tale of _The Pastures of Heaven_. Fertility and dynasty are also central issues in _To a God Unknown_ (1933) and _East of Eden_ (1952). Like Richard Whiteside, major characters in these novels, Joseph Wayne and Adam Trask, move from New England to California to buy fine land to fulfill their dreams. On the ridge-top of the Nuestra Señora Valley, where he will make his home, Joseph Wayne resembles Richard Whiteside looking down on Las Pasturas del Cielo.

A long time he sat there. As he looked into the valley, Joseph felt his body flushing with a hot fluid of love. "This is mine," he said simply, and his eyes sparkled with tears and his brain was filled with wonder that this should be his. There was pity in him for the grass and the flowers; he felt that the trees were his children and the land his child. For a moment he seemed to float high in the air and to look down upon it. "It's mine," he said again, "and I must take care of it."27

The action of _To a God Unknown_ stems from Joseph's attempt to establish a mystical union with the natural world. From his first day in the valley, Joseph loves the land more than he loves any human being. His possessiveness and his mysticism cause his alienation: he is interested in others only for the part they play in his goals. After his brothers
and their families have joined him, Joseph "felt the joy that Abraham must have felt when the huge promise bore fruit, when his tribesmen and his goats began to increase. Joseph's passion for fertility grew strong" (p. 22). He says, "I want increase. I want the land to swarm with life. Everywhere I want things growing up" (p. 23). Then, thinking that he is "the only sterile thing" on the ranch, he decides to take a wife.

Joseph's marriage to Elizabeth McGregor is happy, but Joseph is a "lonely figure" (p. 90). At a fiesta held at his ranch, he stands apart from the crowd. Elizabeth, watching him until after the people are gone, sees him looking at the sky, which finally brings welcome rain. Joseph has been frightened by tales of terrible droughts in the region. As Joseph and Elizabeth talk that night, he admits that being able to share deep thoughts with her should make him feel less lonely, but it does not. Yet her news that she is bearing a child cheers him, for "It is a proof that we belong here. . . . The only proof that we are not strangers" (p. 92). Because Elizabeth begs him to, Joseph sits with her all evening, but when he thinks that she is asleep, he slips outside. Elizabeth remembers what Joseph's sister-in-law, Rama, has told her of Joseph: "If he dreams you'll never know his dreams" (p. 93). Feeling acutely estranged Elizabeth shivers and begins crying softly.
Joseph has left Elizabeth to go to the oak tree which he uses as the center of druidic rituals. Joseph makes a practice of speaking to the tree, for he believes that the spirit of his father dwells in it. Elizabeth does not share Joseph's persuasions but she has an unpleasant mystical experience. Returning from a mysterious pine glade where she found a huge rock, she tells Joseph, "Something malicious was in the glade, something that wanted to destroy me. I ran away. I thought it was after me, that great crouched rock, and when I got outside, I prayed. Oh, I prayed a long time" (p. 123). When she returns to the glade and climbs upon the rock, she falls to her death.

It does not seem to trouble Joseph so much as Elizabeth that they could not relieve one another's loneliness, but he says when he finds her dead, "It was the one chance to communicate. . . . Now it is gone" (p. 129). Rama tells Joseph that he did not know Elizabeth as a person. "You never have known a person. You aren't aware of persons, Joseph; only people. You can't see units, Joseph, only the whole" (p. 134). That it is Rama who criticizes Joseph is important, for Steinbeck attributes great, instinctive knowledge about life to Rama, an archetypal earth mother. Although Rama is sure that she knows men and that her instinct is never wrong, she believes that she cannot know Joseph.
Shortly before Elizabeth's death, Burton Wayne, Joseph's fanatically orthodox brother, killed the oak where Joseph had worshipped. Joseph senses that his father's spirit has moved to the rock in the glade. When the dreaded drought comes, everyone leaves the ranch but Joseph. Joseph gives his child to Rama, thinking his gesture might "help the land." Rama asks,

"Do you mean you're sacrificing the child? Is that it, Joseph?"
"I don't know what name to give it," he said. "I am trying to help the land, and so there's no danger that I shall take the child again."

She stood up then, and backed away from him slowly. "Good-bye to you, Joseph," she said. "I am going in the morning, and I am glad, for I shall always be afraid of you now. I shall always be afraid." Her lips trembled, and her eyes filled with tears. "Poor lonely man!" She hurried away toward her house, but Joseph smiled gravely up at the pine grove.

"Now we are one," he thought, "and now we are alone; we will be working together." (pp. 154-55)

In time the drought makes the valley a waste land; the drought ends as Joseph sacrifices himself and rain begins to fall.

Some of this early novel was conceived even before Steinbeck's first published novel appeared.²⁸ The mysticism of Joseph suggests that as a young man Steinbeck looked for the possibility of a transcendental escape from alienation. But although Wayne's beliefs seem to be validated by some of the events in the story, Rama's challenge to Joseph's humanity is never answered. Rama wonders whether men like Joseph were sometimes "born outside humanity, or whether some men
are so human as to make others seem unreal. Perhaps a god-

ling lives on earth now and then." She believes that one
can worship Joseph, but not know or love him; that he is
"not a man, unless he is all men" (p. 66). It is under-
standable that Steinbeck never returned to the mysticism of
this book. The concern of the rest of his work is the less
metaphysical reconciliation available to less godlike human
beings. And yet, Steinbeck's problems of characterization,
previously noted, show that he never fully resolved the para-
dox described by Rama: if a character is "all men" he can-
not be known as "a man." Even in *East of Eden*, Steinbeck's
most determined effort to establish psychologically credible
motives, his mixed intentions for his characters continue.

In his *East of Eden* journal, Steinbeck says that he
wants his characters to be symbolic, yet he wants them to be
real. He believes that as symbols, his people are a kind of
"psychological sign language," but he is concerned (as quoted
earlier in Chapter III) that he make the characters "doubly
understandable as people apart from their symbols [sic],"
because he aspires to "a semblance of real experience both
visual and emotional and finally intellectual." He strives
for meaning by clothing his "symbol people in the trappings
of experience" (p. 27). Steinbeck repeatedly says that he
wants to make the reader see himself in the novel: Cain
will be understood because "every man has Cain in him"
(p. 128). The characters in *East of Eden* are assuredly
more credible than the flat, allegorical types in *Burning Bright*, and one result of this difference is the effect upon the theme. *Burning Bright* offers an Everyman to convey a message of the brotherhood of men; *East of Eden* is concerned with a more specific kind of love: the need of individuals for the love and acceptance of another person, as well as for self-love and self-acceptance. *East of Eden* continues the theme which has preoccupied Steinbeck from the beginning: feeling unloved leads to a sense of inadequacy; compensation for the inadequacy is sought in defensive behavior; and consequently both inadequacy and guilt cause self-estrangement as the alienated person sees the dichotomy between the beloved or lovable person he would like to be and the less loved or lovable person he believes he actually is.

**Adam and Cal Trask**

*East of Eden* (1952) juxtaposes a fictional family with Steinbeck's own maternal relatives in a sprawling tale that sometimes seems to be two books in one. Although Steinbeck said as he wrote it, "this book is about everything" (*Journal*, p. 43), his journal and the novel itself repeatedly indicate that his specific theme is alienation. *East of Eden* shows that man's universal need for love, so often unsatisfied, and the pain of rejection underlie human behavior: man's good or evil and his happiness in life depend upon the
satisfaction of his craving, or his ability to understand his needs and to adjust to what life has to offer him as fulfillment. As Steinbeck undertook the writing of *East of Eden*, he remarked that it was the book he had always wanted to write, but that he was not sure he was yet good enough or gifted enough to do what he wanted to do. Yet believing "there is only one book to a man," Steinbeck thought that *East of Eden* was possibly "the only book I have ever written" (*Journal*, p. 5). In so saying, Steinbeck acknowledges that alienation has been his principal theme.

The novel begins with Cyrus Trask, a hard man who wears out two wives before his interest in military affairs wins him a sinecure in Washington. The first wife bears Adam; the second, Charles. Charles never marries, but Adam, after a career in the army and years of wandering, marries a woman he hardly knows, Cathy Ames. Nearly dead from a beating given her by the whoremaster whose mistress she has been, Cathy dragged herself to the Connecticut farmhouse of Charles and Adam. Adam is struck by her beauty and fooled by her lies and clever deceit: thinking he loves her, he marries her in spite of the warnings of Charles, who has had more experience with whores. Cathy marries Adam merely because she has no good alternative in her life at the time. Although she tells Adam she does not share his desire to move to California, Adam, full of hope, ignores her and takes her there to begin a new life. He invests in a fine piece of
land, hoping to start a dynasty. Adam ignores Cathy again when she says she will not stay on their farm, but as soon as she regains her strength after bearing twin sons, Cathy shows Adam how serious she has been. She announces that she is leaving, and when Adam tries to stop her, she shoots him in the shoulder.

Without Adam's knowledge Cathy changes her name to Kate and becomes a whore in nearby Salinas. In time through a series of calculated cruelties including murder, Kate acquires her own brothel, a brothel which caters to perversions. It is years before Adam begins to get over the shock of Cathy's rejection. Adam's Chinese-American servant, Lee, runs the household and becomes a substitute parent to the boys. The lives of the Trasks touch at some points with those of the Hamiltons (Samuel Hamilton was Steinbeck's maternal grandfather). Samuel, whose farm land is as poor as Adam's is rich, befriends Adam and enjoys exchanging philosophical ideas with Lee. It is Samuel who shakes Adam from the lethargy caused by the loss of Cathy to force him to give names to his sons. Their Biblical names, Caleb and Aaron (shortened to Cal and Aron), portentously bear the same initials as Cain and Abel.

Cal grows up envious of his brother and jealous of his father's love, just as Charles Trask had been jealous of Cyrus's love for Adam. Cal's frustrated desire to win Adam's unqualified love and approval drives him to cruelty toward
his brother. It is not until the final moments of the novel when it seems that Adam is about to die that father and son are reconciled and Cal is free of the stigma of evil and guilt that has controlled his life. The affirmative tone at the conclusion suggests that Adam's blessing permits Cal to escape the alienation that has tortured him.

The theme of alienation is apparent in all three generations of the Trasks. Cyrus, Charles, Adam, Cathy, Cal, and Aron all experience painful feelings of rejection. The self-estrangement of Adam and Cal is defined most clearly and is tied most conspicuously to the plot and to the meanings of the novel.

Adam's authoritarian father, Cyrus, creates fear in his family where there might have been love. Cyrus deplores weakness and demands discipline above all else. His second wife, Alice, learns that he treats sickness like a crime, administering cures that are like punishments. She does not complain about her consumption because she does not want Cyrus to kill her with his treatment before she can die of the disease. With his sons Cyrus assumes the role of a general toward his soldiers. He decides upon a military career for Adam, and he seems to believe that rearing Adam to perform properly in battle will prepare him for life, which to Cyrus is essentially war. Being of different natures, Adam and Charles react to their father's stern
military approach in different ways. Adam comes to hate his father; Charles loves Cyrus desperately and futilely longs for reassurances of his love. For his part, Adam feels completely alienated from his family; he hates his father, fears his brother, and longs for a mother's love, something he has never known from his stepmother; Adam knows that only Charles belongs to his stepmother: "he knew because he had been told many times. Not from things said but from the tone in which other things were said . . ." (p. 21).

When at sixteen Adam tries to understand why his father insists that he go into the army, Adam is amazed to learn that his father prefers him to Charles. Through the years Charles has correctly suspected Cyrus's favoritism and has often beaten Adam severely to punish him for being loved. Having observed the intimacy between his father and brother when Adam is about to leave home, Charles tries to kill Adam. Adam, who has for good reason always been intimidated by Charles, cannot explain to Cyrus what makes Charles angry enough to hurt him so badly.

Years later, however, Charles tells Adam how he loved their father, and Adam admits he never loved the man. These confessions dispel Adam's fear of Charles, for Adam realizes that his brother's attacks were a fight for love. Steinbeck says in his journal that this conversation between Charles and Adam "is one of the very most important things in the
book" and that upon it depends a considerable part of the "structure of the book" (pp. 38-39). The crucial point of the dialogue is Adam's discovery of the principle which explains so many problems in his life: someone can have faith in a person he does not love; but when a person loves, he is jealous, doubtful, and suspicious of the loved one, and his jealousy can lead him to aggressive behavior. Adam comes to this discovery after he and Charles wonder whether their father stole money from the government. Cyrus's death leaves the brothers much more money than they expected—"enough to start a dynasty" (p. 60). Adam is sure they are entitled to the money. Charles says:

"But you said you did not love our father. How can you have faith in him if you didn't love him?"

Maybe that's the reason," Adam said slowly, feeling his way. "Maybe if I had loved him I would have been jealous of him. You were. Maybe--maybe love makes you suspicious and doubting. Is it true that when you love a woman you are never sure--never sure of her because you aren't sure of yourself? I can see it pretty clearly. I can see how you loved him and what it did to you. I did not love him. Maybe he loved me. He tested me and hurt me and punished me and finally he sent me out like a sacrifice, maybe to make up for something. But he did not love you, and so he had faith in you. Maybe--why, maybe it's a kind of reverse."

Charles stared at him. "I don't understand," he said.

"I'm trying to," said Adam. It's a new thought to me. I feel good. I feel better maybe than I have ever felt in my whole life. I've got rid of something. Maybe sometime I'll get what you have, but I haven't got it now."

"I don't understand," Charles said again.

"Can you see that I don't think our father was a thief? I don't believe he was a liar."

"But the papers--"
"I won't look at the papers. Papers are no match at all for my faith in my father."

"I don't understand," said Charles.
"You don't? Well, it does seem that maybe this might be the secret of the whole thing. Look, I've never mentioned this--do you remember when you beat me up just before I went away?"
"Yes."
"Do you remember later? You came back with a hatchet to kill me."
"I don't remember very well. I must have been crazy."
"I didn't know then, but I know now--you were fighting for your love." (pp. 70-71)

In the journal, Steinbeck comments on this passage:

I am particularly fascinated with Adam's reaction to the death and defection of his father. That will go down hard with you and with everyone else. It did at first with me but once you have accepted it, you will see that it is righter than any conventional approach could be. In fact his reaction I think is most profound. And you will be interested to know that Adam made it himself. I did not do it for him. There is nothing unusual in the fact that he who did not like his father nevertheless had faith in him. You and even I must think a good deal about that because in it lies one of the great truths. When you look at it you will see that love is identification and embodies jealousy and suspicion. Think of that. Faith is an entirely different thing. Love can only weaken faith. (pp. 37-38)

It seems that fathers bequeath to their sons an inability to trust themselves in intimate relationships; the result is that love and trust are seen as inimical. Later in East of Eden Adam acknowledges to Cal: "I'm as bad a father as my father was. . . . My father made a mold and forced me into it. . . . Nobody can be remelted. And so I remained a bad casting" (p. 454). This molding is the sin of the fathers. Adam sees this legacy as an agency beyond
human control which determines his behavior with his sons, including his expressions of favoritism toward Aron. Adam's partiality causes the hostility Charles felt toward him to be repeated by Cal in his feelings toward Aron. The effect on Cal is clear. Since Cal knows that other people prefer Aron, he takes revenge on them when he can do so without their knowing it; "he punished because he wished he could be loved as Aron was loved" (p. 349). Aron's puzzled request for Cal to explain his misbehavior makes Cal feel dirty and mean; Cal longs "for Aron to love him. He felt lost and hungry and he didn't know what to do" (p. 375).

Steinbeck explains that Aron's handsome blond appearance attracted people, while Cal's darkness made them suspicious. Cal needed affection as much as anyone, but, being rebuffed, he became shy; "And once a boy has suffered rejection, he will find rejection even where it does not exist—or, worse, will draw it forth from people simply by expecting it" (p. 444). Key episodes involving gifts from the boys to their father occur in both generations and parallel the story in Genesis which describes God's rejection of the offering of Cain. The fathers reject the gifts of their dark sons whose initials are C. Just as Cain struck Abel out of anger, the dark Trask sons hurt their brothers to compensate for feeling rejected.

Cal fights his hostile tendencies from boyhood. As a boy he prays:
Dear Lord, . . . let me be like Aron. Don't make me mean. I don't want to be. If you will let everybody like me, why, I'll give you anything in the world, and if I haven't got it, why, I'll go for to get it. I don't want to be mean. I don't want to be lonely. For Jesus' sake, Amen. (pp. 379-80)

At seventeen Cal becomes aware and ashamed that he is jealous of Aron and he tries to overcome his jealousy. He wonders whether Aron has "to fight himself like this" (p. 539). When Cal realizes that he actually enjoys punishing himself as he does, he asks himself, "Why not be just what you are and do just what you do?" (p. 539). He concludes that he whips himself to protect himself from the beating someone else might give him. He tries to persuade himself to be magnanimous, but so many conflicting drives work within him that when Adam rejects Cal's gift of fifteen thousand dollars earned to restore Adam's financial position the part of Cal that he himself hates must be expressed. Cal feels his "quiet hateful brain" working: "He fought it more weakly, for hate was seeping all through his body, poisoning every nerve. He could feel himself losing control" (p. 544). Guessing how Cal feels after his gift has been rejected and after Adam has again expressed his preference for Aron, Lee tries to persuade Cal to control his anger. Lee says that although Adam cannot change his nature, Cal can overcome his own evil impulses. But the poison has gone too far in Cal: the cycle of rejection leading to revenge, guilt, and increased alienation has begun. In
revenge Cal takes Aron to see their mother. Meeting Kate shocks Aron into joining the army at once to escape reminders of what he has learned about her. Then the news that Aron has been killed in World War I causes Adam to have a stroke. Cal, bearing guilt for far more harm than he intended, becomes convinced that his mother's blood has made him evil.

Lee knows that Adam must release Cal from his burden of guilt to make it possible for Cal to reshape his life. Though Adam is gravely ill, Lee persuades him to give Cal his blessing. "He did a thing in anger," Lee says to Adam, "because he thought you had rejected him. . . . Your son is marked with guilt out of himself--out of himself--almost more than he can bear. Don't crush him with rejection" (p. 602). Adam responds and sets Cal free.

Cal's pattern of alienation is one that proceeds from rejection to violence to guilt and further rejection; Adam, more peaceful by nature, alienates himself through fantasies. After Cathy enters Adam's life, the notion of founding a dynasty occurs to him. Up to this time he has served the term in the army his father forced upon him, as well as another for which he reenlisted out of loneliness and the lack of any goal in life. Compulsive work eased his loneliness. "He volunteered for work in field hospitals when he was exhausted from his regular duties. He was regarded by his comrades with contemptuous affection and the unspoken
fear men have of impulses they do not understand" (p. 35).

After his final discharge, Adam wanders aimlessly about the country, putting off going home because "Home was not a pleasant place in his mind" (p. 48). The startling news of the inheritance from his father gives Adam quite a different view of himself. Suddenly he is ready to think of permanence and immortality. Fantasies begin to take the place of compulsive work or wandering, the habits that have inadequately hidden his feelings. Cathy happens along just in time to become part of Adam's important new fantasy: he finds his Eve and he means to carry her off to the Garden of Eden. Steinbeck comments in his journal:

Why doesn't Adam listen when Cathy says she will be going away? I don't know. Men don't listen to what they don't want to hear. I know I didn't and every man I think is somewhat the same--every man. I must point that out very clearly. Adam has a picture of his life and he will continue to maintain his picture against every influence until his world comes down. (p. 76)

Steinbeck's language in a discussion between Adam and Samuel makes the parallel to Genesis quite plain. Samuel detects the pitfalls of Adam's projections when Adam explains how important Cathy is to him.

"You can't know. No one can know. I had a gray life, Mr. Hamilton--Samuel."

"A kind of light spread out from her. And everything changed color. And the world opened out. And a day was good to awaken to. And there were no limits to anything. And the people of the world were good and handsome. And I was not afraid any more."

"I recognize it," Samuel said. "That's an old friend of mine. It never dies but sometimes it moves
away, or you do. Yes, that's my acquaintance--eyes, nose, mouth and hair."
"All of this coming out of a little hurt girl."
"And not out of you?"

Adam overlooks Samuel's meaning and continues to insist, "Cathy brought it [i.e., Adam's euphoria], and it lives around her" (pp. 170-71).

Adam's fantasies about Cathy make him vulnerable to the pain of reality. His alienation from his sons also involves unrealistic conceptions: he sees them, too, according to stereotypes. Aron seems "good," Cal "bad," but Adam never really knows either son.

East of Eden reevokes the Biblical theme from Exodus used earlier in The Pastures of Heaven that children suffer from the sins of their fathers for several generations. Adam's relationship with Cal seems to say that a man cannot escape from his father's control unless his father releases him. This idea has broad extensions: once controlled by feelings of inadequacy, a man seems to have no hope for freedom except to work things out through his own experiences. Lee could not reason with Cal; Steinbeck's characters suffer from alienation according to their "natures" and their "natures" can be changed only through experience, not through reason.
Notes to Chapter IV


2The name "Elizabeth" seems to have had a special significance for Steinbeck. It recurs in Elisa Allen ("The Chrysanthemums"), Liza Hamilton (East of Eden), Elizabeth Wayne (To a God Unknown), and Lisa (In Dubious Battle).


5L'etre et le neant: Essai d'ontologie phenomenologique (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1943), passim.


9Ibid., p. 72.

10Ibid., p. 73.

11Ibid., p. 70.


13Ibid., p. 106.

14Ibid., p. 123.

15Ibid., pp. 118-19.

16John Steinbeck (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1971), p. 34.


23. Ibid., p. 3.

24. Ibid., p. 6.


29. See notes 1 and 2, Chapter I, for examples.

30. The problem of alienation is visible not only in the Trask family, but also in the Hamiltons. Steinbeck himself says that the study of Tom Hamilton and his guilt and sacrifice "is one of the keys to the story and the story attempts to be a kind of key to living" (*Journal*, p. 106).
CHAPTER V

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE THEME OF ALIENATION TO
STEINBECK'S LITERARY REPUTATION

Steinbeck's literary reputation in the United States has largely grown out of the immense popularity of The Grapes of Wrath, which is widely believed to express the core of Steinbeck's moral vision. This study presents evidence which indicates that The Grapes of Wrath is atypical, that Steinbeck's overriding preoccupation is with personal and private forms of alienation, rather than with external, social forms. Steinbeck's European admirers, removed as they were from the American Depression and from the dust bowl, have generally taken a broader view than Americans. The brief, selective survey of critical comments which follows illustrates the anomaly in which an American writer seems to be better understood by foreigners than by his countrymen.

In the introduction to Rehearsals of Discomposure: Alienation and Reconciliation in Modern Literature (1951), Nathan A. Scott, Jr., deplores the reluctance of a sufficient number of thinkers to speak on human situations; intellectuals have ignored "the urgency of the human predicament, as it reveals itself in the existential terms of
contingency and anxiety, guilt and suffering, love and despair, isolation and death."¹ Scott credits the modern artist with preempting the "conveyance of self-knowledge"; the artist "has discovered that self-recognition is a point at which one arrives only by the acceptance of existence as separation, as isolation and estrangement—and this vision has related to him the soul's anguish over its finitude and contingency."² Scott finds that the authors he chose to study (Kafka, Silone, Lawrence, and T. S. Eliot) "tended increasingly to spell...out" a sense of inescapable insecurity "in terms of a metaphysic of alienation or estrangement."³ Scott mentions Steinbeck's stories "of labor disputes on the California coast"; he finds these stories "remarkable photographs of American life" but believes that "the merely photographic quality of the regional picture cannot be gainsaid."⁴ Scott compares the work of Steinbeck, Caldwell, and Farrell, which gives "an 'ariel' view of society but little more," to the work of such writers as Malraux, Hemingway, and Silone, whom he thinks more effectively convey "the universal quality of their materials."⁵

In contrast to Scott, a number of French writers give Steinbeck a prominent position among contemporary authors whose work bespeaks an existential vision. The French derive their opinions from careful and sensitive reading of more works by Steinbeck than those "of labor disputes."

Transatlantic Migration: The Contemporary American Novel in
France (1955) describes Steinbeck's French reputation (counting him one of the five contemporary American novelists regarded as major in France). The authors, Thelma M. Smith and Ward L. Miner, judge the writers they discuss on the basis of book sales and critical reactions: Steinbeck was received enthusiastically by the French during and after World War II. He was among the writers considered to have "the greatest snob value" until he and Hemingway "lost much of their snob appeal because they sold so well." Some critics praised Steinbeck's themes of brotherhood, but many found most significant his concern for "man alone." In a long article summarized by Smith and Miner, J. Blanzet considers Steinbeck to be more remarkable than Hemingway or Faulkner in one important respect:

With him for the first time perhaps the contemporary novel goes back not to the themes but to the spirit of Greek tragedy. Nor is Steinbeck an imitator. His heroes are not Orestes or Cephus changed into unemployed or vagabond Americans. But as in Sophocles, there is at the end the abyss and the destruction of man. And in man's spilled blood the gods see their eternal victory.

French existentialists, who appreciated American novelists for presenting "the absurd world of their [own] philosophy," went so far as to call Steinbeck "un des pères de l'Église existentialiste." Since they classify Steinbeck among the most popular American novelists in France, Smith and Miner include Steinbeck when they say, The American novel, then, which has made the widest appeal in France is the pessimistic novel because that
is the prevailing European mood. The French have found in our novel the sound and fury which characterize the absurd world in which they live. 10

As for the quality of Steinbeck's regionalism, the French remark parallels between Steinbeck and Tolstoi as examples of how both Russian and American literature "exhibited an intense regionalism and at the same time gave the reader a sense of space that no Western European literature has ever given. A vivid human quality and sympathy were seen in both, evoking such parallels. . . ." 11

Samuel Terrien, a theologian born in France and educated at the Sorbonne, the School of the Louvre Museum, the French School of Biblical Archaeology at Jerusalem, and Union Theological Seminary in New York, includes Steinbeck when he speaks of modern artists who testify to man's "wistfulness for the reconciliation and the permanence of the self within an organic community"; these artists "proclaim the tragedy of man's alienation from the world he has mastered and they call for his reinsertion within a nature that would be neither his mistress nor his slave." 12 The company in which Terrien places Steinbeck shows that his impression of Steinbeck differs radically from Scott's:

Poets like Valéry, Aragon, Emmanuel, Eliot, Auden, Marianne Moore; dramatists like Pirandello, Sartre, Marcel, Giraudoux, Montherlant, Anouilh, O'Neill, Tennessee Williams; novelists like Proust, Gide, Kafka, Mauriac, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Wilder, Camus, have gone and are going far beyond the generations that have preceded ours in analyzing the loneliness of man in the universe, the hostility of man toward man, and the
enigma that man is to himself. They have plotted the "waste land" in which we live or merely exist.  

Wallace Fowlie noted the popularity of Steinbeck with the French existentialists.

The secret of human liberty, for the existentialists, seems to lie in the absurd or the contingent. . . . The eternally superfluous quality of existence has been discovered by the French existentialists in the writings of some American novelists with whom they feel close affiliation: Hemingway, Faulkner, Dos Passos and Steinbeck. 

But to say that Steinbeck was popular with the French existentialists is not to claim that he has great philosophical depth or that he takes an analytical approach to his material. In 1946 Jean-Paul Sartre observed, "The greatest literary development in France between 1929 and 1939 was the discovery of Faulkner, Dos Passos, Hemingway, Caldwell, Steinbeck," and he tried to explain the attraction of these authors: "What fascinated us all really . . . was the constant flow of men across a whole continent, the exodus of an entire village to the orchards of California. . . ."  

While Americans were turning to "novels of analysis," says Sartre, Frenchmen who "created the genre" and produced "the best of the analysts" were weary of analytical methods. What aroused their enthusiasm was "a veritable revolution in the art of telling a story."

The intellectual analysis which, for more than a century, had been the accepted method of developing character in fiction was no longer anything but an old mechanism badly adapted to the needs of the time. It was opposed to a psychology of synthesis which
taught us that a psychological fact is an indivisible whole.16

Nor did Steinbeck seem regional or temporal; at least, not in the same ways that Americans saw him as regional and temporal. Sartre believed that the injustices Steinbeck depicted were not taken to be "a defect of American society but rather a sign of the imperfections of our time."17

It was apt for Edwin T. Bowden to include The Grapes of Wrath among the twelve American novels he studied in The Dungeon of the Heart: Human Isolation and the American Novel.18 Recognizing the theme of isolation as one of the main themes in American literature, Bowden examines the theme as it occurs in his twelve subjects. As appropriate as his inclusion of Steinbeck may be, his choice of The Grapes of Wrath must have furthered the mistaken impression of the novel as representative of Steinbeck. Bowden correctly claims that the novel emphasizes man's ability to escape spiritual loneliness by turning to a group, but this emphasis occurs nowhere else in Steinbeck with comparable hope and optimism.

A number of people have considered Steinbeck's broad contribution to literature. The Nobel Prize committee which selected Steinbeck for the award in 1962 (as quoted in the New York Times, 26 October 1962, pp. 1, 12) commended The Winter of Our Discontent and other works, including The Long Valley and Of Mice and Men, as measuring up fully to the
the high standard Steinbeck set for himself with The Grapes of Wrath. Many Steinbeck critics mention, as Todd M. Lieber did recently, that followers of Steinbeck know that beneath the seeming diversity of Steinbeck's novels there is a unified body of thought. Lieber analyzes Steinbeck's talismanic patterns and states, as this study does, that Steinbeck's chief interest is non-scientific. Lieber also touches upon the subject of this study when he notes the alienation of several Steinbeck characters; most significantly, he, too, sees Joseph's sacrifice in To a God Unknown as an effort to overcome alienation. More recently still, Lawrence William Jones has briefly described Steinbeck's "ethical outlook" in terms which are consonant with those of the present study; Jones does not use the word "alienation," but he comments on the "tension between unity with life and separation from life" from which tension "Steinbeck derives a scale of values which form the basis of his moral philosophy." In time, such understanding may rekindle some of the appreciation that once existed for Steinbeck. Recognition of alienation as Steinbeck's dominant theme may then lead to a clearer sense of Steinbeck's place in twentieth-century letters.

Harry Slochower noticed as early as the nineteen-forties that "Steinbeck's work is part of the vast theme of man in exile. . . . And Steinbeck's stories likewise contain the motif of loneliness stressed by contemporary literature."
Loneliness, an aspect of the larger theme of alienation, plays a part in every book by Steinbeck. His first and last heroes, Henry Morgan and Ethan Hawley, kill their best friends and face death alone "with no friend anywhere." Understanding Steinbeck's characters through a study of their alienation proves finally that a few characters are fortunate enough to live so that they suffer neither from delusions nor from alienation; others fortunately have experiences in life which allow them to join the free; but the largest number of them are unhappily and irrevocably lost. Steinbeck does not cry for brotherhood; he cries in pain.
Notes to Chapter V

2Ibid., p. x.
3Ibid., p. xi.
4Ibid., p. 73.
5Ibid., pp. 72-73.
7Ibid., p. 165.
8Ibid., pp. 165-66.
9Ibid., p. 43.
10Ibid., p. 44.
11Ibid., p. 71.
13Ibid., pp. 16-17.
16Ibid., pp. 116-17.
17Ibid., p. 116.
19Lieber, "Talismanic Patterns in the Novels of John Steinbeck," American Literature, 44 (May 1972), 262-75.

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