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Larbi Tebessi University -Tébessa-
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Letters and English Language



**The Entanglement of The American Dream and The Great
Depression in Modern American Fiction: A Case Study John
Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men**

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Candidates:

CHEBOUKI Fadhila
KADRI Ouahiba

Supervisor:

Mrs HARRACHE Amina

Board of Examiners

President: Mrs BOUHELAISS Samira (University of Tébessa)
Supervisor: Mrs HARRACHE Amina (University of Tébessa)
Examiner: Mrs ABBACI Warda (University of Tébessa)

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Dedication

To my family.

This work is dedicated to my younger sister **YOUSRA** for her patience and continuous support and help in choosing the theme of the research.

For you.

I know I troubled you throughout the work on realizing the final draft of this research paper.

Thank you.

YOU ARE THE BEST AND I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST.

Ouahiba

Dedication

To my family.

Fadhila

Abstract

The current research paper tackles Steinbeck's novella *Of Mice and Men* in a trial to investigate the presence of the Great Depression era and its effects on the loss of the American ideal of success and pursuit of happiness. The American dream characterises the American society. It has helped in the creation of the modern American society. We approached the work via the psychoanalytical analysis alongside the Marxist view. The two standpoints seek the interpretation of the inner and the outer features of the literary work which was one of the best depictions of those hard times. It is concluded with the interpretations of the characters' voices, hopes and words. The reading of what Steinbeck wanted to be between the lines of the novella concerning social hardships and economics of the thirties years of the previous century endured by the poor and the vulnerable was the core upon which the research is centered .

Résumé

À un moment donné de l'histoire Américaine contemporaine, l'Amérique a connu l'une des épreuves les plus difficiles de son histoire dans les années trente du siècle dernier. La Grande Dépression a affecté l'un des principes les plus importants sur lesquels la société américaine a été construite, qui est " Le Rêve Américain". L'écrivain américain John Steinbeck a réussi à décrire la perte du rêve Américain dans les conditions difficiles que les temps de la grande dépression ont servi dans l'un de ses meilleurs livres " Of Mice and Men". Dans un article dans cette recherche, nous avons utilisé l'analyse littéraire psychologique ainsi que le point de vue marxiste et son impact sur le choix des mots, des voix et des espoirs des personnages de ce court roman. L'étude espère clarifier et atteindre les véritables opinions cachées entre les lignes de l'écrivain qui a écrit les problèmes vécus par les pauvres et les faibles.

ملخص

في مرحلة من تاريخ أمريكا المعاصر، عاشت أمريكا واحدة من أصعب المحن في تاريخها في ثلاثينيات القرن الماضي. الكساد العظيم أثرت على واحدة من أهم المبادئ التي بُني عليها المجتمع الأمريكي، ألا وهو الحلم الأمريكي. نجح الكاتب الأمريكي جون سنا يبنك في وصف ضياع الحلم الأمريكي في ظل الظروف القاهرة التي ختمتها أوقات الكساد الاقتصادي الكبير في واحدة من أحسن كتبه "فئران ورجال". في ورقة البحث هذه اعتمدنا التحليل الأدبي السيكلوجي وكذا النظرة الماركسية وتأثيرها على اختيار كلمات وأصوات وآمال الشخصيات في هذه الرواية القصيرة. تأمل هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح وتحقيق الآراء الحقيقية المخفية بين السطور للكاتب الذي كتب لتأريخ المصاعب و المتاعب التي عانى منها الفقراء و الضعفاء في ذلك الزمان.

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INTRODUCTION

The early twentieth century was the time of a massive shift in the American politics and culture. In the 1930's, the American society witnessed a severe breakdown that overwhelmed all people and caused catastrophic results economically and socially. This harsh event was the Great Depression. Authors were brave enough to shadow the enduring harshness of the time in aesthetic modern productions. These literary works demonstrated the failure of social order in a community full of dreams, the homeland of the American dream. The American society of the twentieth century certified the authenticity of the declining upheavals illustrated in bold in themes related to the Great Depression and the American Dream after the golden years of the Jazz Age. One relevant work was Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. The novel depicted a true story of the times lost between severe historical events and people trying to survive on the ruins of their dreams. This dissertation is intended to exploit the depth of Steinbeck's narrative taking into account the circumstances of 1930's. It also establishes the chronological link between economic and social disorders and literature and represents the American fiction as being characterised by reflecting reality through characters and exploring social distance, social classes and social impact through events and denouements. Accordingly, this research is going to focus on the thread that twist modern fiction which stripped away simple descriptions of scenes, characters and simple plots to the American dream and the Great Depression. That is, *Of Mice and Men* is the novella that sought to exhibit the dream of people living in dark ages and bring readers a realistic picture of the hardships faced Americans because of the economic devastation of the depression.

This novella was written as an epitome of the real effect of the crisis, dealing with characters of different ambitions and hopes embodying the idea of the damage that happened at the time. The focus of this study aims at deciding on the shadow of the economic crisis and its aftermath and the illusion and vanity of the American Dream on the literary work of

Steinbeck who wanted to document the change in the life that happened. The study wants to point the breakdown of the social and economic realities that turned the mythic American dream into a barren reality that can never be achieved by those ill-fated. Thus, the problematic core has been well-demonstrated in this thesis which spots Steinbeck's storyline *Of Mice and Men* in a fine consideration to fill in the gaps that lead to question the work.

Based on the study's statement of the problem, this dissertation seeks to answer certain questions that stand around the significance of the novella on the American modernist fiction and the effective reflection of realities that took over pink dreams looking for space in the twentieth century harassed American society. The questions which this thesis targets are centered to identify to what extent *Of Mice and Men* does achieve the twist between the American modern fiction and both the American dream and the Great Depression. Also, they are set to show how Steinbeck appeals the context of the twentieth century in the modern novel and whether Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* strongly reaches the extremes of effective social and modern literature through his storytelling or not.

Accordingly, this work is intended to investigate the impact of the social conditions imposed by the economic crisis of the Great Depression on the literary work of the realistic author Steinbeck's novella entitled *Of Mice and Man*. For this reason, this paper is devoted for the study of the impact of the social reality of Americans in the times of the Great Depression on the end of the myth of the American Dream presented in the writing of the novella and the choice of its characters and themes. Most importantly, the paper attempts to discuss the effects of the economic crisis on the overall literary work.

The thesis at hand is based on the works that aimed at analysing the words of Steinbeck and seeks to add to the literature review via the careful analysis and readings of the novella. The study, throughout its chapters, looks to determine the impact of the Great

Depression's devastating economic effect on the American social life and on the American dreaming world of the people who mostly suffered from the inflation and its results. The literature that was dealt with will be clearly stated and always referred to throughout the research paper since it cannot be limited to be mentioned in a paragraph. The novella had shed a lot of ink since its publication and became one of the most known works of the writer and one of the mirroring literatures of the situation of the 1930's people. The tale speaks the ambitions of the characters. The research, however; looks to point out the end of the dream caused by the horrible economics of those times and how far Steinbeck describes the situation of the voiceless people who suffered in silence.

Respectively, this dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter, that is theoretically based data, exposes the reader to the different elements contributing to the rise of the modern novel and the two big concerns of the twentieth century as being tackled so apparently in the themes of Steinbeck's novel. It also gives space to the significant literary theories participating deeply in the analysis of the literature of the work. The first section of this thesis sheds light on the American modern fiction, its basics, core and features in relation to the stimulating impetus leading to create such a literary device. The second section stands for historical background of the American Dream and the Great Depression in America. It aims at analysing the visual outlook of the circumstances that have overwhelmed a whole society after getting used to hold on conventional and rooted values deeply attached to the American dream. It also devotes space to highlight their literary considerations. To end up this part, the third section advocates a set of literary theories, which play a vital role in determining the thoughtful study of the novel *Of Mice and Men*. That is, Marxism and psychoanalysis occupy a specific corner in this research paper.

The second chapter which is practical is sectioned into two parts that deal with the author in broader sense and his novel's context that speak for realistic, narrative and capitalist

perspectives. The first section of this chapter is intended to display John Steinbeck's work *Of Mice and Men* and provide a detailed representation of the social life of the author in relation to his work. In other words, it aims at studying Steinbeck's novel association with the Great Depression and his exhibition of the dream during years of uncertainty and social interruption in literature. The second section is mainly analytical implementing the theories studied in the first chapter in the real material of Steinbeck. Accordingly, we are going to investigate on the social, economic and psychological examination of the story's details to prove the value of *Of Mice and Men* in the world of literature and in the entanglement of the American Dream and The Great depression in real experiences of the Twentieth century American following a well-defined methodology.

Approach, research design and research questions are all related. To answer the questions, a qualitative method is to be adopted. The qualitative ground will provide an in-depth understanding to the topic. this paper will be respecting the MLA 8th edition.

This research is deemed to take a considerable period. It is supposed to be carried out along the three months of the second trimester in accordance with the supervisor. The deadline has been recently fixed, however; the procedures of this thesis remain actual complying the logical rate of any academic work to fulfil the required satisfaction.

The outcome this thesis chases intends to achieve a successful representation of Steinbeck's novella so that much emphasis goes around leaving no space to criticism and weaknesses. The feedback expected is a positive one highlighting the purpose behind choosing this work and its impact on future writers of the university. In addition, the importance of exhibiting such a literary case study opens intervals for students to get in closer touch with the influence of social and economic status and circumstances on one's thoughts and intellectual production. Hence, the audience will be grateful to such inspirations.

Chapter one

The Invocations behind the Rise of the American Modern Novel

Literature is an embodiment of the scares of the human soul. After the horrors that the humans endured during and after the Great War; there was a need of change of the old common literary themes. A need that arose from the loss of the old virtues and the new face of the modern man that has lived during the war and was shocked with all that he witnessed of death and loss of morality and the disillusionment of all that was sacred and virtuous. “The Hollow Men”, Thomas S. Eliot described them “shape without form; shade without colour.” As a result; literature witnessed a modern wave of newly related themes that treated the new situation of the modern human soul that still echoed the loss it had and shared the pain of the modern times.

Section One: American Literature “An Emblem of Modernism”

American literature just like the European one; carried the modernist spirit that denoted the search for the human relief to the men of the modern times after the First World War. The war changed all human perspectives and the post war times carried many new thoughts that were easily sold and promoted. The Roaring Twenties; the prohibition era, the great depression were new events to the American history that created the spirit of the modern American men. American literature; as such, had to mirror the fast turn of events. These swift and changing events created the modernist literature which was illustrated by writers who took the burden of freeing the burdens of those times. F. Scott Fitzgerald states in his book *This Side of Paradise* “I was certain that all the young people were going to be killed in the war, and I wanted to put on paper a record of the strange life they had lived in their time.” (qtd. in Pelzer 40)

1. The Great War's aftermath and Disjunction in Literature

The Great War when first started was not expected to take long nor was it foreseen that it would be the most horrifying war in known human history till that time. Mery Ann Gillies and Aurelea Mahood describe the war in their book *Modernist Literature: An Introduction* as “It was a war of technological and mechanical firsts; modern machinery accelerated the ease and speed with which men could be killed. Deaths among combatants and civilians alike were unprecedented— more soldiers died in World War I than in all European wars fought during the nineteenth century combined.” (7)

Instead, it was taken by optimists as “The War To End All Wars” which turned out to be definitely not the case. When the war ended, people came back from the trenches with different soul. The horrors that they witnessed in the battlefields were horrible and no human soul could accept what happened. These horrors were depicted through the literary creations of those who were given the name of The Lost Generation. Samuel R. Williams, the writer of the paper titled *Echoes of War: The Great War's Impact on Literature*, defines the Lost Generation:

This group of writers included Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, T.S. Eliot, and other contemporary writers. While those authors are most commonly thought of as the Lost Generation, it did not take long for other artists apart from novelists to join the ranks of the lost, such as Percy Wyndham Lewis and Will Long staff. These other artists added to the collective remembrance of veterans' trauma of the war. Still, these original writers set the stage and created the works that veterans and civilians both most heavily identified with during the 1920s and 30s, and continued into the twentieth century with following generations. (1)

The lost generation writers captured the physical agony, the mental sufferance, and the emotional trauma of the post war that was embodied in all men of the post war era. People's sufferance and hardships of those times were great. Those times where values did not mean much and when a need to rise again from the ashes of the war and start all anew formed the themes of the new literary shifts and visions.

The American participation of the war was important. The American interference in the war was decisive and helped the end of the war that took much longer time that was expected. On January, 9, 1917 Germany declared a marine war against all submarine neutral and/or belligerent. This announcement disturbed American authorities and as a result this latter declared the end of the American-German diplomatic relation on February, 3. On March of the same year American ships were attacked. This attack was the reason for the entry to the world war (O'Neill, "United States").

American participation was not like that of the European one. American participation though did not suffer a heavy loss yet it had lost soldiers from its part. As reported by the U.S. War Department in February 1924. U.S. casualties as amended by the Statistical Services Center, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Nov. 7, 1957; the American side had lost the total of 323,018 among died, wounded, and missing; in a percentage of 8.1% of war casualties.

After the war, the literatures of the lost generation expressed clearly the collective thinking of the post war times out of their own experiences as battle soldiers. The lost generation writers hoped for two main purposes: the first was to describe their lost souls in the battlefields of the war and second to try to create a shelter to remedy their hopelessness, disillusionment and remorse "Authors such as Ernest Hemingway and Erich Maria Remarque never completely found closure after the war, while J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis

experienced relief through their insertion of lived experiences into their imagined worlds.”

(Williams, 3-4)

The lost generation literature was not deemed to one nation. It echoed the loss of war and went beyond the limits of identity or one nationality. All their works represented the horrors they witnessed. Remarque himself stated in the introduction to his 1929 novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*, “This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped shells, were destroyed by the war.” (qtd. in Williams, 4). *The Sun Also Rises* of Hemingway pictured the futility of life of soldiers after the war. Other works like T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pounds poems also sounded the situation and brought past examples of myths and moral examples from the world’s cultures and traditions in the purpose of restoring the lost human virtues for the hope of a better human future.

The list of literary works cannot be limited. The lost generation of the time marked the phase of the human history of the war and post war times in a way that depicted the horrors and the agony the humans suffered in the point of view of the writers who were a direct eye witnesses of the tragedy of the war. They told the story as they witnessed it and encoded the feelings of their own in the position where they had to kill and be in hot-spotted battlefields, where they witnessed the trenches and the machinery that destroyed everything in its way, where they had to kill another human being for the sake of their own lives. It was a war that put everyone’s beliefs in question; where they had to act on the spot ignoring all virtues. The battlefields swelled their souls and kept them “hollow men”.

The lost generation, however, was not limited to writers of the war times. The themes that were brought by lost generation writers continued through the 1920’s and 1930’s

introducing a modern era of literature with new themes and form that would suit the new topics. The American literature, as such, made a very important portion of the literatures that carried the modernist spirit and invoked its new themes and features.

The American Modernist Period also produced many other writers that are considered to be writers of Modernist Period Subclasses. For example, F. Scott Fitzgerald is considered a writer of The Jazz Age, Langston Hughes and W.E.B. Du Bois writers of The Harlem Renaissance, and Gertrude Stein, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Ernest Hemingway writers of The Lost Generation. The Great Depression marked the end of the American Modernist Period, and writers such as William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, and Eugene O'Neill dealt with the social and political issues of the time in their literary works. (Gillie 3)

2. Modernist Literature: A Rejection of Tradition

Modernism in literature has been known as a break with the past to engage in search for new forms and manners to express a certain content and a specific context. It fostered an age of experimental convenience in arts during the period between 19th to the 20th century. The strong belief to establish “The New” has been underlined in history prevailing the changes of modernity moving a step forward.

2.1. The Rise of Modern American Fiction

The foundation of this literature can be traced to former periods of the second half of the twentieth century. This timing line witnessed several economic, social and political upheavals that pushed writers to innovate either prose or verse to dramatically depict the events and the sarcastic life endured by people. Thompson states, “Invocations of a great American novel began in the early nineteenth century during the period of “literary

nationalism” between the middle of the century, and the turn of the nineteenth century into the twentieth” (17). Thus, modern American fiction reached its peak after experiencing a severe headache resulted in written masterpieces by grouped American writers and authors who tried to explore the spiritual nature of the American man and the rooted values of the American concepts and conventions. The circumstances that confronted and contributed to the birth of literary texts and genres in modern fiction pictured the deepest entanglement of both the author’s realistic intensities and the social life of America to be introduced to the world. In another context, “Perhaps we might hear American modernism in the giddy raptures of jazz melodies, tinkling piano keys and furious, jaw-busting trumpets. All capture one or other aspect of the era” (Catherine 9). That is, the making of the American modernism is revealed in the improvised touch of its pioneers who have applied artistic pieces in their products whether in blueprints or in verbal manifestations. It is emerged on the ground of the Jazz age and because of immigration and multiculturalism.

The twentieth century American novel was best associated with issues that had taken place formerly. The malaise of WWI and the fortunes of the great depression of 1929 inspired writers or novelists of the period. They created their own portrayal free from any literary limitations recommended by previous genres advocating self-experienced worries and antipathy of the social surrounding of their times. According to Nebbou, “To the modern novelist, the focus must be about ordinary things and events, to get more directly at the substance of simple existence, and to highlight modernity’s effects on basic human relationships. For modernists in the 1920’s, it was important to write fiction more true to daily life, primary feelings, and deep desires.” (217). In other words, modern American fiction opened the scope for much realities and details of lived stories and the struggle depicted through the protagonists of modern authors. It was not the imaginary prestigious product but rather the explosion of a deep influence of several calamities. It is characterized

by “The whole sense of loss and uncertainty, and the need for spiritual belief, shaped the literature of the day. A significant part of the American literature of the twentieth century was concerned with quests, a doomed search for sense and logic in the face of a chaotic perception of experience... it was concerned with spiritual survival in an inextricable universe” (Garcia and Zamorano). That is to say, this kind of literature was set to elucidate happenings not to pinpoint the weaknesses or the gaps of literature. It was the spot in history that proved social breakdowns and the intellectual concern of the twentieth century mind.

2.2. Modernism and Traditions

The word ‘modernism’ indicates all the values, styles, features and characteristics of modernism, which is a modern cultural movement against the traditional conservative. The dating of modernism has no precise timeline for either its first tangibility or its ending but as far as its creation is concerned, modernism as a development in literature “began in the late 19th century” (Quinn 207). Therefore, the chronological punctuality of modernism paved the way to the blooming of modernist fiction, which is the literary product of the time. This interrelationship defines the scope and content of the literature produced which bear the maximum of features from modernism. Thus, if modernism "comprises numerous, diverse and contesting, theories and practices which first flourished in a period that knew little of the term as it has now come to be understood" (Kolocotroniet *al.* qtd. in Goldman 225), modernist narratives claim multifarious concerns, forms, and aesthetic features which are in fact different from the past.

Modernism assures the fact that the traditional is out-dated and there is no space for realism ideologies. They address the changing ideas that stand against the conservative philosophical view of realism. Accordingly, modernist innovations come to exist apparently in American literature of the period. Modernist writers also break up with the Enlightenment

thinking and other religious doctrines and focus on conscious ways of writing. Their works aim at darkening the boundaries between literary genres and make it flexible for fragmentation and change. Eysteinson and Liska consider the point of the break and state:

The term avant-garde was practically reserved for extreme artistic experiments which called for breaking off (most often by noisy and iconoclastic manifestos) with the legacy of past cultural achievements... thus, one began gradually to identify the term “classicism” with the denotation of the artistic current of a more “ preservative” nature and to replace modernism as its main watch-word. It is worth mentioning here that both T.E. Hulme and T.S. Eliot propose at the early stage of their activity to name “the great artistic break-through” classicism. It was only later and due to the continuous transformation of its theoretical premises that one opted for the term modernism as the more appropriate one. (19)

This statement delivers the idea that modernism is based on the break-through mechanism in art and literature to imply for the new. Thus, the old attachment to traditional links must be faded away because the space of the modern era calls for escape from any past relations. As a whole, the modernist product is meant to be non-conventional and actualised by the concept of “Avant-grade” for innovation and literary tendencies.

3. Tenets of Literary Modernism

Modern literature breathed the new topics of the post war times. It carried the tone of the agony of the writers of the post war era and portrayed perfectly the situation of the human soul via the use of imagism, allusion, fragmentation, archetypes and refuse of traditional and conventional form. These tenets guarded the idea of disillusionments an loss that governed the writers who put it in the papers of their works. It also helped them set their thinking free

in order to remedy their wounds and banish their heavy burdens after the end of the Great War.

The American writers developed the modern literary theory. Writers sought to describe the world after the Great War as a place with different concepts of old certainties about faith and knowledge. The novels were shadowed with a spirit of inwardness portraying realities of the human psyche and his subconscious “Free indirect discourse and stream-of-consciousness were two of the most important modernist techniques for gaining access to a character’s mind (Gillies and Mahood 9). James Joyce’s *Ulysses* founds the best example of the inward thinking of the writer which manifests via the characters of the literary work.

Modernist poetry focused on imagism. The American poet Ezra Pound was the first poet who adapted the imagist manner in treating the thing. “It is the presentation of such a ‘complex’ instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.” (qtd. in Gillies and Mahood 7). Imagism gives a form to the modern chaotic present of the post war through the representation of cultural exemplars that would serve to break with old literatures that focused only on valour and honour and to shed light only on the images and realities of the experiences of the man that lived the war and after the war.

Fragmentation was another principle of the modern literature. Fragmentation or the nonlinear plot which made the reader perplexed. Fragmented form of the literary texts puzzles the reader since it does not evolve upon a central unite theme yet it takes the reader through different stations of different cultural and /or traditional and mythic images in order to show that the modern world is disjoint and that reality turned to be confusing. T S Eliot’s

The Waste Land is the best portrayal of the fragmented form. Juxtaposition also appears in modern literary works where different points of view appear.

The use of archetypes for the sake of disturbing the readers mind is another tenet of modernity. It is closely related to the use of images in literature and is defined as the set of primordial patterns in the unconscious of man according to the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (“*archetype*”). Birth had to come after death which is represented in *The Waste Land* in the myths of Sybil and the fisher king. Another important factor in modernist literature is that of the notion of time as a cyclic factor as the writer had to reconstruct knowledge through joining together pieced of old times and of histories past. The writers in the modern literature opted for multiple unknown narrators to emphasise the different sounds and truth and realities of the modern literature. (Conn 1)

4. Major Characteristics of Modernist Literature

Modernist writing is prominently a fine literary and cultural content of an experimental and Avant-grade trends in literature, which disengages authors from traditional and bourgeois values to permit for new forms and styles and to allow people to question the future of humanity. Literature of the period gets its own existence so that writers or novelists have taken the stage for a set of traits. The latter includes time, the individual and the mind.

4.1. The Notion of Time

The change in temporal and spatial orientation that occurred in the twentieth century required writers to shift according to the cultural and social development. Modernist works called for a revolt against the past and its stereotyping ideas that spread in times and literature of realism. The new political, historical and cultural changes were clearly rooted in the content of modernist literary works that supported the movement; they formed a new

approach concerning time and temporality. According to Stevenson, modernists believed that conventional understanding of time does not reflect the way in which time actually influences and is influenced by human lives (106). Thus, the ability to measure time was not affordable and modernists claimed that the real interpretation of time existed only within the individual. Therefore, they used experimental patterns of time for their literary works. Contrasting the traditional method, which viewed time as a flow from the past to the present toward the future in a succession, any individual can travel via his memory through time. The flow from birth to death and the chronological order of events has taken place in the traditional novel which the modernist rejected but valued and no longer treated its concept as an abstract absolute entity. In T.S Eliot words, time is relative and functions as “a way of controlling, or ordering, or giving a shape or significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (177). Modernist believed in “psychological time and clock time” (Withworth 123). That is, time can be measured by the clock or it can never be determined, divided or stopped as perceived by the mind. The use of time in modernist literature is significant; it allows writers to take a nonlinear approach to their novels. For example, Virginia Woolf treatment of time is apparent in her *Mrs. Dalloway*:

The story has no breaks or chapters; the purpose of chronological juncture is resolved by the striking of the Big Ben that reminds the characters of the inevitability of passing time and death. The presence of several clocks in the story set out a fictional pace for the story. Not only that, the juxtapositions of clock time with the psychological time of Clarissa Dalloway- her memories, musings and thoughts- completes the narrative as it reminds the characters as well as the reader about the unmarked flow of time. (Puri 831)

4.2. Individualism

In modern literature, the individual is the concern away from any social restrictions. Writers assure the character that stands heroic alone to face the world and adapt the change. Individualism in literary definition spells oneself and singularity. Tocqueville in his book *Democracy in America* views, “Individualism is a calm and considered feeling which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and withdraw into the circle of family and friends; with this little society formed to his taste, he gladly leaves the greater society to look after itself” (507). This perception of the term indicates separation and self-alienation that push the individual to invest in his inner foundation and to seek his existence out of any bound or social attachment. That is, when the term is seen from its broadest sense, it leads to the concept that confronting to others might be misleading and individuality is a kind of logical contract between the person and his thoughts and character. In modernist literature, individualism encourages for self-reliance and self-trusting. It is best summarized in the sociologist George Simmel’s words, “the deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture and of the technique of life.” (qtd in Giddens and Sutton 79). The emphasis on radical individualism is represented in literary works of T.S. Eliot and other famous writers to move from the imprisonment of the realist convictions and the Victorian literature and to favour depicting the alienated or dysfunctional individual within a fragmented society.

4.3. Stream of Consciousness

Modernist writers were concerned by the mind and its conceptualization of art, science, philosophy and literature. They came to innovate a new method called “stream of consciousness”. The latter represented the embodiment of the modernist thinking since it

appealed a large public. According to Karl, the stream of consciousness is “the epitome of modernism”. That is to say, the use of this method allowed for interior textual representation. Kitson explains, “The mind is a stream”. The stream, he continues, consists “of the sum total of mental processes going on within the individual: ideas, sensations, feelings, volitions and actions” (4). Kitson’s book focused on the mind and its usefulness to appeal the consumer’s “stream of consciousness” or cognitive schemata to increase sales. His fundamental pursue was to “inject an idea” to stimulate the “desired response” as he mentions, “the task of the seller is to encourage those ideas which are favourable to his pet-idea and to suppress those which are contrary to it” (156). The benefits from attacking the mental process of the buyer is that he would find no rescue to oppose the ideas poisoning his mind through a set of variables “attention, interest, desire, confidence, decision action to satisfaction” (5). This technique paved the way to create the world of advertisement whose main function has always been to enter the consumer consciousness to purchase the product. Scott adds to this point and states, “advertisements are sometimes spoken of as the nervous system of the business world”. He explains, “As our nervous system give us all the possible sensations from every object, so the advertisement which is comparable to the nervous system must awaken in the reader as many different kinds of images as the object itself can excite” (84).

On the other hand, Stream of consciousness in fiction has gotten another direction. Virginia Woolf uses the following illustration of considering the mind to explain the modernist movement towards a fiction of subjective consciousness:

For she is just as visible to you who remain silent as to us who tell stories about her. In the course of your daily life this past week, you have had far stranger and more interesting experiences than the one I have tried to describe. You have overheard scraps of talk that filled you with amazement (...). In one day, thousands of emotions have melt, collided, and dispread in astonishing disorder. Nevertheless, you allow the

writers to palm off upon you a version of all this (...). Never was there a more fatal mistake. It is this division between reader and writer, this humility on your part, these professional airs and graces on our, that corrupt and emasculate the book which should be healthy offspring of a close and equal alliance between us. (Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown 336)

In this passage, Woolf showed the consciousness as a literary technique, which also functions as a multiple experience and represented one relevant feature of the modernist novel. She emphasized the idea of interiority over the visibility of the self. Contrasting Scott's view about advertisement and consciousness in which he called for the importance of stimulating the stream of consciousness so that the reader would understand it without any rethinking, Woolf calls for the importance of the relationship reader and writer in the creation of meaning. She invites the reader to participate in constructing the text by standing away from any personal experience of subjective consciousness so that they come with new thoughts. In another definition, Hanna states, "stream of consciousness is a literary rendering of the thoughts that follow through a character's mind at any given time. It is often used interchangeably with 'interior monologue'... stream of consciousness would in this case refer to the more experimental style of representing consciousness in apparently raw or unedited form, sometimes sacrificing intelligibility and conventional grammar in the process" (77). Thus, this narrative technique intended to render the multitudes of impressions that flow in the rational process of the individual just like an interior soliloquy.

To conclude, modernism revolves around the two world wars, which cause disillusionment after an age of satire called the Jazz Age and the Roaring twenties. These details pave the way for a new sense of life through art, philosophy, literature etc. Modernism in literature, thus, opens the doors for updating the traditional; obsessions to realism no longer exist. The literary works of the twentieth century are seen to be different in terms of

content, themes and techniques. Innovations have occurred at many levels in the modernist text to symbolize the function, context and styling of the modernist era. Modern American fiction, in fact, serves as a mirror that reflects social and economic procedures related to historical intervals of the American world. For instance, many authors have tried to depict realities and stories that illustrate the Great Depression and the American Dream in a modernist version, which are to be dealt with in details in the coming section.

Section Two: The Collapse of the Socioeconomic Life in the American 30s

After years of roaring twenties where Americans danced, drunk, and revolted to change the old idols, an economic depression rung up the door bells of the years that followed. 1929 marked the most serious test that put Americans in a totally unexpected turn of events. Economy faced a “great” recession where all sectors ached a serious stock market crash and deflation. This led only to the “great” unemployment and hardship all Americans suffered for more than 43 months. The American life was abruptly changing as a result of the economic depression that faced industry, agriculture and as a result all other sectors that formed the basis of the life of the American individuals. As Meridel Le Sueur talked about “the animal terror” in the eyes of people who were the ones who faced famine, unemployment; and poverty become part of the American life in the 1930’s to the 1940’s. The idolized American dream of a better life, of a life where only the sky can be the limit of the American ambition was greatly influenced with the circumstances of the years that marked the Great Depression. All this formed the rich status to write a literature that encompassed the traits and the pains of those years. Authors like William Faulkner, John Dos Passos, Jack Conroy, Robert Cantwell, John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway, Meridel Le Sueur and many others found the obligation of writing the voices of the Americans in order to breath the hardships they suffered , to criticise the times , and to encode the terrors that showed the essence of the human nature. Worthy literatures mirrored the situations of the people and the effects that this depression had on people. They also described the myth of the American dream that was not possibly achieved in such hard times.

1. The American Dream

The American dream has entirely been the standard that the whole nation stands upon to include a variety of ideals pronouncing the opportunity for success and prosperity. The

disregard of social indifference, status and origins is a must in the principality of the American dream. The basics that determine one's opportunity to pursue a happy life wanted by any individual is entitled deeply within the concept Americans hold as their "Dream".

1.1. The Concept of " The Dream" in the American society

The American dream finds its clear identification as being a pervasive ideal within the Americans' culture and identity despite the nation's diversity. In many respects, the concept of the American Dream did not label in a formal definition until 1931. James Truslow Adams, in *The Epic of America* coined the "dream" in concrete terms as glorified also the frontier as being the origins of the American Dream. He writes:

But there has been also the American dream, that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyman with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement...it is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of a social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. (404)

Adam perceives the "Dream" as a state of mind that shapes the nation's values of hope and optimism and settles their awareness to be a part of the Americans' consciousness. He states:

It has been a dream of being able to grow to fullest development as man and woman, unhampered by the barriers, which had slowly been erected in older civilizations, unrepressed by social orders which had developed for the benefit of classes rather than for the simple human being of any and every class. And that dream has been realized

more fully in actual life here than anywhere else, though very imperfectly even among ourselves. It has been a great epic and a great dream. (405)

In similar context, Rank views that the American dream exists in the most humble of places, in life's corners and peoples' hopes. It is not a journey about wealth or material things, but rather a quest for personal fulfilment and a vision for self-actualization, success and progress. In his book "Chasing the American Dream", he states, "It lies in the hopes of a single mother struggling on a minimum wage job to build a better life for herself and her children. It rests upon the unwavering belief of a teenager living on some forgotten back road that one day he or she will find fortune and fame" (2). The American Dream, in fact, functions indispensably within culture; however, many assumptions rise to think of it as being a genuine cultural myth. Lewis writes, in his prologue to *The American Adam*, "There may be no such thing as 'American experience'; it is probably better not to insist that there is. But there has been experience in America, and the account of it has had its own specific form" (8). This statement indicates that the concept of the Dream is meant to encounter the world in its unique way and experience throughout the continent course. That is, American culture is derived from authentic experience of the American continent and that a great distinction should take a clear context between the implemented reality of America and the theoretical modelling of a national conscious conceptualisation, founded on a social idealism.

Refuting the claim above, Cullen examines the dynamic dimensions of the concept known as the American dream as being a complex idea that does not only ensure the core of 'the dream' with attainment but also as a multiple American dreams behind the singular phrase. Moreover, it reassures neither reality nor any kind of drama since its ideologies are proved unmythical and calling fundamental principles. Cullen explains:

The Dream also involves acknowledging another important reality: that beyond an abstract belief in possibility, there is no one American Dream. Instead there are many American Dreams, their appeal simultaneously resting on their variety and their specificity... Sometimes “better and richer and fuller” is defined in terms of money-in the contemporary United States, one could almost believe this is the only definition- but there are others. (7)

Adams points out that through every period of triumph, thrive, deception, lost and tragedy in America’s history, the American dream was the glue that attached and united the country together. He previews, “We have a long and arduous road to travel if we are to realize the American Dream in the life of our nation, but if we fail, there is nothing left but the eternal round. The alternative is the failure of self-government, the failure of the common man to rise to full stature, the failure of all that the American Dream has held of hope and promise for mankind” (416). Definitions vary but spot the same truth that surrounds the American pursuit through opportunity for success, equality and reward. Studying the American Dream in its contexts offer the country its cultural and historical significance as well as it reveals its spatial identity and practice of Americanness.

1.2. Historical Background of the American Dream

America has always been the land immigrants from all over the world tried to reach and discover as “The New World”. This world, dating back to centuries ago, was marked as a dream, the land of hope for anyone to settle in and chase opportunity. The first settlers went for land ownership. Others coming after sought freedom of belief, religion and rescue from some practices especially those of the Church of England. In her book, *American Dream, American Nightmare*, Hume considers the issue of immigrants and states:

Many longings and desires are expressed through that rubric (the rubric of the American Dream). Prosperity for anyone willing to work hard is a crucial component of the dream, a house of one's own being the icon. In the past, immigrants knew that they might have a hard life, but they trusted that their children would be better off. For a long time, indeed, successive generations did acquire more personal property than their parents did. Reinforcing this perception is the technology that makes each generation seem better off indisputably, cars got faster, houses became larger and acquired more appliances, and more miraculous medical interventions proved possible. (3)

That is, the American Dream was traced in history as affording a better life and chasing dreams in a land of opportunity, reward, equality and liberty. Americans have come to pursue that they are able to fulfil their destiny and believe in the vow that through determination, tenacity and perseverance life can be different and better. This ideology is attached to USA and rooted deeply in its earliest spots and standards to form the country's layout. It states that "all people are created equal by their creator, that they are endowed with certain alienable rights among these are life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" as proclaimed in "The Declaration of Independence of 1776."

Understanding the history of the dream prints an overall premise of basics that frame the American social life and features its demands. Jillson writes:

The American Dream has always been, and continues to be, the gyroscope of American life. It is the Rosetta stone or interpretive key that has helped throughout American history to solve the puzzles of how to balance liberty against equality, individualism against the rule of law, and populism against constitutionalism. The American Dream demands that we constantly balance and rebalance our creedal values

to create and preserve an open, competitive entrepreneurial society in which the opportunity to succeed is widely available. (5)

In another important mentioning, Martin Luther king talked out loudly about his Afro-American dream “ I have a dream” to hope one day for no racism against the blacks and to live or be treated equally with no segregation of whatever race, religion, skin colour a human is. His dream was addressed to the public in the American land because it was always the centre of the dream. He says in his speech in New Jersey:

I’d like to use as a subject from which to speak tonight, the American Dream. And I use this subject because America is essentially a dream, a dream yet unfulfilled. The substance of the dream is expressed in some very familiar words found in the Declaration of Independence. We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This is a dream.

Throughout this speech, there was a very clear announcement of the dream and the opportunity to have this dream in equal consideration. Martin Luther king tended to say “all men” to insist on the same chance, the sameness and universality of the dream. He refers to no exception neither white nor black; his main concern was sparkling above all, delivering a deep message between the challenge and realization. Hence, the American dream would remain the concept that held no paradox of inferiority and superiority. It is the dream that have unified the whole country since its foundation.

1.3. The American Dream as a Myth

The American dream, that beautiful far reaching dream of richness and happiness in the land of plenty and new opportunities where everyone has the chance to be someone and to

enjoy freedom and equality of opportunity, fascinated the migrants. This dream was delightful to imagine and gave hope to those downtrodden masses. Everyone had to work hard to achieve the dreams they draw for themselves. Their dreams promised them long lasting happiness and colourful hopes “it is nevertheless the substance of a massive cultural idealism and so naturally resists the confines of strict definitional boundary” (Ayers 18). However beautiful, it was still a dream that had gained the nationality of the American land which promised the new comers a happy life. The dreams are free for everyone, yet making them come true is not an easy mission.

The mythic nature of the dream needs a detailed analysis of the mythological elements that made up the American ideal vision of the concept of “Americanism”. This myth has become a cultural part of the American life (Ayers 19). Though it has been differently referred to, it has gained a popularity that was nourished by real life examples that carried out the theme of the American cultural idealism. This mythic character can only be distinguished via the literatures of the writers who were the best historians of the American times. The mythic nature of the dream changed accordingly. Therefore, it is best to seek the analysis of the mythic nature of the dream alongside to the analysis of the literatures written by Americans.

The American dream was a fiction that was established during the 1920’s but could not keep its glamour during the 1930’s. “The real threat to the American dream was its obvious falsity to everyone struggling to survive” (Huff 143). The times of the 1930’s and what they brought of misfortune caused after the collapse of the American economy after the black Thursday that changed the world’ economy changed also the perfect picture of the self-made man that was presented in the inspirational articles and biographies and through the popular magazines that painted the American Dream with glamour and fame. Those early 1920’s inspirational literature told about the self-made man who sought their own way to success and

the biographies of powerful economic business magnates elucidated the inner-power to success via the strong dream and belief in one's self. (143)

The American dream lost its charm with the great depression where people's most important dream was to survive. The harsh economic conditions stopped the beautiful dream of the glamorous, lavish American life. literatures' orientation shifted as such to picture the dream in a different manner suitable to the situation of that time:

The serious writers of the depression reacted to the hardships of the era. Several studied the importance of dreams and myths in making life bearable (Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men* and O'Neil, "The Iceman Cometh"). Others stressed the destructive consequences of pursuing the dream (Farrell, *Studs Lonigan*). Studies of the underdog's plight glorified the average man (McCabe, "A Chance to be somebody") or presented his heroic struggles under adverse circumstances (Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath*). The criminal or "hard-boiled" character (Hemingway, *To Have and Have Not*) took rugged individualism to its logical conclusion. (Huff 144)

The mythic nature of the American Dream was a theme that troubled many American writers. Mark Twain shadowed the illusion of the dream in his book *Huckleberry Finn* in which he induced the sceptic nature of freedom and justice for all which the American dream promises once Huckleberry Finn set free in the uncharted American lands (Pinsker 1). The most known tale of the mythic American Dream relates directly to F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* 1925. The novel breathed the roaring twenties' spirit along the American Dream's aspirations and seeking for a better social status within the frame of the savage materialistic society that lost all kind of spiritual attachment. The emotional emptiness of the society resulted from the glamour of the American Dream lived by the newly rich people living in Long Island. The story though ends in the tragedy of the death of Gatsby (Tunic 67).

The American Dream though was possible in the new world which carried the wish of a new life; it was not attainable by many Americans. The dream haunted them and led to their tragic ends.

The American dream was embodied in the characters of Steinbeck's novella. The allegory of *Of Mice and Men* articulates the tragedy of the dream during the hard economic times of the Great Depression. After writing the book, Steinbeck wrote to his agent:

I'm sorry that you do not find the new book as large in subject as it should be. I probably did not make my subjects and my symbols clear. The microcosm is rather difficult to handle and apparently I did not get it over—the earth longings of a Lennie who was not to represent insanity at all but the inarticulate and powerful yearning of all men . . . (qtd. in Lisca 133-134)

The projection of the haunting dream lays in the characters and their dreams. As mentioned above, Steinbeck never aimed for the character of Lennie as a representation of insanity; instead it meant it as a Lennie of all those Americans, powerful and dreamy. The characters' particularity lays on the peculiar and vulgar use of language in the novella. The writer tended to use motifs and symbols to carry the "all men" situation that inhaled the Dream and suffered the pains of the Great Depression era.

The Great Depression did not help those who hoped for the realisation of the dream since the economy of the country and the world deteriorated. Those hard economic and social times turned the world to an unsafe haven to "all men" this was symbolised in Lennie's desire for all furry and cosy things, his love for the rabbits, and his dream of "a little house an' a couple of acres." The fate of the dream is deemed to destruction and vanish just like all the furry things Lennie likes but ends up in killing them: the rat, at the beginning of the story; the puppy; the rabbits which were never real for Lennie; it all echoes the unreal and the never

attained American Dream. George' description of the dream of a land and a house of their own describes the vanity of the image created by the words. George's words mesmerized Candy, the old work man, and Crooks, the black man, whose souls became full of hope and optimism once the dream of a possible private ownership reached them. However all is gone when Curley's wife is dead and so is the dream. The force of bad circumstances and the inevitability of events put the end to the wish of those men who dreamed of freedom of their own will and a regain of a proper life (Lisca 133-135).

The life of the two migrant workers embodies the archetype of their search for a safe refuge. Peter Lisca in his essay *The Wide World of John Steinbeck* (1958) "There is the obvious story level on a realistic plane, with its shocking climax. There is also the level of social protest, Steinbeck the reformer crying out against the exploitation of migrant workers. The third level is an allegorical one, its interpretation limited only by the ingenuity of the audience." The story's building itself characterises the hope of those workers to create a home where they can belong. It is an apprehension of the essence of the dream which can be true only if it could survive the destined obstacles and hardships of the society and the worst of those was the restraint of the great depression that halted the dream and killed the dreamers physically and mentally.

To sum up, the American history has always been a representation of the mythic dream. Americans have inhaled the idea for a better self in order to attain the social and economic mobility. Ayers assures:

We can observe, though, that innovation has been the tradition of the American nation: its democratic governmental structure is a political innovation; its emphasis on human progress is a social innovation; its constant westward expansion through to the end of the nineteenth century is a sustained testament to innovative civilizational processes;

and business, economic, and technological innovation have characterized the spirit of twentieth-century America. (241)

1.4. The American Dream: A Literary Consideration

The literary text related to the concept of dream can be considered as the dream report of a human event or activity. The indispensability of dealing with the dream comes to ask this question: What do dreams symbolize in literature? Dreams are taught to influence the actions of the living or to foreshadow events. This motif is found throughout the Homeric epics. In the Iliad, for example, Zeus deceives the Greek king Agamemnon by advising him in a dream to advance the warrior Achilles. In another Homeric tale, Odysseus's wife Penelope has a prophetic dream about an eagle killing twenty geese. Penelope's dream is interpreted to mean that her husband will return from his long years at sea to vanquish the suitors for her hand in marriage (Weidhorn 406). In addition, the Elizabethan period literature has also witnessed the manifestation of dreams in Shakespeare's play Richard III in which Richard is conjured by dreams of guilt. To reach modern literature, theories and psychological concepts come to impact on the incorporation of dreams in literature. Sigmund Freud's dream theory has influenced modernist writers to engage in psychological reflections of events through characters' enrolment and performance. James Joyce's Ulysses represents "another profound step in the evolution of public and scholarly attitudes towards dreams_ from thinking of them as supernatural phenomenon or simple mirrors of reality to using them to reveal important aspects of personal identity" (414). Accordingly, the dream as reflected in literature proves the unlimited intervals of its conceptualization. The American Dream is one among the fascinating dreams displayed in the world of literature. Its notion, themes and boundaries generate literary masterpieces in the American literature.

Authors of American literature tried to reflect the realities of the American dream in their masterpieces. They depicted through a selection of characters one prominent theme, which was the promise and failure of the dream. Hereby, many questions raised concerning the futility of the dream and its pursuit towards happiness, whether it was really a dream or a nightmare. The dramatic situation experienced by people during the twentieth century created illusions between finding a rescue from the bitter and awful experiences or thinking of a gloomy future in that pessimistic reality. Many literary works actually served this theme; among which were Fitzgerald's writings, Steinbeck's novels and many other works in drama, poetry and fiction. *The Great Gatsby* was an emblem of the corruption of the American dream. According to Birkerts, "the *Great Gatsby* is, most of us would agree, beautifully self-contained, with all its parts echoing each other and at the same time serving the whole" (3). The conflicts within Fitzgerald's character and work were the point critics explored to reveal the fate of the American dream. His personal experience of contradictions rooted in his fiction the promise and corruption of the nation's ideals and his personality. James states, "Through Fitzgerald is particularly known for his historical sense. His use of the war is far from idiosyncratic, I think, is the self-consciousness with which Fitzgerald's novel demonstrates the manipulation of history as a strategy to accommodate gender anxiety. In a variety of discourses and media, the postwar era saw a new myth of war experience, which was used to stereotype male suffering as disillusionment"(31). That is, Fitzgerald blue print was the embodiment of the whole American Experience from moments of triumph to moments of despair, from illusion to disillusion, from the dream to the nightmare. The American dream in the eyes of Fitzgerald was personalised, as it should be, from several corners related to the nation basics, people faith and historical boundaries. Another famous work representing how the American dream was corrupted was Tennessee William's *Cat on a Hot tin Roof*. This playwright pictured the dilemma and failure of American family to fulfil

its dream. Moreover, Arthur Miller's *Death of Salesman* tackled the theme of the death of hope in relation to the concept of the dream. By the end of his book, the American Dream came to prove its unattainability. None of the characters was able to achieve their dreams. Willy Loman, the protagonist, failed in becoming a good salesman. His misery ended him to commit a suicide and faded away his family dreams as a well. Thus, the reality of realising the American Dream was portrayed in literature as a deception because the nature that this dream carried did not approach the real situation people were living. Many social and economic obstacles defeat the idealism of the American dream, which made it in many contexts impossible to reach.

2. The Drastic Decline of the Twentieth Century America : The Great Depression

In the 1930's, the American society witnessed a severe breakdown that overwhelmed people and caused catastrophic results economically and socially. This harsh event was the Great Depression. The latter was not only "a temporary economic setback but a period of severe hardship that profoundly affected both the rich and the poor. It changed the course of world politics and left permanent mark on U.S government institutions and American popular culture" (Duignan). The crisis was a period of deep contraction in the American history and a global decline. Historians referred to no specific time lining for the whole world downturn and "lasted through the thirties, but in our neighbourhood, hard times were extended into the beginning war years" (WltMire 2). A huge migration flow characterised the period. Americans felt the need to seek refuge and traveled in search of survival. The situation was worse than anyone could imagine. Many stories were heard out of the real sufferance, "my friend Lorraine Bennet, said when she was a little girl in Kansas, where her family lived, the Depression was bad enough, because of the drought, they could barely grow food. She recalls that her mother planted seeds for a garden about a mile from the house... but she and her

siblings walked that mile to and from the creek bed every day to scoop up water in buckets, to water the plant” (4). This passage, in fact, illustrated nothing from the endured hardships of the Great Depression. Life was dark; people lived hunger, despair and so much tragedy. The great depression was the grim scenario of the thirties with a full package of causes and effects.

2.1. Causes and Effects of The Great Depression

The great depression was the worst and longest economic collapse experienced by the industrial countries that began in 1929 and lasted until the late 1930s. The Depression was particularly long and of extreme pain in the United States, the worst depression ever which was related to numerous causes associated with the Black Tuesday and resulted in fundamental changes in both the world’s economic theory and political system. According to Duignan, “the great depression caused drastic declines in output, severe unemployment, and acute deflation in almost every country of the world. Its cultural and social effects were no less staggering, especially in the United States, where the great depression represented the harshest adversity faced by Americans since the Civil War.” (1)

Many causes pushed the country to endure this crisis. The most remarkable one in the onset of the great depression was a decline in spending as being referred to as “aggregate demand” or the stock market crash of October 29, 1929 and therefore a decline in production. The U.S stock market underwent a catastrophic downward movement in output through investing in the stock market to make money, which therefore expanded the stock prices for profit. The action resulted in inevitable decline in prices and a psychological shock and panic in the market; it destroyed the country’s wealth. Duignan states:

In 1928 and 1929, the Federal Reserve had raised interest rates in hopes of slowing the rapid rise in stock prices. These higher interest rates depressed interest-sensitive

spending in areas such as construction and automobile purchases, which in turn reduced production... Many stocks had been purchased on margin, which is, using loans secured by only a small fraction of the stocks' value. As a result, the price declines forced some investors to liquidate their holdings, thus exacerbating the fall in prices. (6)

On the other hand, banking panics and monetary contraction during which deposits were fearfully withdrawn until they prove their solvency took a severe toll on the American banking system. By 1933, one-fifth of the banks inexistence at the start of 1930 had failed. The gold standard caused by the imported and exported imbalance of goods and International lending and trade because of the high US interest rates were others reasons behind the severe depression of 1930's. The Smoot-Halway tariff of 1930 increased the cost of the imported goods and led to violent response actions by the United States 'main trading relations. The fall of international trade had a deeper impact than the collapse of world production of goods and services.

The effects of the crisis were worldwide; Europe faced an economic devastation and most countries went into recession. Overall, the great depression was cruelly a serious economic turmoil. People were even struggling for their very survival. Duignan notes:

“The severe hardships created by the great depression influenced society and culture in various ways. Notably, birth rates dropped during this era, as adults shied away from bringing more children into an environment- of breadlines, foreclosed family farms, and shantytowns- were indelibly impressed on the generation that witnessed them and remain preserved in countless books and films from or about the era.” (3)

Historians and experts of the field referred to the crisis harsh chaos as being an inevitable failure of capitalism. The global impact of the great depression reached levels of a

broken life, limited systems and strategies. Companies and industrial businesses went bankrupt which aggravated problems that spread all over the nation. Henretta et al states, “As more than a million acres of land were affected in the Dust Bowl, thousands of farmers lost their livelihoods and property, and joined the ranks of the unemployed. Consequently, a mass migration patterns began to emerge for farmers left rural America in search of work in urban areas. Encouraged by handbills promising good jobs 350000 south westerners went to California” (784). Accordingly, the situation called the necessity for recovery and recession. The country jumped then into another stage of self-building and accommodation in the adapted policies and ideologies.

The 1929 panic brought about many concepts and shaped a culture that was related to the great depression. The Americans responded to those hard times with empathy and persistence since the crisis challenged the country’s traditional values and what was commonly spread as “acquisitive individualism”. Brinkly states, “One answer lies in the persistence of traditional values and beliefs in much of American culture, the slowness of ideas and assumptions to change. Americans were not discounted enough; they were not angry enough; they believed too much in the system; they blamed themselves for the failures. (30). He also figures:

But in the 1930s, the response was different. It was no longer possible to look at America as a smug, complacent nation of prosperous, middle-class Babbitts. America was a society reeling from the failures of the industrial world... the others in society were victims of the ravages of progress as well. And the result was a new appreciation for, and even romanticization of, the American people- a revelling in the nobility of the masses, in their patient suffering, their courage and dignity, their internal values.

(14)

United States has been the land of expectations, opportunities, dreams and revolutions against the abnormal before or even during the Great Depression. The changes that happen during 1930's have darkened corners sparkled with beauty, art and richness in the history of the country. The privilege and legacy of the Harlem Renaissance have also suffered and witnessed devastation. The era is described as following, "In the united states, the depression did not, as some suggest, bring the Harlem Renaissance to an end, but it did shift cultural production away from snazzy Jazz Age portrays of Harlem dance halls, rent parties, and flappers- away, in other words, from a high-end consumer capitalism where "the Negro" was the rarest product for sale. It foregrounded, instead, the least of citizens' backward spaces by social class, tradition and poverty" (Matthews). This deduces the real impact and the deepest effect of this breakdown in the country's frame production and social layout. The world turned upside down inactively injecting pressure and collapse in every single source of power to leave therefore obscurity in the actual economic, political and social practices.

2.2. The Legacy of the Great Depression

The Great Depression changed the balance of the economy of the United States as well as the economies of the world nations. It was the unprecedented event that was so severe and long in the history of the American states and of the world. The depression defied all economic theories and laws; as such, economists should regulate the depression into its historical bowl for the hope of finding the real causes that led to the breakdown of the economic status of leading industrial countries and other periphery countries (Rothermond 4). This historical shift drew new ways to the world nations and caused all new unexpected paths in the history of almost all world countries.

The aftermath of the era of the great depression was focused on the need for new economic theories that changed the state of the monetary system. The banks and the credits of

the 1920's became no more granted "Monetary and fiscal policies were used to defend the gold standard and not to arrest declining output and rising unemployment" (Andrýsková 294). The United States overcame the hard situation and the Great Depression became known as "the defining moment" and the game changer of the American economic development "one implication was a major re-thinking of macroeconomics by the economics profession which, in the Anglo-American world, rapidly adopted Keynesian thinking" (qtd. in Crafts and Fearon 306). The Keynesian thinking provided a new base for the revival of the economy the idea as explained by Nicholas Crafts and Peter Fearon in their paper:

In the United States, the main change was that it became generally accepted that the automatic stabilizers would not be over-ridden in pursuit of a balanced budget, and these were now much more powerful, with federal spending considerably bigger, but there was no move to trying to fine-tune the economy through Keynesian demand management. (307)

In the irony of fate, the legacy of the Great Depression helped the rise of the United States as a leading pole of the West. The European countries suffered two destructive wars and in between them they had to face the hardships caused by the depression. These successive events were not helpful for the development of the European economy. The United States was not interested in taking part in the conflicts of the Great War and the Second World War but it was dragged into the conflict "Even the entry into the Second World War was forced upon the United States, although it must be said that President Roosevelt was not at all reluctant to enter the war" (Rothermond 156). The Americans tried to stay faithful to the obligation of neutrality and isolationism and even though it was the birth place of the depression, it did not suffer the same as the European nations and was able to be stronger when it was intrigued to enter the war by the Japanese.

The Americans did consolidate their own economic position in the meantime and when they finally had to enter a war once more, they were in a position to mobilise millions of soldiers and produce an enormous number of ships and plenty of armaments. Moreover, by means of the Lend-Lease Act passed on 11 March 1940 they provided credit to their allies to the tune of \$60 billion. But the actual American entry into the war again required a provocation—this time by the Japanese who attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. (161)

Roosevelt's presidency (FDR) promised the new deal which brought ease to the intense economics of the time. Roosevelt kept the gold value while devalued the dollar. This decision was not easy to take but it was the first step towards the recovery of the economy. The New Deal made some radical changes as it provided work and withdrew married woman from the working force and instituted a compulsory age of retirement. The recovery was swift and smooth however prices kept falling. These were the seeds of the new powerful American economical hegemony over the agonised European nations (Crafts and Fearon 306-8). As such, America gained back its strength after a long painful and tiring decade of disastrous events that stroke the essence of the American society. This induced a radical change in the beliefs of the American society as it supported the self-made tycoons who embodied again the ideal of the American Dream.

2.3. The Great Depression: A Literary Consideration

The drastic deflation; the stock crash of the 1929 and the aftermath of the crisis were all portrayed by a bunch of American writers who lived the economic failure. Writers after the Great War and with the beginning of the 1920's with the roaring twenties; the prohibition era; the Harlem Renaissance, and the jazz age kept dramatizing the horrible situation of the human mind, morals, character, and shallowness. The turn of the thirties was different in the

sense that it provided a whole new experience to the Americans and stretched to reach the world. Throughout these events the American writers were the historians of the people's hopes and aspirations.

The writers wrote for the sake of finding the past to hope of a better present and future. Most of the literary writings carried a tone of the past. The times of the crisis needed to seek the one thing that may make the American reunite and that was the past be it the reconstruction of the American past or the histories and cultures of other nation and myths carrying different contexts and moralities in a kaleidoscopic vision . Although the revival of the past was with a nostalgic air, it aimed in the essence to criticise and blame people for the lost virtues in exchange of the present which breathed shallow morals that led to the events people suffered at that time.

They frequently revived the past to criticize American values and institutions. In historical novels, poems and films, biographies and autobiographies, historical monographs and folklore studies, in painting, music, and photography, men and women of the thirties discovered a kaleidoscope of pasts shaped by a wide variety of political and cultural commitments. Some of these writers considered themselves radical, others conservative; still others were uninterested in politics at all. The conflicting pasts offered vehicles to defend competing views of the present and future. (Conn english.edu)

The writings of the era focused mainly on depicting the proletariat's situation. Many writers took the burden of encoding the sufferance of the Americans in the depression and those where the most accepted books among the readers. The most known work of literature of this nature was Steinbeck's *The Grapes Of Wrath* "a more realistic portrayal of the labor disputes of Depression-era California" (Severson 215). Anthony Hopkins as C. S. Lewis in

Shadow lands writes ““We read to know we are not alone.” The writers who carried the tone of the sufferance of the thirties were many and walked their way to fame when they wrote their masterpieces” Several proletarian writers of the 1930s went on to fame, including John Dos Passos (1896–1970), James T. Farrell (1904–1979), Erskine Caldwell (1903–1987), Richard Wright (1908–1960), and John Steinbeck (1902–1968).” (*“Literature and Songs of the Great Depression”* encyclopedia.com)

The American dream was the hope that kept the Americans’ spirit survives throughout the crisis of the Great Depression. The Dream was an idealisation of the American land. The land that mesmerized the world and urged all people especially Europeans to migrate to, in the dream of the promised prosperous life. The Great Depression as all other crisis in the American history proved the strong will of Americans to continue the Dream of prosperity and the best proof is the legacy that made America one of the leading powers in the world. Writers wrote about the situation of the people at those times and with that created one of the very important literatures and helped enrich the library of American literature about an era that was the most crucial in the creation of the new American belief of the American Dream.

Section Three: Analogical Treatment of the Marxist and Psychoanalytic Literary Theories

The literary work is generally exposed to analytical studies that tend to establish a concrete relationship between the variables of the work and its interpretations in terms of social, economic and even political levels. This examination gives the reader the possibility to either support or criticize what is applied in this piece of literature. This section, therefore, attempts to shed light on the literary theories that are likely used for deep and systematic considerations in the American fiction of the 1930's. Accordingly, the psychoanalytical theory and the Marxist theory take place in this part. They are tackled giving their definitions, features and functions. These literary theories are also associated with the American Dream and the Great depression. That is, the latter are viewed and studied from psychoanalytical and Marxist perspectives to bring the global image of the twentieth century literature into its fullest treatment.

1. The Marxist Account of the 1930's Literature

In the world of socioeconomic analysis, there have been developed certain theories and studies that interpret the findings and historical transformations according to specific measures and criteria. Marxism is one relevant method that studies the world's economic and social setting from a materialist perspective. It is dated back to 19th century and associated to the German philosophers Karl Marx and Friederich Engels. Marx sociology emphasizes one very noticeable element, which is "Capitalism". The latter is a profit-base system. Karl Marx in his book *Capital Volume 1* argues, capitalism does not always involve the commodities' exchange, but capital development, in the form of money, with the purpose of generating profit through the purchase of commodities and their development into other commodities which generating more value of it so it generates a higher price lead to higher profit.

Therefore, the first fertile source that allows for profit is labour. It is the most productive way in terms of quality and quantity.

Capitalist ownership means private control of the whole production. It is a free independent process in which capitalists set prices for commodities, stocks etc. In addition, capitalism focuses on social division. Under this system, society is split into two classes, the bourgeois that is the upper class and the proletariat that is the working class. The bourgeois class owns the capitalist and all means of production. This social classification results in class conflicts.

1.1. The Marxist Literary Theory

Literature has always been a contextualized product in which social frames and ideological perspectives are predicated. Eagleton insists, “The literary text is not the “expression” of ideology, nor is ideology the ‘expression’ of social class. The text, rather, is a certain production of ideology, for which the analogy of a dramatic production is in some ways appropriate... the relation between text and production is a relation of labour” (qtd in Smith 51). The Marxist literary theory is the literary implication of Marxist economic and political theory. The beginning of the Marxist thought has come with Karl Marx and Frederick Engels’ *The Communist Manifesto* during the late 19th century. Castle contextualizes Marxism as “a form of Dialectical Materialism; it holds that all social realities are fundamentally material, that they have their origin and being in specific forms of labor and production.”(qtd in Kalua 124). This theory shows that class conflicts are profoundly rooted in the societies they mirror in literature. The superstructure and social classes interpret the social base. Therefore, understanding literature requires a deep perception of the social process. According to Eagleton, “To understand *King Lear*, *The Dunciad* or *Ulysses* is therefore to do more than interpret their symbolism, study their literary history and footnotes

about sociological facts which enter into them. It is first of all to understand the complex, indirect relations between those works and the ideological world they inhabit” (5). These relations are displayed in themes, style, quality and form as well as the ideology that connect the different classes of the society, the case in which a super class has power through ideology over the other.

Marxist literary theorists consider one concern, which constitute the socioeconomic and historical conditions of the literary production. They pay attention to the whole surrounding beyond the literary work. The Marxist literary theory focuses on the super-structure of society. To be precise, Castle explains the social theory “it begins with a base/superstructure paradigm. The base refers to the modes of production as well as to the class formation and class relationships generated by them; the superstructure refers to the social and cultural institutions and traditions that promulgate and sustain the specific ideologies of the ruling class” (112). Overall, Marxism is based on a certain surmise that one’s consciousness is directed and progressed based on the environment that he or she is raised in; if this environment belongs to the bourgeois, this means that this individual is a member of the ruling class. As said in *The German Ideology*, “it is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness” (Marx and Engels 42). In other words, all people are born equal but the environment in which they exist shape their destinies in terms of social division.

1.2. Marxism during the American dream and Great Depression

The development of capitalism in the American society and its alienation of the individual and social levels are the themes that echo the ideals of the twentieth century society. The modernist writer gives space to tackle this issue in literary works so that class clashes and social gap are well illustrated as they really happen in historical setting.

Accordingly, the characters of the story in any fictionist production directed to treat this point are divided into groups to fit the social distance imposed by ideologies. Several American novels determine strongly enough the Marxist theory. They exhibit the ideology of the American dream during the great depression in relation to Marx 'view of capitalism. The capitalist mode of production, created by the dominant ideology of a market economy, is a mode of production where the entire process (M-C-M) is privatized. The bourgeoisie rule capitalist society by owning the land/property and the means of production, and in order for the proletariat to survive in society they are forced to sell their labor power. (Marx and Engels, chapters 2-4). This claim provides a clear description the exploited society during the 1930's, how the bourgeois rule and practise power of the proletarian. According to Marx, the exploitation of the worker is a result of the bourgeoisie's constant need to create surplus value. The capitalist exploits the worker by i.e. paying the workers less than they deserve, or by providing them with a poorer work environment than required and so on. By exploiting the worker, the capitalist is able to get more surplus value than is otherwise achievable. (Marx and Engels, 242-243). Thus, People belonging to different classes in terms of financial capacities would not engage in harmony successfully. The capitalist exploits the worker and there would be always that gap that separates the two and insists social distance.

The American so-called society of equality and the land of dream and opportunity has proved a wide gap in society during times of the Great depression. The proletarian suffer poverty and live in the margins. Steinbeck in *Grapes of wrath* describes:

In the West, there was panic when the migrants multiplied on the highways. Men of property were terrified for their property. Men who had never been hungry saw the eyes of the hungry. Men who had never wanted anything very much saw the flare of want in the eyes of the migrants. And the men of the towns and of the soft suburban

country gathered to defend themselves; and they reassured themselves that they were good and the invaders bad. (190)

Living in a capitalist society that has the privilege on ideological perceptions, migrant labourers are never able to realize their dream. The American Dream, as a deceiving ideology, has been emerged as a way to shine the future in the eyes of the working class to believe that they are working for their own sake. The protagonists, who also represent the working class, are influenced by capitalist ideology to a degree where they are not able to comprehend the deceptiveness of the system. (Eagleton 23). This dream provides the worker the hope and determination to serve the employer without complaint. Therefore, they lived on the edge of the capitalist world resulting with unachievable dreams. Marx also notes, “Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself.” (Marx and Engels 18)

2. Psychoanalytical study of the Great Depression and the American Dream in Storyline

The Psychoanalysis Theory is relatively a new school of thought. When examining the definition of the psychoanalysis we should start with the definition of psychology “Psychology is the science of the mind and behaviour. The word "psychology" comes from the Greek word psyche meaning "breath, spirit, soul" and the Greek word logia meaning the study of something (1). It is the branch of science which uses human behaviour as a means to understand the working and functioning of our minds” (Manjhi and Tiwari 18). Plato defines psyche as ““Psyche”; “a word used to describe both the mind and the soul, to develop a rough framework of human behavior, reasoning and impulses” (18). Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler

and Carl Jung framed the unconscious into a systematic study with a proper terminology (Habib 572). This new thinking revolutionized the literary criticism:

To say that the unconscious governs our behaviour is to problematize all of the notions on which philosophy, theology, and even literary criticism have conventionally rested: the ideal of self-knowledge, the ability to know others, the capacity to make moral judgments, the belief that we can act according to reason, that we can overcome our passions and instincts, the ideas of moral and political agency, intentionality, and the notion – held for centuries – that literary creation can be a rational process. (572)

Furthermore, the unconscious is also linked to the idea of the body, instincts of survival and aggression and the social factors as well physical factors like size and colour etc. All these “unconsciousness” are carried in the conscious behaviour of the individual. Those archetypes created in the minds of the individuals find their representations in the behaviours and manifest through artistic production of the individual be it literary writing, painting or other forms of expression. (572)

Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis focused on certain terminology. The “ice berg” analogy of the mind defined the most important principles: the ego, the id, and the superego “id comprises the psychic representatives of the drives, the ego consists of those functions which have to do with the individual’s relation to his environment, and the superego comprises the moral precepts of our minds as well as our ideal aspirations” (qtd. in Manjhi and Tiwari 19). He called it *Repression and unconscious* when he claimed that the ego protected itself with repressing the bad ideas and feelings as a defence mechanism. *Infantile Sexuality*, Freud’s research with his patients made him go further in his psychoanalysis theory as he framed the fact that the sexual function of the person started in his childhood with this belief he went on breaking the common theological and conventional perception of the

“innocence” of the child “Freud used the term “libido” to designate the energy of the sexual instincts” (Habib 575). Then he coined the term *The Oedipus Complex* “the boy focuses his sexual wishes upon his mother and develops hostile impulses toward his father” (575). Those sexual wishes are inhibited to become a feeling of “love” afterwards. (575)

Sigmund Freud relied on the analysis of dreams which according to him were the real representation of the traumatic events lived by the patient. Writers as such will have their literary works to be the mirrors of their unconscious fears and agony:

The dream-work, or process by which the latent thoughts are converted into the manifest or explicit content of the dream, occurs through a number of functions: *condensation* of the component parts of the preconscious material of the dream; *displacement* of the psychological emphasis of the dream; and *dramatization* of the entire dream by translation into visual images. While a dream expresses fulfilment of a repressed wish, it can also continue the preconscious activity of the previous waking day, expressing an intention, a warning, or a reflection. Psychoanalysis can exploit this dual feature of the dream to obtain knowledge of the patient’s conscious and unconscious processes. (577)

The most famous of all were “*Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*“(572). Therefore; Freud tended to apply his dream interpretation to analyse literary works. Critics accepting this view relied on the following for their analysis:

Analysis of the motives of an author, of readers and fictional characters, relating a text to features of the author’s biography such as childhood memories, relationship to parents; the nature of the creative process; the psychology of reader’s responses to literary texts; interpretation of symbols in a text, to unearth latent meanings; analysis of the connections between various authors in a literary tradition; examination of

gender roles and stereotypes; and the functioning of language in the constitution of the conscious and unconscious.” (572)

The Theory of the Instincts comes next. The instincts are the origin of all behaviour.

Freud states that:

Narcissistic libido is continually being transformed into object-libido and vice versa, as well exemplified in the state of being in love, where the subject can range between self-sacrifice and self-indulgence. These considerations led Freud to reformulate the mechanism of repression. The main agency of repression, urged Freud, was the instincts of self-preservation, or the “ego-instincts. It is precisely these instincts which constitute the narcissistic libido. In the process of repression, narcissistic libido is opposed to the object-libido; the self-preservative instincts defend themselves against the demands of object-love.” (575)

These basic terminologies are linked with the libido i.e. the child’s behaviour. Once the child grows old all his unconscious complexities grow with him yet they change into more adult-like words and feelings. Freud declares this truth:

As people grow up, says Freud, they cease to play, but they do not give up the pleasure they once derived from playing. As always in mental life, “we can never give anything up; we only exchange one thing for another. What appears to be a renunciation is really the substitute or surrogate” (Freud 438). What the growing child does instead of playing is to phantasize, indulging in day dreams. There is one difference, however: whereas the child takes no pains to hide his play, the adult is “ashamed of his phantasies and hides them from other people. He cherishes his phantasies as his most intimate possessions.” (579)

Those phantasies are different from those of the child. They are the dreams and wishes of a different nature. Freud claims “a happy person never phantasies, only an unsatisfied one [sic]”; and the motive forces of phantasies are “unsatisfied wishes, and every single phantasy is the fulfilment of a wish, a correction of unsatisfying reality.” (580). He continues:

A phantasy is intimately related to the three dimensions of time: it is linked, firstly, to “some provoking occasion in the present” which arouses one of the major wishes of a person; this triggers the memory of an earlier experience, usually in childhood, in which this wish was fulfilled; the mind then imagines a situation in the future where the wish is fulfilled. What is thus created, says Freud, is a daydream or phantasy, which carries in it traces of the present, past, and future: “Thus past, present and future are strung together . . . on the thread of the wish that runs through them.” (580)

2.1. The Psychoanalysis Theory in Literature

Literary criticism has various facets upon which a literary work may be approached and/or analysed. All literary works are not fully appreciated until they are thoroughly analysed. The critics, thus, should spin the literary works with various questions that aim to facilitate the endeavour to the understanding of the writer’s mind as well as his written thoughts and feelings “A literary work cannot be of much use till it is understood” (Painter 5). In this respect it is only true to know that the literary criticism targets the core of the literary works and aims at forming the correct estimation of the literary production “It brings literary productions into comparison with recognized principles and ideal standards; it investigates them in their matter, form, and spirit; and, as a result of this process, it determines their merits and their defects” (5). This analysis looks for the truth rather than for falsifying the work at study.

The twentieth century brought about new streams of criticism with the rise of new disciplines. New thinking alongside to various events happened in the twentieth century varied the visions of critics and each had to defend his vision analysing the literary production on the basis of his own school of thought.

the New Criticism, arising initially in the 1920s and subsequently formalized and popularized in the 1940s; the tradition of Marxist criticism, traceable to the writings of Marx and Engels themselves; psychoanalytic criticism, whose foundations were laid by Freud and Jung; Russian Formalism, arising in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution; structuralism, which emerged fully in the 1950s, building on the foundations established in the early twentieth century by Saussure and Lévi-Strauss; and the various forms of criticism which are sometimes subsumed under the label of “post structuralism”: Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, which rewrote Freudian concepts; deconstruction, which emerged in the 1960s, as did feminism; reader-response theory, whose roots went back to Husserl and Heidegger; and the New Historicism, which arose in the 1980s. (Habib 560-561)

Every school of criticism has its clear cut principles. The critic as such should be well aware of his task that obliges him to neutrality and objectivity. The critic’s work is like that of a judge that is guided with the stated laws, therefore; he is forbidden from bringing on any personal thoughts that may bias his criticism. Many famous names were respected critics “in America we meet with such honoured names as Poe, Emerson, Whipple, Lowell, Stedman, and many others” (Painter 6).

According to Freud; the writer is like any other fosters his phantasies in writing. The writer plays just like a child and creates different worlds: “He creates a world of phantasy which he takes very seriously – that is, which he invests with large amounts of emotion –

while separating it sharply from reality” (qtd.in Habib 580). Freud defined writers into two separate categories: “those who, “like the ancient authors of epics and tragedies, take over their material ready-made,” and those who “seem to originate their own material.”(580)

Freud tried to engage into literary criticism and pointed out some very important features of literature and the reception of literature by readers. When focusing on the writer’s presence in the literature, Freud points at the manifestation of the ego of the writer in his work.

Freud’s point here is that the fiction is not a “portrayal of reality” but has all the constituents of a phantasy or daydream: the hero is invulnerable, women invariably fall in love with him, and the other characters in the story are “sharply divided into good and bad” in a manner that contravenes the more subtle variations found in real life. (580)

However, even if the writer does not play the god-like / omniscient author; he tries to delve the psyche of his characters; he is still present since he just went on the process of dividing his ego, via self-observations, into different parts. And here the situation is always the same. The literary criticism goes further as set by Freud and includes works of respected literatures as well as folkloric and traditional ancient tales and myths:

For example, despite T. S. Eliot’s disclaiming insistence on writing “impersonal” poetry, his poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” might be analyzed in terms of the history of Eliot’s own attitudes toward women and the derivation of these attitudes from his childhood relationship with his mother and father, as well as from figures such as Baudelaire and La forgue who sustained tortuous relationships with the “feminine.” (582)

For him, folklore and myths are just the same as all literary work, yet in a more refined and general taste: “Freud surmises that further investigation into folk-psychology might reveal myths to be “distorted vestiges of the wishful phantasies of whole nations, the secular dreams of youthful humanity.”(582)

Finally Freud wonders about the source of the pleasure of reading a literary piece. He concludes with the fact that the writers works on refining and softening his dream to suit the minds of the readers via techniques that embodies the language to suit the pleasures of the mind. “a liberation of tension in our minds,” perhaps because the writer enables us to “enjoy our own day-dreams without self-reproach or shame” (582). As a result, a literary text can be analysed to seek the hidden unconscious fears, obsessions, and worries. Those are focused on more by Carl Jung, Northrop Frye, Lacan, and others.

2.2. The Psychoanalysis Reading of the Great Depression and The American Dream

Psychoanalytic criticism became one of the most important criticisms since it delves into the human psyche of the writer and how he used the literary work as a carrier of his thoughts and visions. Literature is therefore the creation of the mind, “from the writer”, of minds, “characters”: to the minds “readers” (Manjhi and Tiwari 18). Henceforth, the writings of the Great Depression were a realization of the minds of the people of those times. The “Dream” of the ideal American life suffocated during the economic hardship; and this made the Americans feel repressions and inhibition by the exterior factors imposed on them. All the sufferance did, in fact, restrain the American Dream. Many poor could not see the chance to achieve a better future. The writers of those times documented the economic bankruptcy and its effect on the human soul. One of the most known is John Steinbeck. His books like In

Dubious Battle (1936), Of Mice and Men (1937), The Grapes of Wrath (1939) were of huge success. People read them and liked them because they represented them.

The depression era was an economic fall down that affected the picture of the American Dream. The depression era did not help Americans seeking for social welfare and prosperity; it bared poverty, misfortune, and sorrow to the majority of Americans. The works of these effects of the depression shaped the “superego” of Americans about the American ideal that portrayed the American land as a land of prosperity. People could not achieve the promised Dream of wealth, the concept of hard work was biased since it did not help in the prosperity of Americans and the dream which was cherished in the dreams of Americans since childhood was futile and many failed to achieve it.

The American dream exhibits the exterior subjective inwardness. According to Lois Tyson in his book *Psychological Politics of the American Dream* the American dream is a myth that narrates the escape of the anxious self in an antagonistic American society in a trial of self-realisation and development (139). He believes that the American dream is a commodity which makes the fabric of the American culture. The dream and its representation with real life tycoons who made themselves out of scratch was the hope that helped Americans pursuit happiness. Those real-life models were the subjective support which wove the psyche of Americans and became a ruling ideology. American psyche in the Great Depression lost the hope; therefore the American culture was shaken in one of the most important founding pillars of its foundation.

The American psyche was represented via the works of literature of 1930's. Lois Tyson wrote about the desolation of the American Dream. The fall of the American dream can be seen via the physical or hypothetical death of the protagonist characters of some chosen iconic books “Fitzgerald, Wharton, and Miller have their protagonists die at the end of

their narratives: given the failure of the transcendental project in each case” (139). The same with the characters of Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men* and other works. The collective dream of the transcendence from poverty to welfare and richness harboured lost and aching souls of the depression era. The American dream fell apart during the social and economic break down of the 1930’s. Americans became unable neither to feed themselves nor to keep their households in economic safety.

Psychological readings of the American psyche differed with different trends. The Freudian aspect focussed in interpreting the unconscious trends of the individuals and literary productions of writers of the depression time. It framed the psyches of characters and writers who pronounced the psyche of Americans themselves. The American Dream’ failure during the great depression was very loud and easily diagnosed because of the hardships people lived. Both ideology and reality cannot be separated, however; the American dream was the hope that carried the seeds for the American revival after a devastating worldwide crisis. Without an understanding of the psychological impact of the “Dream” in an era of failure, the understanding of American literature and history can only stay limited.

Chapter Two

Of Mice and Men: The Product of the Twentieth Century Disruption

In the world of American fiction, nobody can spot light on certain masterpieces that reflect historical and social settings in which Americans and people of specific areas and periods shared common fate and imposed circumstances. John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* has been the product of a whole amalgamation that brought about the Great Depression, the concept of dream and realism in one globe through a selection of characters and events. This chapter is intended to tackle each aspect of the novella *Of Mice and Men* and analyse its deepest meaning in relation to literary examination of its components, ideological interpretations and theories. The first section is devoted to examine the title and the physical background of the story since the author has revealed "a wall of background" behind the details mentioned in the experience of the story's characters. In addition, the reader of this work would be exposed to the value and perception of the novella to reveal what impact does have in the world of literature and in the historical significance of USA as a whole. Moreover, this part gives hand to picture the concept of dreaming in a society overwhelmed by ghosts of failure and economic forces vanishing every good spirit existed in people's values before. That is, it reflects the absurdity of the American Dream during the Great Depression via *Of Mice and Men*. All in all, the novella is exposed to a deep analysis to provide the audience with the maximum data related to both the author and history.

Section One: John Steinbeck "A Wall of Background"

Steinbeck was an American writer who took the task of writing for the sake of speaking for the silenced ones. He was one of the writers who wanted to show the real picture of the people of his likings who strived for the life they had under the circumstances of the drastic economics of the thirties. His books are the best documentation of that era in a literary

embodiment of fictional characters and plots. *Of Mice and Men* (1937) traced the spirit of the times. This novella which was published into immediate success provided the readers with a story that appealed to Americans. Many critics took on the novella and tried to find different readings and interpretations. As a result, a valuable attention was attributed to this latter and its police spoke different voices mourning different sufferings and unspoken pains.

1. Background and Vision

John Steinbeck was born in 1902 in Salinas, California, a region that became the setting for most of his memorable fiction, including *Of Mice and Men*. John was the third of four children, and the only son. He worked during his summer's breaks school as a hired hand in nearby ranches, which brought about later images in *Of Mice and Men*. Steinbeck attended Stanford University but he never graduated or earned a degree by any ways. Kirk states, "While in college, he continued to write creatively and he worked for a time on neighbouring farms, especially Spreckels Sugar Ranch. The agricultural industry at this time relied on cheap, transient labour. It was during this time that Steinbeck met many of the types of people described with compassion in his writing later." (2) John worked at several jobs until he eventually returned his homeland California where he produced his prints. As a labourer occupying several manual jobs, Steinbeck worked with migrants on his travel from the Great Plains to California. The experience contributed to depict a harsh setting lived during depression and hard times in the United States. Steinbeck based his writing on his own experience as a teenager that resulted in four of his famous novels, *Tortilla Flat*, *Of Mice and Men*, *In the Dubious Battle* and *Grapes of Wrath* and other several short stories.

The physical background of the novella indicated flashes of reality and survival. John Steinbeck was aware of the social, economic and political situation that the country had gone through because of the impact of the Stock Market Crash and the Great Depression of the

time. Heavilin states “ John Steinbeck enticingly suggests in “ The Long Valley Ledger” that there is a “wall of background” behind of Mice and Men, but this setting may be discovered only by subtle indirection because the historical and social contexts are never overly given... Steinbeck insists that this novel has just such a backdrop, leaving readers to seek out its nature for themselves.” (13)

In 1937, his novella *Of Mice and Men* was published to tell a story behind authentic forces pushed people to endure social impetus and inner will against imposed hardships and expected destiny. Steinbeck portrays in this novella the dream that held most; the exploited men whose ambitions went around certain directions, to have a job and to own a land. He wrote about people who were isolated in the society of their time, who were fast disappearing from the American scene. In “Deadly Kids, Stinking Dogs, and Heroes: The Best Laid Plans in Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*”, Louis Owens maintains that in this novella, “Steinbeck is laying out a cautionary tale deeply engaged with the profound human crisis of his times” (qtd in Stephen78). *Of Mice and Men* was considered a social protest sympathizing the powerless and the weak. Steinbeck could shadow the life of people left with no chance to live, in a serious era of isolationism that demanded self-production of crops to supply the country’s needs. As a result, an enormous walk took place for work because they lost their savings, their shelters and source of income, which pictured Lennie and George in the novella.

Steinbeck examines in *Of Mice and Men* the vision of dreamers of a life that installed them out of their miserable survival as impoverished and inferior seekers looking for existence and a life worth living after being marginalized in a capitalist society. The choice of certain characters was not by chance; it has been destined to reinforce and determine the motives of failure of the dream, which the protagonists attempt to convert into reality. The novella portrays the connection between his stories and his personal background. Parini, the writer of *John Steinbeck – A Biography*, explains that Steinbeck searched his life and his

personal experiences not only to find inspiration for his stories, but also to understand more about himself and his background. (1-3) Parini continues with the notion that by re-examining one's past a writer changes and rearranges it into what he calls "personal mythos": That is, we create the story of our lives, selecting certain details from others to find order, to discover an aesthetically satisfying form within the chaos of experience. (2)

Steinbeck has written *Of Mice and Men* after being exposed to a dilemma of harshness with migrant labourers. According to Tarigan (1986), novel is a long fictional prose narrative with a more or less complex plot or pattern of events about human beings and their feelings, actions, and thoughts. Based on this, it is through his personal mythos that the story gives voice to those exiled people fallen in the bottom of their society and comes to life and becomes convincing. The novella is composed of six chapters. It is written in dialogue-action form similar to stage drama. Steinbeck himself said that he wrote "a kind of playable novel" and then he added that it is "written in novel form but so scened and set that it can be played as it stands". (qtd in Ernesto and Stow 86).

2. Reading the Title

Of Mice and Men was not the first title Steinbeck considered for his novella. *Some Things That Happened* was the title that headed his work before he changes it to the current one inspired by the Scottish poet Robert Burns' poem intituled *To A Mouse*. Based on a true event that happened with the poet and farmer destroying a nest of a mouse by mistake, the poet wrote his poem in 1st person to the mouse. The lines that met the main theme of Steinbeck's novella and inspired him were (in Scottish)

But, mousie, thou art no thy lane,

In proving foresight may be vain:

The best laid o' mice an' men

Gang aft agley

And lea' us nought but grief an' pain

For promis'd joy" (qtd. in Lisca 138)

These words translates to: "the best laid plans of mice and men often go wrong and leaves us nothing but grief and pain instead of the joy we hoped for" perfectly illustrating the core themes the novella is centring about.

Form dreams which were lost when seemed almost approachable to the entrapment due to the social conditions of migrant workers leaving them with limited choices in life. Steinbeck saw in the new title the uncertainty of life, no matter how much or well we plan for it, our plans may be shattered in a mere of a moment and that dreams may go terribly wrong "the symbol of man's eternal, bitter warfare with himself" (Benson 304). The suggestion the title offers is that the reader should be prepared to face the fact that some of these dreamers may not see their goals coming true or maybe all of them won't. The foolishness of humans seeking for shadows of hope in no more that imagination was indeed the thing that got them over that hard post war era of time owning but their souls and free only in their thoughts (Lisca 138).

3. The Value and Perception of the Novella in American Modern Fiction

Of Mice And Men (1937) was a clear realisation of the social reality of the years of the Great Depression. Criticism of the novella varied between extravagant praise to other critical assessment. Steinbeck tried to focus on the fate of the disfranchised via the characters he chose. The novella achieved an immediate huge success and was widely accepted and valued:

The novel was also highly anticipated, selling "117, 000 copies [. . .] in advance of the official publication date, February 25, 1937" (Meyer). It was also a selection for the book of the month club. Biographer Jackson Benson reports the novel "[...] hit the best-seller lists almost immediately. Both Hollywood and Broadway were quick to see the novel's dramatic possibilities (351). (qtd.in "*Of Mice and Men - Critical Reception*" www.sjsu.edu)

Nevertheless, the novella had some criticism. Some critics focused on the context and the nature of the characters chosen "Edmund Wilson, criticized the novel for "Steinbeck's preoccupation with biology, (...) he saw *Of Mice and Men* as a simple social representation of Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest" (Ibid.). He claims that the character of Lennie is a picture of the vulnerable members of the society who, according to the novella, should be cut away from the society. Many other critics regretted the end of the novella and blamed the author for a more joyful end. After more than eighty years of its publication, the novella still carries its sorrowful story of the two migrants who connects to every reader as it speaks the themes of loneliness and the lost American Dream of a social mobility and a promised happiness.

Steinbeck succeeded to a great extent to portray the life of Lennie and George. His choice of the peculiar language was clearly a manifestation of the life as it is an accurate recording of the common people's speech. The metaphors he used epitomized the sentiments of the characters and reached the readers in a very emotional smoothness. *Of Mice And Men* was very successful because "it is the compassion of Steinbeck for the misfits of life and for those who are handicapped by the imponderables of heredity and environment." (Meyer 2)

4. The absurdity of the American Dream in the novella

Steinbeck's novella *Of Mice and Men* is an emblem of the spirit of dreamers to get out of a life full of hardships and misery and to own a land in which they could feel their existence away from any kind of capitalist slavery. This work illustrates how the American dream has lost its promise and falls in the depth of failure. The protagonists of the novella give the image and transform the deceptive consciousness of the dream to come true. Steinbeck's heroes are basically dreamers. Warren French, in his study of Steinbeck, seems to argue that dreamers in Steinbeck are always doomed due to the failure of nature to grant man the sort of life of which he has been dreaming (32).

Accordingly, In *Of Mice and Men*, George Milton and Lennie Small spend most of their time dreaming of having a farm of their own. Having found their job through an employment company, George and Lennie have come to work in a ranch where they meet Candy, an old disabled swamper; the boss; his arrogant son; Curley; Curley's wife; Slim, the muleskinner; Carlson; and Crooks, the black stable hand. The story is set on large California ranches during the Depression, a period in which men had to go from one ranch to ranch to find work. George and Lennie's dream is so appealing that Candy and Crooks want to join. Candy wants to offer his saved money to fund the purchase of the land and be able to work and live on it with George and Lennie "it'll be our own place" (p. 60). Conflicts in the story raise because of the living conditions and other forces that have pushed the characters to endure exploitation, alienation and loneliness, no family tenderness has been evolved around the events. However, Steinbeck assures some kind of friendship to help sustain the dream. George and Lennie are friends of another kind; the mentally disordered Lennie is dependent on the responsible dreamy George. Steinbeck makes a dramatic link between the intelligent George and the physically powerful Lennie to realize their dreams. This relationship seems

successful; but reality gets over them. Both have failed to reach their dreams because of certain circumstances.

The dream in *Of Mice and Men* does not consist George and Lennie only but also Curley's wife. Her dream has always been away from the ranch in which she lives unhappy. She wants to become a Hollywood cinematic image that occupies no space in the real world. However, Curley's wife is unfortunate and ends up killed by Lennie, she and her dreams have been gone away as wind. The opening Steinbeck has started his story with pictures nature as a peaceful paradise where people are inspired and full of life. Yet, the ability to live a hopeful future in this land seem contrasting. *Of Mice and Men* shadows:

... but on the valley side the water is lined with trees— willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees, the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the spreadpads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark. (1)

Later on when events flow, nature becomes awful and full of evil. The circumstances that George and Lennie live picture another destiny and a completely different outlook. This symbolizes that the dream has to fall apart in this wildlife. The wildlife and vegetation, as Matthews emphasizes, are so equally described both times that the impression given is that of timelessness; time has not actually progressed at all (83). The same setting in which the novella begins and ends suggests a "never ending circle to human endeavour. (Schultz and Luchen 147).

The pursuit of the American dream represented in *Of Mice and Men* reviews the social constraints that stand against the capability and hope of dreamers to step forward and change their fate. The death of hope is manifested when the dream is confirmed unattainable. None of the characters has triumphed over their destiny on the ranch. The collective dream to live a pinky life is destroyed. By killing Lennie, George has actually killed their shared dream and remains the labourer to prove that the bitter Crooks is right when he says:

I seen hundreds of men come by on the road an' on the ranches, with their bindles on their back an' that same damn thing in their heads. Hundreds of them. They come, an' they quit an' go on; an' every damn one of 'em's got a little piece of land in his head. An' never a God damn one of 'em ever gets it. Just like heaven. Ever'body wants a little piece of lan'. I read plenty of books out here. Nobody never gets to heaven, and nobody gets no land. It's just in their head. They're all the time talkin' about it, but it's jus' in their head. (67-8)

The novella played an essential role in the discovery of the American society. The great depression and the fate of the American dream are core features of the book. All becomes clear with the analysis of the work. Many readers sympathised with the characters and saw the changing conditions that governed the people in the novella. Those conditions were uncontrollable but they imposed completely different destiny to the two main characters. In this manner the writer could carry the lost dream of better life in times ruled by a huge economic crisis whose effect were not escapable for no one.

Section Two: The Allegory of “*Of Mice and Men*”, Profound Examination

The final section is devoted to the application of the features of the literary theories mentioned in the previous chapter to the novella of John Steinbeck *Of Mice and Men*.

Literature of the thirties by some selected writers in America described the life in the great depression. *Of Mice and Men* carried more than just literary picture but symbols which served the vision of the writer who wanted to tell about the life he lived. The Marxist and psychoanalysis criticism will help the definition of the innate vision of the writer and how far he could make George and Lennie alongside the other characters speak of the truth of the era.

1. The Marxist evaluation of capitalism in *Of Mice and Men*

The Marxist perspective in *Of Mice and Men* is obviously marked by socio-economical classes that Steinbeck tries to reflect in the story. The struggle between the oppressed and the oppressing causes division in social framework. This novella, in fact, shows multiple examples of this theory which proves the importance of gender to achieve success.

1.1. Social ideologies and capitalism in *Of Mice and Men*

Of Mice and Men told a story, about two workers named George and Lennie. They were ranch labourers. Both held dreams to accomplish, that is why; they travelled from a ranch to others to find a job. During their journey, they faced many obstacles and experienced several hardships and troubles. Their story ended them up fired by the ranch owner. This case is associated to their status as workers and the power of every capitalist, owner of the ranches they work in. It also reflected the life of workers and the power of capitalists in influencing it. Steinbeck's novel pictured the situation of a group of people who were isolated and margined in their society from the American scene. The author succeeded in bringing the realistic conditions of lower social classes in a dramatic depiction of events. He portrayed the

alienated and exploited working class through the representation of characters and their performance in the story. Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* provided also an image of the ideology of the American dream during times of the great depression from a Marxist's perspective.

Capitalism is closely attached to the pursuit of profit regardless of how the others would endure. According to Phelps, capitalism may be in order, is generally means a private-ownership system marked by great openness to the new commercial ideas and personal knowledge and idiosyncratic views among the wealth-owners and financiers who select the ideas to which to provide capital and incentives for their development (1). Thus, in *Of Mice and Men*, Steinbeck tries to focus on class conflicts and on realities happened in history. His choice of the main characters George and Lennie demonstrate the working class's vitality and their will to chase their dreams in an agricultural capitalist society. His work is a self-experienced life; the story's details show a clear link between the novella and his personal background. The writer of *John Steinbeck – A Biography*, explains that Steinbeck searched his life and his personal experiences not only to find inspiration for his stories, but also to understand more about himself and his background. (Parini 1-3). Parini continues with the notion that by reexamining one's past a writer changes and rearranges it into what he calls "personal mythos": That is, we create the story of our lives, selecting certain details from others to find order, to discover an aesthetically satisfying form within the chaos of experience. (2). Hence, Steinbeck mirrors his personal mythos with the migrant labourers, which makes his work persuading. The story is written around an extreme socioeconomic downturn of the Great Depression so that George and Lennie exemplify thousands of cases endured the same tragedy for sake of survival. Therefore, they are situated at the bottom of social hierarchy. They were physically, psychologically and financially exploited by both the employers and the government. (Dunbar & Kravitz 2-3). The characters in *Of Mice and Men*

live in capitalist centralized society, either to belong to the bourgeois or to rank in the proletariat. These social ideologies confirm the social base that favour the bourgeois. George and Lennie have been conscious of the working conditions the boss or the ranch would afford. However, they start working because they have already been exposed to such conditions. “Tomorra we’re gonna go to work. I seenthrashin’ macines on the way down. That means we’ll be bucking grain bags, bustin’ gut.” (Steinbeck 9). That is, the capitalist society normalize those conditions since profit is above all. These ideologies develop due to the capitalist programmatic influence. “Capitalist ideologies in the superstructure are the result of the capitalist mode of production (the base)” (Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts 29*).

1.2. Alienation and Exploitation

The migrant labourers in *Of Mice and Men* represent the harassed and exploited working class in society. Ranch workers are alienated and exploited by the capitalist mode of production, which Marx states “is the basic source of alienation and exploitation” (Marx 28). Marx argues that the act of reducing the labourer to the same level as a commodity is the origin of alienation. (29). Dunbar & Kravitz describe the migrant’s work experience as monotonous and effortful, “You also have to perform the same task all day, bent over with hardly ever a chance to straighten your back, your fingers travelling the same path back and forth from the plant you sack, and you have to do this without letting your legs or your mind fall asleep” (2). The workers lack creativity and they do not care about the product; their interest is to work and be paid. They are alien from the product. Labor has become merely an activity to turn the product into a commodity. When labor has reached this level, the worker is externalized from the product and is no longer able to identify with it. (29). George shows this when he talks to Lennie about his dream to gain money and own farm. He says that he would no longer be alienated, produce, and harvest themselves. “We’d know what come of

our planting.” (Steinbeck 58). These two workers are subject to alienation from the product since they cannot identify with it. Since the capitalist privatizes labor, the laborer cannot associate with it and it becomes alien to the owner. They are transformed to “a servant of his object” (29). That is why, once they work their own plants and grow their own product; they would feel satisfaction and contempt of the result.

George and Lennie face alienation in several situations. Once they arrive late to the ranch, the boss does not approve their attitude because this act prevents him to gain much more profits. This work atmosphere and conditions lead to oppression and thus to antipathy towards work. As a result, therefore, man (the worker) only feels himself freely active in his animal functions – eating, drinking, procreating, or at most in his dwelling and in dressing-up, etc.; and in his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal. (30)

Alienation from work causes alienation from life as whole. The labourers in *Of Mice and Men* are unhappy with their fortunes at work because they are exposed to exploitation and the exercise of authority over their will. Marx views “estranged labour estranges the *species* from man.” (31). In other words, they are machines-like. Alienation also appears between worker’s attitudes themselves. Crooks is almost isolated having no shared space in the ranch. He is treated as a second-class citizen and favoured by none because he is different. This false consciousness, which is created by capitalism ideologies, “recruits its next generation of managers by encouraging them to believe that they act out of individual selfhood, whereas the real conditions are that individual selfhood is a delusion that makes it possible for them to act out of socially (not individually) determined motives that they remain unconscious of, oblivious to” (Parker 200). This social distance between individuals sharing the same labour is the outcome of being alienated from their species being.

The characters of the story *Of Mice and Men* do not suffer only from alienation but also from exploitation. Steinbeck shadows in certain events the capitalist reactions against labourers. The narrator's description of the surrounding setting and objects determine that exploitation is normalized as a basic exercise in the capitalist society. Curley describing George's, he states "George stepped over and threw his blankets down on the burlap sack of straw that was a mattress." (Steinbeck 20). George's behaviours and reaction towards the situation of the chamber indicate that he gets used to such miserable conditions. He "seemed satisfied." (21). Dunbar and Kravitz depict the migrant laborer's housing condition as Poor housing, however, predominates, and by "poor housing" we mean overcrowded buildings with no partitions between the bedrooms, no window screens or windows, no cabinets for food, no heater, no indoor plumbing, no running water, walls insulated with newspaper, and exposed electrical wiring. (79)

Another instance when labourers are over possessed and treated as a property is the long time period they spend working on the ranch. George talking about his dream says, "We wouldn't have to buck no barley eleven hours a day." (Steinbeck 58). Thus, they are excessively devoted to work; they have no time to leisure or hang out to enjoy life. According to Marx, in order for the worker to "produce his daily labour-power" the worker should labour approximately six hours a day. (Marx, *Capital – A Critique of Political Economy*, 159). Hence, *Of Mice and Men* proves the fact that labourers are not exploited but possessed and treated as a private ownership by the capitalists. They lose their sense of belonging, which illustrates George's dream to purchase a farm to live by their own rules, no one to practise power and control over them.

2. The Psychoanalytical demonstration of characters' performance in *Of Mice and Men*.

Based on the stated study in the previous chapter, this part will seek to know the different psychoanalytic sets in the novella *Of Mice and Men*. The characters of the novella and their psyches as well as the psyche of the writer himself via his book are to be under examination.

Freud was the one who made the link of literature with the field of psychoanalysis. He believed that people's minds manifest in their behaviours. Since literature is a kind of written performance; it is evident that it should be carefully studied. For him, this compulsory relation is needed "...the creative faculty draws on drives and fantasies buried in the unconscious, and that they provide the clue to understanding the imaginative mind as well as individual works"(qtd.in Manjhi and Tiwari 19). Freud himself examined literary works and inspected the traits of his theory through the writer, characters, and readers. This intrigued researchers to follow the same interest of research with other literatures.

Of Mice and Men draws a complete realistic picture of the scene in the great depression. Each character speaks of different psychic background. the writer wanted the book to be a mirror of the economic and social state of those times and in almost perfect metaphor, he could make the character utter the deep thoughts of each portrayed in the characters of the novella.

George Milton is the first main character. George is completely and deeply different from Lennie. "An' you ain't gonna do no bad things like you done in Weed, neither" (Steinbeck 7), right from the beginning of the novella it is clearly stated that George guides and mentors Lennie's behaviour. He cares for him because he was his childhood's friend. George represents, thus, the superego for Lennie whose behaviours were idle and childish and completely unintentional. George was a caring friend for Lennie and tried to protect him

against the brutal society who would not be merciful with Lennie's lack of intelligence.

George agreed to do so after the incident with Lennie in Sacramento River where he almost caused Lennie to drown himself in the river. This incident made up the moment where George decided to protect Lennie. His confession to Slim of the incidents proves his superego since he stopped his instincts and desires.

Steinbeck used two main events in the novella in which George was mainly a superego for Lennie's behaviour. The first was with that of the dead mouse at the beginning of the story. Lennie wanted to keep the dead mouse but George ordered Lennie to give it up. This was the correct thing to do. The second was when he ordered him to keep the puppy in the barn with his mother. George in both situations was the voice of the superego to Lennie. George also warned Lennie from getting close or dealing with Curley, the short man who was the son of the owner of the ranch, and from Curley's "purty" wife "who got the eye" and was feared for being the source of troubles.

George warned Lennie from getting into any troubles as if he symbolised the cultural and traditional principals of the social behaviour. He guided him with threats and promises to make him obey and adapt the wishful and correct manners. He made him the promise of the dreamed "ranch", a ranch of their own where they can be free and men of their own will. He threatened him to leave him and let him alone, therefore; made him fear for the dream that George was successful in picturing its details and features. The dream included all of Lennie's instincts from the details of "ranch life" Lennie always kept from his childhood memories.

Even if the real dream of George was not the same of Lennie's. George's real dream was not really of having a ranch and petting soft and furry things like Lennie, he, instead, wanted a life where he had no responsibilities. His real dream was repressed. Even though, the wish of being free from the responsibility of Lennie was not admitted by George, his

unconscious reminds him of it every time the situation gets worse with Lennie's presences in his life. George declares every time that:

Whatever we ain't got, that's what you want. God a'mighty, if I was alone I could live so easy. I could go get a job an' work, an' no trouble. No mess at all, and when the end of the month come I could take my fifty bucks and go into town and get whatever I want. Why, I could stay in a cat house all night. I could eat any place I want, hotel or any place, and order any damn thing I could think of. An' I could do all that every damn month. Get a gallon of whisky, or set in a pool room and play cards or shoot pool. (Steinbeck 8)

Lennie Small is the second hero in the novella. Lennie was described as the child-like, vulnerable person. He always forgets things and events and he likes furry things. He loves animals and adores petting them. At the same time he is a physically fit person who can accomplish any hard physical work which helped him to get jobs in ranches in California. With all that has been said, Lennie is the personification of the id. throughout the novella, Lennie continuous to act like a child with no governing norms. He finds pleasure in his actions, but he tries follows the order and advice of George as he hopes to be a good companion to his friend by always trying to avoid problems. He, unfortunately, falls in the deadly fault of touching the soft and furry dress of Curley's wife and her hair and when she gets frightened and irritated by his odd behaviour, he ends up by breaking her neck and killing. His movements are instinct-based and totally unintentional. Furthermore, it is more likely that his threats of leaving to live in a cave in the mountains was only a hint to the repression of instincts to the unconscious by the forced governing norms that are always represented in the words of George.

Lennie was so faithful to George; however, his instincts led to unexpected ends. George was protective to Lennie but after the death of Curley's wife; he was the one who

killed him. The assimilation of the death of Lennie is closely similar to that of Candy's dog. This depiction of a similar death represents the fears of both George and Candy; their fear of losing their closest companions. Both of them faced the decision of ending the life of their dearest companions with whom they grow old, supported each other and completed each other. This metaphor of two pictures represented the rule of the superego of both characters who could accept the norm of killing under the realm of logic. Lennie's death was heartbreaking for readers and totally an unexpected action, yet it showed that the weaknesses are not allowed in the society as such instincts.

Lennie; nevertheless, finds his balancing ego in the moments of realizations. In the novella, Lennie realizes each time his mistake of following his pleasure of furry things. The moment of his realization of his mistakes brings about his balancing ego who blames him for following his instincts and forgetting the advice of George, the superego. Lennie's love for furry things can be related to his infantile sexuality. He is a fit adult man with a child's mind. The furry things represent the comfort he had in his childhood:

both body and mind acting together persuaded by psychic drive of libido submerged in unconscious, which causes him to love soft things like mice, rabbit, pup, velvet, silk and Curley's wife's hair. This feel of softness brings a compensatory feeling for Lennie's own id, an alternate option for physical sexual pleasure. (Manjhi and Tiwari 20)

Slim is the embodiment of ego. He was the head of workers in the ranch. His character imposed on everybody to respect him and his words and actions were well balanced by logic and thoughtful manners. Carlson is an impulsive worker. He is aggressive and driven by his instincts and completely the opposite of Slim. He was the one who killed Candy's dog. Curley is the obsessed owner always afraid of not being enough for his wife and for his work. He hates Lennie because he represents the weaknesses he wants to hide.

Crooks is a black man who works in the ranch. Crooks when he first meets Lennie and the conversation they had, he speaks with bitterness of the repression he faces. He is a worker like his white fellowmen, however; he is not permissible to be one of them because of the white supremacy rules of the American society at the times. His talk is full of irony that showed his discontent about the situation of the segregation he has because of the judgemental opinion of those white people who repressed his existence because of his black colour. He likes the dream of Lennie and Candy when he hears of it. At first he saw the fantasie of freedom through the dream, but then he remembers all the ones who had similar fantasies of a different future. His gloomy tone comes back to him when Curley's wife threatens him. Curley's wife's words were the words of the society who eliminated the blacks and considered them less than humans.

The novella's central theme revolves around the work of dreams under the poor social conditions of the era. The dream of George and Lennie, the migrants who hope for a ranch of their own where they will gain their freedom; Candy, the old man who seeks a final refuge to rest his aging body; Curley's wife who aimed for fame and glamour; Crooks, the black worker who had no rights although he had a descent childhood among the people of his colour. The dream waves the story from the beginning and in every metaphor. The characters worked for finding a better tomorrow, each in his/her way. Nonetheless, the dream faded away with the unplanned fates. The dream of the characters ended when Lennie killed Curley's wife. The catharsis that killed the remaining hopes. The fantasies of the dream were repressed wishes for each character in the times of social and economic repression. In this respect, the American dream was gone with the misfortunes of the great depression.

The writer wrote his thoughts and desires as well as his unlucky situation like any of those who were in the times of the great depression. His omniscient writing of the book made him divide the human psyche and represented it most clearly for the hope to portray the

sufferance and the conditions of the times. His play was made to perfection and readers found their hopes and imaginations written in fates of the characters.

To sum up, the examination of the novella has established a solid relationship between the theoretical propositions and the historical components that have participated in the production of this literary work. Through this deep analysis, the reader comes to understand the characters attitudes and performance in the story in relation to the social and economic setting that surrounds the events. Also, the futility of the American dream has got its justification for the dreamers are conjured only by the spirit trying to get over the capitalist chains. However, reality over controls them and vanishes their dream at the end. This section finally determines the novella, as a case study, to be a real social judgment of the American life conditions during 1929-1937.

Conclusion

The pivotal point upon which this work is based is the relation of the Great Depression and the American Dream and its presence in *Of Mice and Men*. This latter is a seminal novella which proved hitherto a crucial impact on the American literature. After a well-defended analysis, it is important to prove that the American modern fiction gained a lot with writings of John Steinbeck who focused on documenting the hardships of the Great Depression of the 1930's and the loss of the American ideal that supported the Americans since the foundation of the American.

Of Mice and Men was immediately accepted with good reviews from critics and readership. The novella was turned into theatrical and cinematic versions because of its peculiar realistic plot and emotionally touching characters. The story showed the failure of the characters to achieve their dreams as a result of unexpected events. The American Dream was not achieved. The exhausted souls lost the only hope of social mobility, social freedom, and self-estimation. The novella was very successful in portraying the economic failure and the lost spirits that suffered poverty and could not find a shelter from social pains and dangers. All the vulnerable in the American society in that time were dead or metaphorically killed with the tight and sever situations they lived in.

The analysis of the theme of modernist literature in relation to the American dream and the great depression in *Of Mice and Men* displayed the personal experience of the author himself. Steinbeck who gives a significant portrait about a society that has corrupted the true values of the American Dream in the hard Thirties appears to be part of the unbalanced environment. The dream resulted in the disequilibrium of the American who were facing upheavals beyond their capability because of their obsession with it. That was the point John Steinbeck stresses throughout his novel's major theme that no one in the American thirties was safe from vacant dreams and their negative consequences.

Of Mice and Men is a powerful tale that successfully portrays the alienation and exploitation of migrant laborers who inhabit solitary lives. The laborers work eleven hours a day, six days a week in harsh conditions only to be paid insufficiently for their hard work at the end. As the workers are forced to submit to the rules of capitalism in order to survive, they are thus reified to a commodity. The mode of production designed by the capitalist allows the bourgeoisie to objectify the proletariat and the proletariat to be treated as mere workforce. A capitalist employer is only interested in maximizing profit, which naturally results in exploitation of the workers. Through long workdays, poor work conditions and low wages the workers are pushed to extreme conditions and thus exploited and objectified. The laborers are influenced and shaped by capitalism to the extent where they are unconscious of the degree to which they are alienated. It is this power over the working class that allows capitalism and its norms and rules to endure.

John Steinbeck provides the marginalized with a voice through his novel. Those who otherwise are ignored, alienated and exploited are given the gift of speech. The two protagonists in the story represent the alienated and exploited proletariat in capitalist society. As other working class citizens, George and Lennie live in a society where they are positioned at the bottom of class hierarchy. They experience all four features of alienation developed by Marx, and through these types of alienation they experience exploitation by both the capitalist and capitalist society.

The novella was a confession of the twentieth century times. Steinbeck chose to be more realistic and avoid the literary escapism like the writers who wrote about imaginary tales to avoid the harshness of reality. His bravery allowed him to write about the destinies of the poor people. He wrote to shed light on the bitterness they faced. And was able to make it in very literary manner with metaphor and common language; the language of the people to talk about the people. These factors afford the novella to be an out loud pronouncement of the

social pains. The story, despite its simplicity, is a total success of different angles to report the calamities of that depression suffered by the poor and the vulnerable.

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