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### Abstract

*The paper demonstrates how John Steinbeck reflects both the life and the character of President Abraham Lincoln in Of Mice and Men (1937). Using analogy, the study specifically shows how the main character, Lennie, is connected to Lincoln in many aspects as they share the same physical appearances, mood and ethics. It also shows how they experience almost the same childhood, death, and whose murderers are familiarized with the same name 'Milton.' The study uses descriptive and comparative methods to highlight that Lennie's attitude towards the Black character Crooks is similar to Lincoln's position towards African-Americans. It significantly focuses on their perspective towards women. To put it differently, the study projects how both of them care and are considered to be good listeners to women. It foremost delineates how the relation between Lennie and George reverberates that of Lincoln and the South in terms of separation, clinging, and unity. This bond mirrors the conflict between the North and the South.*

**Keywords:** John Steinbeck, Of Mice and Men, Abraham Lincoln, Specter, Lennie and Politics.

### ملخص

توضح الدراسة كيف يعكس جون شتاينباك كلاً من حياة وشخصية الرئيس أبراهام لينكولن في كتابه عن الفئران والرجال (1937). باستخدام القياس، تُظهر الدراسة على وجه التحديد كيف ترتبط الشخصية الرئيسية، *Lennie*، بلينكولن في العديد من الجوانب حيث يتشاركون في نفس المظاهر الجسدية والمزاج والأخلاق. كما يُظهر كيف عانوا من نفس الطفولة، والموت، ومن تعرف قتلهم على نفس الاسم "ميلتون". كما تسلط الدراسة الضوء على أن موقف لينبي تجاه الشخصية السوداء كروكس مشابه لموقف لينكولن تجاه الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي. يركز بشكل كبير على وجهة نظرهم تجاه المرأة. بعبارة أخرى، فإنه يعرض كيفية اهتمام كل منهما بالمرأة واعتبارها مستمعة جيدة. إنه يوضح في المقام الأول كيف أن العلاقة بين لينبي وجورج تعكس صدى العلاقة بين لينكولن والجنوب من حيث الفصل والتشبيث والوحدة. تعكس هذه الرابطة الصراع بين الشمال والجنوب. ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف استخدمت الدراسة الطرق الوصفية والمقارنة **الكلمات المفتاحية:** جون شتاينباك، عن الفئران والرجال، أبراهام لينكولن، سبيكتر، لينبي والسياسة.

## Introduction

John Steinbeck (1902- 1968) is a distinguished American novelist, story writer, essayist and war correspondent. He is the author of Twenty seven books, including sixteen novels, six nonfiction books and five collections of short stories. He was honored with many prestigious Awards for his literary works including Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1940 and Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962. Steinbeck's first novel, *Cup of Gold*, was published in 1929. He achieved his first critical success with *Tortilla Flat* in 1935 followed by three novels about the migrant working class beginning with *In Dubious Battle* in 1936, *Of Mice and Men* in 1937, and his magnum opus, *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939. Steinbeck became the most famous and critically acclaimed writer of his time with the publication of his series of California novels and Dust Bowl fiction set among the common people during the Great Depression.

In his works, Steinbeck represents his views on USA. In his introduction of *The Steinbeck Question* (1993), Donald Noble argues that Steinbeck's works are considered to be cultural products that reflect the situation in twentieth century America: "By the end of the 1930s, Steinbeck had done beyond being the author of best sellers such as in *Dubious Battle* (1936) and become, in fact, a national figure" (I). In addition, Steinbeck gained reputation as he was acquainted with political issues and leaders who are mentioned in his works. Respectively, in *America and Americans*, and *Selected Nonfiction* (2003), Steinbeck states that: "In reviewing our blessings, we must pay heed to our leadership" (334). His works specifically encompass different names of presidents such as Kennedy, Washington, Stevenson, Roosevelt, Johnson and Eisenhower. However, this study focuses on one of the most influential presidents, Abraham Lincoln, who has left a great impact on Steinbeck's achievement. He is also an author who shows his enthusiasm for highlighting how the public critical mind comes against the injustices in the American society, namely racism and capitalism. This idea is clearly depicted in *Of Mice and Men* (1937), in which he refers to the situation of migrant harvesters.

*Of Mice and Men* revolves around the lives of two migrant workers George Milton and Lennie Small. It deals with their ambition to own their own ranch. In their path to achieve their own objectives, they face the world of dreams, lowliness, isolation and sacrifice. It is worth mentioning that the novel is an adaptation of Robert Burns's poem "To a Mouse." In the novel, the author

discusses a wide range of themes as the devastating effects of the Great Depression on Americans. He also criticizes the American dream as he gives voice to the working class to reveal their daily sufferings. In other words, Steinbeck devotes his novel to discuss political matters in USA. On this basis, the present study aims to trace the presence of the figure of Lincoln in OMAM. It further explores how Steinbeck relives Abraham Lincoln's specter in OMAM by representing his life and personality almost the same as that of the main character, Lennie. In other words, the study uses analogy to examine the similarities between the two persons. In order to achieve these aims, the study seeks to answer the following questions: How is Abraham Lincoln characterized in Steinbeck's OMAM ? Are there any parallel aspects between Lincoln and the character of Lennie? Why does the author refer to Lincoln in the novel? And what makes Steinbeck's main character, Lennie, connected to the personality of Lincoln?

Accordingly, few studies have referred to the manifestation of the figure of Abraham Lincoln in the fiction of Steinbeck. For instance, in *The American Short Story Handbook* (2015), James Nagel argues that Steinbeck's *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932) was inspired from Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*. It is worth noting that Anderson was interested in Abraham Lincoln's life and persona and represented him in the majority of his works such as *Poor White*. Furthermore, in *Dubious Battle* (1936), Steinbeck refers to a street named after Lincoln, "Lincoln Square", noting that this street is fictitious and does not exist in the place that Steinbeck mentioned in his novel (28). To put it clearly, there is a note at the end of the novel that says: "The Street described resembles First Street; but there is no Lincoln Square in San Jose and California elected no Senator Morgan. These names were probably chosen for symbolic iron" (245). Fanbin Meng and Fengjuan Liu's study: "An Analysis of John Steinbeck's Humanistic Concern in *Of Mice and Men*" (2018) deals with Steinbeck's Humanistic concern via two aspects: the desire for land and the hunger for intimacy, highlighting that the author is enthusiastically influenced by Lincoln's humanism. In *Steinbeck's Imaginarium: Essays on Writing, Fishing, and Other Critical Matters* (2022), Robert Mott exposes the influence of Lincoln on Steinbeck's writing without going deeper into details: "Steinbeck writing under the signifying visage of Lincoln is an appealing trope; whether it was an urban myth seemed beside the point because the parts fit together. Lincoln's grave face as iconic metaphor for Steinbeck's democratic enthusiasm"

(101). On this basis, the above-mentioned review of literature enlightens the current discussion in the way it raises more questions about the presence of Lincoln in Steinbeck's fiction in general and in OMAM in particular. In other words, the study contributes to the existing criticism by throwing more light on how the figure of Lincoln is characterized in the novel by making an analogy between him and the novel's main character.

It is the intention of this paper to highlight the manifestation of Lincoln's character in Steinbeck's OMAM. The proposition that Lincoln has exerted an influence on Steinbeck's literary career in general and his presence in OMAM in particular is suggested as a result of Steinbeck's recognized acknowledgment about such notion, specifically Lincoln's gestures, humor, physical appearance, speeches, origins and history. In *A Russian Journal*, Steinbeck (2001) recounts a story that is related with the memory of President Roosevelt: "And a large man at the end of the table stood up and drank to the memory of Franklin D. Roosevelt. We were beginning to understand the quality of Roosevelt's memory in the world, and the great sense of tragedy at his death" (51). Then, he bridges the memory of Franklin D. Roosevelt and that of Abraham Lincoln together, saying: "And I remembered a story that I had heard one time. Within a week of the death of Lincoln, the news of his death had penetrated even in to the middle of Africa" (71).

In his essay, "Duel Without Pistols," Steinbeck admits the influence of Abraham Lincoln on his behavioral attitudes, saying: "My thinking went like this: If he challenges me, I will naturally have the choice of weapons. And I remembered the story of how Abraham Lincoln was once challenged and chose cow manure at five paces. I decided to borrow this weapon, with full credits to Lincoln" (2003, 109). This was the reply of Steinbeck to a communist newspaper called *Il Tempo* in Italy that attacked his writings. Furthermore, in "Adlai Stevenson," an essay in Steinbeck's *America and Americans*, Steinbeck (2003), admirably, writes about President Stevenson and comes to comment about his humor. However, he admits the fact that humor suited another man who is Abraham Lincoln. Accordingly, Steinbeck states: "In our whole political history I can recall only one man who used humor effectively. That was Abraham Lincoln" (219). Moreover, in *The Pasture of Heaven*, Steinbeck draws parallels between the character 'Pat' and Abraham, saying: "Pat was a homely man; gangling, big-nosed and heavy jawed. He looked very much like Lincoln as a young man. His figure was as unfitted for clothes as Lincoln's was" (1936,

146). He also mentions a statue named after President Lincoln: “His clothes were uncompromising, as unhappy as the bronze suit on the sated statue of Lincoln in Washington” (98).

Likewise, in the *Grapes of Wrath* (1939), Steinbeck has referred to the Revolution and independence, naming President Lincoln again: “Doin' it 'cause you have to. 'Cause it's you. Look a Washington,' he says. 'Fit the Revolution, an' after, them sons-a-bitches turned on him. An' Lincoln the same. Same folks yellin' to kill 'em. Natural as rain” ((525). Additionally, in *The Winter of Our Discontent* (2008), Steinbeck maintains his familiarity with Lincoln in politics: “Your great-grandfather had some pretty fine books. They are in the attic. “Like what?” “Oh, like Lincoln’s speeches” (30). Finally, in *Travels with Charley*, Steinbeck (2012) adds an old story of Lincoln’s family to the lines of his novel: “I read a book how Lincoln’s Family came to Illinois on a raft” (82). Then, he referred again to Lincoln: “Maybe they never excited, but if there ever were the People that is the commodity the Declaration was talking about, and Mr. Lincoln” (177). Although Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men* is rife with some life incidents and political attitudes of Abraham Lincoln, no Steinbeck critic has ever written about this topic. Therefore, through the examination of both *Of Mice and Men* and the reliable sources written on Abraham Lincoln, this essay shows that Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men* echoes and reflects Abraham Lincoln’s life and personality.

### **The Childhood Phase:**

It is worth noting that Lincoln and Lennie share the same childhood experiences. Starting with Lennie’s life, in his attempt to introduce Lennie to the boss, George provides a pretext which is an accident elucidating Lennie’s mental situation: “he is my cousin. He got kicked in the head by a horse when he was a kid”( 25). This accident is similar to the one that happened to Lincoln when he was eleven years old. Accordingly, Glenna R and Schroeder- Lein state in their *Lincoln and Medicine* (2012): “The horse kicked Lincoln in the head, knocking him out, or as Lincoln phrased it, he was apparently killed for a time” (2). More than that, both persons share the notion of adoring rabbits. Lennie’s desire to tend the rabbits and how his mood completely changes when they are mentioned in front of him is the same feeling for Lincoln. Historically speaking, rabbits were gifted to Lincoln’s child, Tad, in order to relieve him after

successive tragic events. The first one took place in February, 1864 when “the White House stables caught on fire” (presidential petmuseum.com). Besides, ten days after the terrible fire, Tad and his entire family experienced another tragic loss which is the death of William “Willie” Lincoln, the Lincoln’s third son. He passed away from typhoid fever; “the entire family grieved terribly over the loss of Willie and none more so than Tad.” (2). Thus, people started to send gifts to the White House, particularly to Tad. A man named Michael Crock “sent the pair of rabbits hoping that they would help ease Tad’s grief” (2). The gift helped Tad to recover and pleased him, which pushed Lincoln to send his greeting personally to the rabbits’ sender.

In *The Papers and Writings of Abraham Lincoln* volume 2: 1860-1865, Lincoln wrote to Michael Crocks: “allow me to thank you on behalf of my little son for your present of white rabbits. He is very much pleased with them” (129). The letter states that the color of Tad’s rabbits is white. Seemingly, OMAM has nothing to do with the white color of Tad’s rabbits, but it is implied in the combination of the three colors of Lennie’s desired rabbits: blue, red and green. In this context, Lennie says: “Let’s have different color rabbits, George” the latter replies to him, saying: “Red and blue and green rabbits, Lennie. Millions of them”) (17). In *Making Media: Foundation of Sound and Image Production* (2012), the visual artist Robert –Breslin explicates the nature of the white color: “It is based on the three additive primary colors—red, green, and blue—that when they mixed together make white to the human eye” (115). On this basis, one may say that the rabbits in OMAM allude to Tad’s own rabbits.

Tad and Lennie are alike in their love of soft animals. Lennie has explained to George that he likes “to pet nice things with [his] fingers, soft things” and to tend furry rabbits with different colors (98). He mentions to George: “Furry ones, George, like I seen in the fair in Sacramento”( 18). In another scene, Lennie seems attracted to the puppy’s fur and his desire to stroke it has never been controlled by him: “Lennie looked at it for a long time, and then he put out his huge hand and stoked it, stoked it clear from one end to the other” (92-93). When Curley’s wife has discovered Lennie’s obsession with soft things, she makes it a topic of their discussion: “She was a little bit reassured, “Well, who do not she said. Lennie replies: “Everybody likes that. I like to feel silk and velvet. Do you like to feel velvet” (98). For this reason, “she took Lennie’s hand and put it on her head: “feel right around there and see how soft it is” (99). Remarkably, Steinbeck has used the following words: Stroke, furry, soft and silk

to show Lennie's obsession with soft things and soft animals. It is worth mentioning that these words are the same ones used by Margaret Truman, in her book *The White House Pets* (2009), to describe Tad's manners towards his rabbits and how he did enjoy them, saying: "often stroked their soft, silky fur". Since Margaret Truman is the daughter of the 33th American president Harry S Truman, Steinbeck has probably re-used her words to express Lennie's desire for soft animals.

### **Physical Appearance, Mood and Ethics:**

OMAM is replete with physical similarities between the two. First and foremost, Lennie is characterized with his bigness: "A big guy like you" (10). Carlson comments on Lennie's family name 'Small' which does not fit with his real physical appearance, saying: "He is not very small [...] is not small at all" (39). Similarly, Lincoln is also characterized with a unique height. Respectively, Philip Reilly writes in his *A Lincoln's DNA and other Adventures in Genetics* (2002): "During the Civil War, a reporter described him as a "tall lank lean man considerably over 6 feet in height" (3). In fact, Lennie's bigness frightens some characters such as the boss son, Curley, who has felt jealous of him. For this reason, the swamper says: "Curley's like a lot of little guys .He hates big guys. He'salla time picking scrapes with big guys. kind of like he is mad at them because he is a big guy" (29). Similarly, Lincoln's height reflects his greatness and authority as a president. In light of this, Todd Nathan Thompson writes in *The National Joker: Abraham Lincoln and the Politics of Satire* (2015): "Caricatures also seem to have aided Lincoln's bid for reelection, often by making Lincoln's prodigious height a metaphor for his sustain ability and greatness as a leader" (130).

The specter of Abraham is present in the novella through the sad mood of Lennie. It is noticeable that word "sadly" is recurrently repeated in the novella to underscore Lennie's grief. First, when George blamed Lennie for both forgetting his aunt's name and killing the mice, as a way of apologizing and regretting "Lennie looked sadly" (10). In addition to this, Lennie felt sad when he thought that any trouble might cost him the loss of tending the rabbits: "Then his eyes moved sadly" (11). In another incident, when Curley's wife asked him about what he was covering up, "He said sadly" that it was his dead pup (95). Likewise, Lennie felt broken when George expressed his desire to separate from

him and “he continued sadly that if George did not want him, he would go away”( 115). Lennie’s sadness is likely inspired from the perpetual sad mood of Lincoln. In this respect, William E. Gienapp, in *Lincoln and Civil War America: A Biography* (2002) portrays Lincoln’s mood saying: “Lincoln was overcome with grief, and his erratic behavior was cause for concern among his friends” (21).

In OMAM, Steinbeck refers to the analogy between the two persons in terms of ethical behaviour. The author mentions the word “honest” five times as it is evident in the following quotes: “Honest to god I did, George” (04). He adds: “I ain’t got nothing,George.Honest” (5). He says also: “Honest! I found it dead” (6). He mentions also “I never meant no harm, George, honest I never” (36). And finally, He asserts: “I did not mean no harm, George. Honest I did not”( 47). All these quotes are articulated by Lennie to indicate his honest intentions, which makes him similar to Lincoln whose nickname was “Honest Abe.” Respectively, Jean Dresden Grambs states, in *Abraham Lincoln Through the Eyes of High School Youth* (1959): “After all these years stands the most wonderful nickname anyone could ever have, “Honest Abe.” It is indeed a compliment to be remembered as "Honest Abe" rather than President Lincoln” (44).

### **The Theme of Politics:**

In OMAM, Steinbeck echoes certain momentous political leanings of Abraham Lincoln as well as his posture towards them. It starts with Crooks who represents Blacks in the novella. Crooks is sitting alone all the time in his room, that reflects the world of Black people. However, Lennie enters it suddenly to become Crook’s first visitor: ““Crooks said darkly, ‘Guys do not come into a colored man's room very much. Nobody been here but Slim. Slim and the boss”” (Steinbeck, 82) . Crooks’s dark tone while speaking to Lennie affirms the fact that he is an outcast. Lennie’s existence in Crooks’s room shows his acceptance of Crook’s world, and his determination to talk to him proves that he sees no difference between Crooks and the other ranchers. Thus, Lennie is considered as the first man who breaks the apartheid wall applied on the Crooks. In the history of the United States, this goes along with Lincoln’s attitudes toward race and slavery issues. Abraham Lincoln was both the first American President and politician who confronted slavery and racial segregation. Therefore, he was



nicknamed “The Great Emancipator.” Henry Louis Gates and Donald Yacovone confirm this notion in *Lincoln on Race and Slavery*: “It should not surprise us that Lincoln was no exception to his times; what is exceptional about Abraham Lincoln is that [...] it is the progress of his fraught journey through the thickets of slavery and race” (2009, XXVI). In parallel with Lincoln’s stance against slavery, in “Created Equal”, as a part from *America and Americans and Selected Nonfiction* (2003), Steinbeck asserts evidently his attitude towards slavery, saying: “Today we believe that slavery is a crime and a sin” (337). He even talks about his great-grandfather who was anti-slavery and shows a kind of relief towards that: “And Mr. Dickson was a convinced and unchangeable antislavery man. It absolved my great-grandfather from the sin of slave owning” (340). Importantly, Lennie’s presence in Crooks’ room pushes other ranchers to enter it. The room shifts from being an isolated and abandoned place into a crowded and lively one. It becomes loud with the voices of Candy, Slim, George who came to fetch Lennie. Likewise, the gathering inside Crook’s room triggers the curiosity of Curley’s wife to search for her husband there. More pointedly, Lennie has forced other ranchers to visit Crooks’ room unwillingly, which is reminiscent of President Lincoln who forces his nation to accept the passing of the constitution amendment that prohibited slavery whether they like it or not. Crooks as a cultivated and intelligent Black man symbolizes Frederick Douglass, a Black abolitionist author and public speaker. Crooks, the only Black man who has the opportunity to be treated equally from a white man on the ranch, symbolizes Frederick Douglass who is the first African-American nominated for Vice President of the United States. Additionally, Steinbeck mentions the day of that night when Lennie visits Crooks and decides to eradicate the racial segregation against him, writing: “It was Saturday night” (74). It is worth noting that “Saturday’s night” refers to Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address that is held on Saturday, March 04, 1865, in which he declared the abolishment of slavery. Stephen J Vicchio confirms this in his *Abraham Lincoln’s Religion: An Essay on One Man’s Faith*: “Several places in the second address speak of the collective guilt of war, of both North and South, and that of slavery, as well” (2018, 58). Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address took place in the presence of Frederick Douglass who was very welcomed by the President Lincoln. This is what Frederick Douglass states in his *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass: The Illustrated Edition* about Lincoln who said to him: “I saw you in the crowd today listening to my Inaugural Address, how did you like it?”(154)

Moreover, although Lennie's personality sounds void of seriousness, he is a good listener. He does not hesitate to confirm his act of listening to Curley's wife when she demanded him, "you listening?" (97). He replies sincerely "Me? Sure" (97). By using such dialogue, Steinbeck sheds light on Lennie's listening ability as a hint to Lincoln's attentive listening. Barbara Anne White comments on Lincoln's attentive listening in her *Visits with Lincoln: Abolitionists Meet The President at the White House* (2011): "Lincoln was clearly poor at small talk, but it is interesting that his sister in law also highlighted his ability to listen. He had an extraordinary talent for attentive listening as if drawn by a superior power" (130).

In another incident, Curley's wife has felt comfortable when she has confided her own problems and dreams to Lennie, and, therefore, she has been "a little bit reassured" (98). She has also shared with him secretive sides of her private life like admitting that she did never like her husband: "Well, I did not tell this to no body before. Maybe I ought not to. I do not like Curley. He is not a nice fella" (97). As a point of fact, listening to Curley's wife and making her feel comfortable and reassured matches with Lincoln's respect, support and listening to women who strive for their dreams and rights. In *Sojourner Truth: Slave, Prophet, Legend* (1995), Carleton Mabee and Susan Mabee Newhouse comment on Lincoln's meeting with Sojourner Truth, an outspoken advocate for abolition, temperance, and civil and women's rights, saying: "In the 1870s, Truth's old friend Oliver Johnson, the wartime editor of *The National Anti-Slavery Standard*, asserted that Lincoln had "treated her with utmost respect and even reverence" (122). In addition to this, Michael Burlingame writes, in *The Inner World of Abraham Lincoln*, about Lincoln's support for a young woman dreaming to vote: "In the late 1850s, he told a young woman who expressed a desire to vote 'I believe you will vote my young friend, before you are much than I'" (136). Noticeably, the communicative atmosphere between Lennie and Curley's wife is probably inspired from an anecdote told by Jesse W. Weik and William Herndon about Lincoln in his *Biography Herndon's Lincoln*, which was published in 1888, saying: "Listening in boyish wonder to the legends of some toothless old dame led him to believe the significance of dreams and visions" (54). The anecdote connotes that the boyish Lincoln used to listen to some toothless women who talked about their dreams and visions meanwhile doing laundry. Therefore, Steinbeck may have adapted this story to be between Lennie

who echoes the listener, Lincoln, and Currely's wife who represents the toothless women.

Accordingly, OMAM shows different sides of George-Lennie relationship. At the beginning, George wants to separate himself from Lennie who is seen as an impediment for his own success: "if I was alone I could live so easy. I could go get a job, and no trouble. No mess at all"( 12). This side of their relationship is a political allegory of a significant issue in Lincoln's life that is the South's secession from his government. George uses the word "alone" to express his desire of separation. , John Emison, in *Lincoln Uber Alles: Dictatorship Comes to America*, used the same expression to describe the South's willingness to separate

: "Most in South just wanted to be left alone"(26). It is worth adding that Lennie has never wanted George to leave him. In line with this, he says in a panicky reaction: "George will not go away and leave me. I know George will not do that" (80). This is analogous of Lincoln's refusal for South secession as Orison Sweet Marden and George Raywood Devit have pointed in *The Consolidated Library Vol 12* that Lincoln has refused the South's separation (123). Moreover, Lennie has felt his self-esteem: "He had sensed his advantages" and as a reaction to his self-esteem, he says: " If you do not want me, you only just got to say so, and I will go off in those hills right, there- right up in those hills and live by myself" (14). After perceiving George reaction, which was "'No- look! I was just fooling, Lennie. Because I want you to stay with me" (14). It is evident that Lennie's poignant words drive George to accept his company again because he knows that Lennie could not survive alone, which refers to Lincoln's direct warning to the South for their decision in his first Inaugural Address. Accordingly, in *The History of Abraham Lincoln and the Overthrow of Slavery* (1866), Isaac

N. Arnold has recorded Lincoln's influential words that has revoked the South's secession plans: "In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine [...] You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect and defend it" (177).

### **Their Death:**

Lastly, the presence of Lincoln's specter is explicitly manifested in the scene of Lennie's death. Many resemblances exist between Lennie and Lincoln mainly in the identity of their killers, the way they were killed, their last moments and their last wishes. Nobody denies that Lennie is killed by his friend George: "And George raised the gun and steadied it, and he brought the muzzle of it close to the back of Lennie's head. The hand shook violently, but his face set and his hand steadied" (Steinbeck, 117). It is remarkable that George resembles Lincoln's killer, John Wilkes Booth, in many levels. On the one hand, both George and John Wilkes are familiar with the family name "Milton." The latter is the family name of George. When the boss has asked George for his name, he answered him: "George Milton" (24). On the other hand, John Wilkes attended a Boarding school that carries the name "Milton" as Arthur F. Loux affirms in *John Wilkes Booth: Day by Day* (2014): "In the fall of 1849 Booth began studies at the Milton Boarding School in Cockeysville, Maryland" (5). Moreover, George was born in Auburn that is located in Alabama which is a southern city of the United States.

Accordingly, Steinbeck writes: "George said at last. 'Him and me were both born in Auburn'" (44). Thus, he is a Southerner like John Wilkes Booth who "was born on May 10, 1838, in the small town of Harford, Maryland, three miles east of the Bel Air farm" (Jameson, 2013, 43). Both George and John are portrayed as being smart and genius. Accordingly, Slim expresses his peculiar reaction towards the relation of Lennie and George, saying: "It just seems kind a funny a cuckoo like him and a smart little guy like you traveling together." Similarly, Robert Stevens writes in *The Bracken Rangers: Company K, 28th Regiment, 1st Indiana Cavalry, and Essays on the American Civil War*: "some reviewers called him. [John Wilks] and as a "natural genius" with an "astonishing memory" (27).

Both Lennie and Lincoln were killed in the same way; they were shot in the head. Accordingly, Steinbeck writes: "He went over and looked down at Lennie, and then he looked back at George "Right in the back of the head" He said softly (117). By the same token, "President Lincoln was shot in the head at Ford's Theatre" (Hayden, 1871, 753).

Besides, before his death, Lennie has been abundantly happy. In the last scene, the happiness of Lennie has reached its pick since George has not refused his request but has kept repeating his words: “For the rabbits,” Lennie shouted. “For the rabbits,” George repeated (116). Lennie’s happiness and optimism for the future in his last moments reflects that of Lincoln in his last day before the assassination incident. In her *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (2006), Doris Kearns Goodwin narrates: GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 1865, was surely one of Lincoln’s happiest days. The morning began with a leisurely breakfast in the company of his son Robert, just arrived in Washington. Mary Lincoln’s memories of her husband’s infectious happiness that day match the recollections of his inner circle. She had never seen him so “cheerful,” she told Francis Carpenter, “his manner was even playful. (5779) In addition to this, in his last moments, Lennie wishes to go to his promised land where he could tend the rabbits. Accordingly, Steinbeck writes: “Lennie begged, let us do it now. Let us get that place now” (115). It is the same wish that Lincoln had in the last minutes of his life. He was expressing his desire to visit the Holy Land while Booth shot him.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, the influence of Abraham Lincoln on Steinbeck was implicitly manifested in OMAM, which is not the case for some of his works where the name 'Lincoln' is explicitly mentioned. This is not new for Steinbeck whose fiction and non-fiction almost pay heed to his leadership. Importantly, Lincoln's phantom lives between the lines of OMAM echoing the president's political views, mood, childhood, ethics and even his son's tendency towards rabbits. Based on what this study brings to the fore, the door is open to Steinbeck critics and readers to search and explore the influence of other political figures on Steinbeck's writings noting that Steinbeck is famous of his closeness to politics and of his genius at meshing literature with various disciplines.

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