

**ABSTRACT ON THEME OF 'EAST OF EDEN'**

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**Abstract**

An American novelist, short story writer, and journalist. John Steinbeck is best known for Depression-era novel of his times, He earned Pulitzer Prize for his novel- *The Grapes of Wrath*. Many of Steinbeck's novels have become modern classics and were made into successful films and plays.

Steinbeck recognized deep within the American and the universally human psyche a need to believe in the possibility of beginning a new, of returning symbolically from the exile of maturation. The original English colonists saw America very consciously as this new Eden, and Americans have ever since translated that dream of recovering Eden into the American dream, the dream of shedding the past and starting over. For Walt Whitman, this meant an outright denial of original sin, a chance to proclaim himself Adam—the representative American—newly born into innocence. For Benjamin Franklin, it meant a chance to create oneself in the pattern of one's imagination, free of any burden of guilt. It is no coincidence that, as a boy, Fitzgerald's *Gatsby* wrote notes to himself reminiscent of Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography. It is this refusal to see the evil we do and the belief in an Eden just west of the next mountain range that Steinbeck saw as the most dangerous flaw in the dream. In *Eden of Eden*, Adam Trask refuses to see the evil within his wife or within others. He is doomed by that self-willed innocence.

Keywords: American Dream, innocence, Conflict between good and evil, the legacy of sin and redemption.

East of Eden:

The novel opens with a description of Salinas's valley, an important metaphor for the conflict between good and evil—the contrast between the dark, is represented by Santa Lucia Mountains to the west and the light is greeted by Gabilan Mountains to the east. The role of these mountain symbolizes the human predicament of having to navigate between light and darkness, goodness and evil.

The story opens with the introduction to the large, loving Hamilton family and the small, tension-ridden Trask family. Hamilton is a powerful force of good and familiar strength throughout the novel, whereas Cyrus Trask is a menacing figure of corruption and familiar divisiveness.

The biblical story of Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve, many of the relationship provides the basic template in East of Eden We see that relationship in the novel between Charles and Adam is compared to the story of Cain and Abel. According to the Bible, Cain is a farmer, Abel is a shepherd, therefore, one day the two brothers bring sacrifices to God, and Cain offers the fattest portion of his flocks. God seemingly favors Abel's offering and Cain's offering is rejected. Cain grows jealous of his brother and then murders Abel.

In East of Eden, Charles and Adam mirror and this Biblical gift –giving in a birthday gifts to their father. Charles diligently saves money to buy a German knife to his father and Adam plans to give stray puppy which he has found. Cyrus prefers and favors Charles gift instead of Adam's. Charles becomes intensely jealous and shows frustration on Adam. But Charles, unlike Cain doesn't kill his brother; for the moment, evil (Cain / Charles) and good (Abel / Adam) are in a struggle locked by the evil.

In East of Eden, the fortune that has been won by Cyrus is through dishonest means, which he either steals or gain from a career built on lies about his supposed civil war experiences, is a symbol for this original sin. The result of Cyrus's sin-the inheritance of \$100,000-literally is passed on to his sons. Charles believes that Cyrus stole his fortune, but Adam refuses to believe that their father is dishonest.

Steinbeck counters about love and argued that his portrayal of Adam's blind naive devotion to the treacherous Cathy Ames Cathy appears in the novels as definitive embodiment of Evil. She destroys lives without remove, driven by self-hatred, desperation, and a love of pain. She uses sex as a weapon, murders her parents and becomes a prostitute-apparently out of an insatiable need to be evil. Adam falls in love with Cathy. He thinks that he could give new life to her and later they get married. Cathy succeeds in manipulating Adam but she is frightened of Charles. Charles commits adultery when Adam is drugged, he is more willing to sleep with Cathy on his brother's wedding night. Although Charles is aware of Cathy's manipulative nature, falls into temptation and chose to do evil.

The first generation of Hamilton's, represented by Samuel and Liza, as brave innocents. In the second generation of Hamilton's split appears between the passion and goodness handed down by Samuel and Liza. Dessie and Tom have a tragic end. So far, every major character has fit into the dichotomy of good and evil. Formerly Adam, Samuel, and Lee fall in the first category, and later Cathy, Charles, and Cyrus. Aron appears to be good like his father, whereas Cal appears evil like his mother & uncle.

Cathy's abortion highlights the contrast between the Trask and Hamilton families. She is evil and actively tries to destroy her unborn children. Olive, on the other hand, is a loving and nurturing figure, she loves her family as she undergoes the ordeal of the flight simply to please her children. There is another character Lee who takes care of Cathy's children. He is honest and exhibits a sense of goodness and love, balancing the evil that emanates from Cathy. Samuel, Lee, and Adam discuss the existence of a conflict between good and evil throughout human civilization and within every individual. They also give a name to the boys as Cal & Aaron, Cathy and Adam's twins. Cathy leaves Adam and stays in a whorehouse.

During the visit of Samuel Hamilton at Adam's home, the men discuss the Cain and Abel story again, and the concept of 'Timshel' is introduced by Lee, Good is represented by Adam and Cathy does evil without fear. Aron gradually withdraws into religious fervor in order to shield himself from the corruption of the world – an approach that Abra & Lee consider cowardly. However, Cal in collaboration with Will Hamilton, one of Samuel's sons, works secretly to earn back the fortune of his father.

He gives money as a gift to his father. Adam's obvious preference for Aron enrages Cal with jealousy, he temporarily loses his struggle with evil becomes anger, and rashly tells Aron the truth about their mother, Cathy. He takes Aron to a brothel to show him their mother. The fragile Aron is crushed, screams incoherently and runs away.

Cathy Horrified by her son's Aron's reaction commits suicide by overdosing on morphine.

In prior the inheritance of money is divided evenly between two people, diffusing the legacy of sin that the money represents. Aaron is the inheritor of Cathy's fortune because Aaron so fully accepts the idea of hereditary sin when the sight of Cathy crushes him, it is appropriate that the symbolic legacy of sin is inherited by Aron alone.

It leaves Cal in the misery of guilt and self-realization. Lee, however, advises Cal with a message of sense and optimum. His advice to Cal provides a load-lightening affirmation that tinsel, the freedom to choose between good and evil, really exists.

Leads us to believe that Cal at last fully understands what timshel means and that he can overcome the agency of the past. Cain kills Abel in the Bible, Cal commits sin and indirectly causes Aron's death – but this time, with his father's blessing, Cal confronts the sins of his father and is redeemed.

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