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## JOHN STEINBERG'S WORK THAT WON THE NOBEL PRIZE

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## ABOUT ARTICLE

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**Abstract:** American prose writer, author of many well-known novels and short stories: "The Grapes of Wrath", "East of Paradise", "About Mice and Men", "The Winter of Our Anxiety" and others; winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature.

## INTRODUCTION

John Steinbeck was born in the farming town of Salinas, California on February 27, 1902. His father, John Ernst Steinbeck, was not a very successful man; at one time or another he was the manager of the Sperry mill, the owner of a feed and grain store, treasurer of Monterey County. His mother, strong-willed Olivia Hamilton Steinbeck, was a former teacher. Growing up in the fertile Salinas Valley, referred to as "the nation's salad bowl," Steinbeck had a deep appreciation for his environment, not only the rich fields and hills surrounding Salinas, but also the nearby Pacific coast where his family lived. summer weekend. "I remember naming herbs and secret flowers as a child," he wrote in the first chapter of East of Paradise. "I remember where a toad might live and what time the birds wake up in the summer and how the trees and the seasons smell." The observant, shy, but often mischievous only son had a mostly happy childhood, growing up with two older sisters, Beth and Esther, and a much-adored younger sister, Mary.

## THE MAIN RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The family was never wealthy, but nonetheless held a prominent place in the small town of 3,000, as both parents were involved in social activities. Mister. Steinbeck was a Freemason. Steinbeck is a member of the Order of the Star of the East and founder of The Wanderers, a women's club that traveled vicariously through monthly reports. While the older Steinbecks established their identity by taking root deep in society, their son was something of a rebel. The respectable Salinas limited the restless and imaginative young John Steinbeck, and he opposed the "Salinas mindset". At the age of fourteen, he decided to become a writer and, as a teenager, lived for hours in a world of his own creation, writing stories and poetry in his upstairs bedroom. To please his parents, he entered Stanford University in 1919; to please himself, he enrolled only in those courses that interested him: classical and British

literature, writing courses, and a small amount of science. The president of the English Club said that Steinbeck, who regularly attended meetings to read his stories aloud, "had no other interests or talents that I could discern. He was a writer, but he was this and nothing else" (Benson 69). In fact, writing was his passion not only while at Stanford, but throughout his life. From 1919 to 1925, when he finally left Stanford without a degree, Steinbeck dropped in and out of the university, sometimes to work closely with migrants and ranchers on California ranches. These relationships, combined with an early empathy for the weak and defenseless, deepened his empathy for the workers, the disenfranchised, the lonely, and the displaced, an empathy characteristic of his work.

After leaving Stanford, he briefly tried construction work and newspaper writing in New York before returning to his home state to hone his craft. In the late 1920s, during his three years as caretaker on a Lake Tahoe estate, he wrote several drafts of his first novel, *The Gold Cup* (1929), about the pirate Henry Morgan, and met the woman who would become his first wife, Carol Henning, a native of San Jose. After they married in 1930, he and Carol settled rent-free in the Steinbeck family's summer cottage in Pacific Grove. She looked for work to support them, while he continued to write.

During the decade of the 1930s, Steinbeck wrote most of his finest California fiction: *Heavenly Pastures* (1932), *God Unknown* (1933), *Long Valley* (1938), *Tortilla Flat* (1935), *In Dubious Battle* (1936), *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). "To the Unknown God", the second written and the third published, tells of the dominance and obsession of patriarch Joseph Wayne with the earth. The mystical and powerful novel bears witness to Steinbeck's realization of the essential connection between humans and the environment they inhabit. In a diary entry made while working on this novel, a practice he continued all his life, the young author wrote: "Trees and muscular mountains are the world - but not the world outside of man - the world, and man is the only thing." inseparable unit of man and his environment. Why they were ever considered separate, I don't know." His belief that characters should be seen in the context of their environment remained consistent throughout his career. It was not a human-dominated universe, but an interconnected whole in which species and environment interacted, where commensal links between people, between families and nature were recognized.

By 1933, Steinbeck had found his territory; carved out a style of prose that was more naturalistic and much less forced than in his earlier novels; and demanded his people - not the respectable, self-righteous burghers of Salinas, but those on the fringes of polite society. Steinbeck's California fiction, from "God Unknown" to "East of Paradise" (1952), depicts the dreams and defeats of ordinary people shaped by the environment in which they live. Undoubtedly, his ecological holistic vision was shaped both by his early years wandering the Salinas Hills and by his long and deep friendship with the eminent marine biologist Edward Flanders Ricketts. The founder of Pacific Biological Laboratories, a marine laboratory that eventually became located on Cannery Row in Monterey, Ed closely observed tidal life: "I came to depend on his knowledge and patience for research," Steinbeck writes in *About Ed. Ricketts*, an essay written after his friend's death in 1948 and published in *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (1951). However, the influence of Ed Ricketts on Steinbeck was much deeper than the usual chord of detached observation. Ed was a fan of Gregorian chants and Bach; Spengler and Krishnamurti; Whitman and Li Po. His mind "knew no horizons," writes Steinbeck. In addition, Ricketts was friendly; he accepted people as they were, and accepted life as he found it. This quality he called non-teleological or "is" thinking, a view that Steinbeck also adopted in many of his writings in the 1930s. He wrote "distantly", simply writing down what "is". For example, the working title of "Of mice and people" was "Something That Happened" - such is life. Doc, the wise observer of life, personifying the idealized position of the

non-teleological thinker: Doc Burton in "The Questionable Battle", Slim in "Of Mice and Men", Casey in "The Grapes of Wrath", Lee in "East of Paradise" and, of course, "Doc" in Cannery Row (1945) and its sequel, the rollicking Sweet Thursday (1954). Everyone sees broadly, truthfully and empathetically. Ed Ricketts, patient and thoughtful, poet and scholar, helped substantiate the author's ideas. Steinbeck's mentor, his alter ego, and his soul mate. Given the depth of his eighteen-year friendship with Ricketts, it's no surprise that the connection most often acknowledged in Steinbeck's work is friendship between people.

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